

Update on Religious Mail for TDCJ

It is an understatement to say that congregations and ministries that supply Bible studies by mail have been frustrated and discouraged by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) requiring materials to be sent to

Kings Crossing Prison Ministries

3833 S. Staples, Suite S-101, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411

(361) 855-3372 Fax (361) 855-7469

July 30, 2023

Dear Joshua,

Thank you for the letter received from you today. You have been on my mind and in my prayers. Your letter was an answer to one prayer. Janet has been asking me a question that I can't answer – "Where is Aubree while you are there?" Since you had told me something about Aubree being able to get back in school by the time you get back, I "assumed" she was in the care of Bruce & Sandy. Right?

Things are going well here, We're always busy and always behind. There is simply not enough hours in the day or night. Janet & I will be taking a little trip at the end of this week. I performed a wedding for a couple 50 years ago in Grand Prairie and they want me to return to the scene of the crime and help them recite their vows all over again. It is an honor and I'm glad to do it.

On our way back, we will stop at our daughter's house to pick up her dog for us to "dog-set" next week while she takes a friend to be treated at M. D. Anderson Hospital in Houston. Otherwise, she would have had to bring the mutt to us on Monday.

Recardo did the service Sunday afternoon at the halfway house here and was able to baptize two more. He is doing a great job. His father also volunteers and sits at the front desk. He greets folks coming in and helps grade lessons, stuff envelopes, etc. You know what that is like, right?

I will share your letter with Dale about your counselor (Josh Stone) and his potential interest in using the NLB curriculum or CASA there. It's great that they are looking to start some kind of men's group.

I'm glad to hear that you plan to dump the snuff-dipping. I've heard it called another form of thumb-sucking nicotine. In some ways, it is more harmful than smoking (heart attack, dental disease, and cancer of the mouth). Since the inside lining of our lips are blood vessels, the poison has direct access. I have seen more than my share of lips removed in efforts to cut away the cancer. Ugly-looking stuff from snuff.

Dale is already talking about picking you up at 8 a.m. on the morning of August 19. Since their daughter and grandson live so near there, and we would need to come the night before, I suggested that he & Karlene use it as another chance to spend a little time with the family. I can always see you back here or in Victoria.

It looks like it's time to sign-off and say 10-4, good buddy. Go, Cowboys!

August 13, 2023

Dear Richard,

This is a short but "personal" note to you following the news you shared with the congregation a few Sundays ago. I appreciate the fact that you felt comfortable enough to come forward and let us know about the state of Diane's health. I can vouch for the facility she is in because we have had others there in the past and Fran Lampton is still there today.

You have been through so much. I had "heard through the grapevine" of Diane's diminishing condition. I know you did all you could for her for as long as possible. Many fail to understand the toll taken on the healthy spouse before reaching this point. I commend you for your love and devotion to Diane. Placing her at Elon is just one more expression of that love. When this kind of thing happens, I'm reminded of God's promise not to give us more than we can bear. I've heard some say they didn't know "how" they would survive. I guess it's not up to us to understand "how" but to know that we *will*. I fear we get too wrapped up in trying to "figure out the HOW" when it's our job simply to still be standing after the storms pass. I think of Ephesians 6 when Paul speaks of our *armor* as Christian soldiers and we are to "after all, **stand**." It doesn't say we won't suffer or not lose a few leaves but after the hurricane is over, *the tree is still standing*.

The Owen family will survive because of your love, your faith, and having each other. You will survive because that's what you do as a Christian family. You do it for each other. You have weathered storms before. By God's grace and power, this is not your "first" test and you're still standing. It doesn't mean all of the pain is gone. It never will but it has caused you to gain strength. I have watched and heard about the kind of man you are for years. I admire your faith and continuing devotion to God.

It is easy to lose our spiritual concentration in this world. It seems to close in and squeeze us. Sometimes I still drive by my parents' old home outside of Victoria or think of my sister and brother and realize I'm the last survivor of the Griffith clan. I drive by the first two homes we lived in here and where we raised our kids. I drive by the old church building at 4420 S. Staples and down the alley to the back door near where my office used to be. I think of Charlie & Mary Ann Dodd, David & Lillian Smith, R. J. & Vivian Whittington, Robert & Charlotte Kirtley, J. D. & Jo Bebout, and so many others who are gone but they left a ton of memories. I was only 34 years old when we came here. In two months, I'll turn 80! Where did the years go? But *one of these days*, we will be together – forever!

I have no alternative but to refocus on reality, today, and right now. God's not through with me. The same is true for YOU. It's OK to be knocked off our feet from time to time. It happens. We are human. In the middle of a storm at sea, Peter temporarily took his eyes off Jesus and started sinking. Then, he "came to" (like from a coma) and cried for the Lord who immediately reached out and caught him. What Jesus did for Peter, He will do for you and me. Thank God!

Sincerely,

January 13, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to highly recommend Kelli Walker.

Kelli was a "breath of fresh air" when she entered our prison ministry office about eighteen months ago. The first thing that attracted us to her was our knowledge of some members of her family. Kelli comes from an industrious background and we knew she would not be afraid of hard work. Due to her schedule of university classes, her hours were flexible. When Kelli was here, she was here to work.

***Kings Crossing Prison Ministries* supplies correspondence studies to tens of thousands of students. Most students are incarcerated. Much of the grading is done by volunteers. After they finish their work, they bring the paperwork to our office for people like Kelli to follow up on in a timely manner. Delays cause students to lose interest or become discouraged. We knew Kelli possessed both the computer skills needed plus, she works fast. The following are other attributes observed over this time frame:**

**Pleasant personality
Prompt
Neat appearance**

**Considerate
Diligent
Multi-talented**

**Self-starter
Quick to learn
Faithful**

One other quality we appreciated about Kelli is her kind and generous spirit. Due to the nature of this ministry, employees at times meet clients face-to-face. These may be recently released offenders, persons struggling with chemical addictions or members of their families (including children). This can be a challenging environment but Kelli always handled it extremely well.

We anticipate hearing more glowing reports of her future career pursuits.

Sincerely,

**Buck Griffith
Director**

June 29, 2014

Dear Mark & Linda,

Today, you will preach your final “official” sermon at Kings Crossing Church of Christ but your influence will continue to be felt for the rest of our lives. You have poured yourselves into God’s family at Windsor Park/Kings Crossing Church of Christ for 12 years. It will be easy to drive out of town but it will not be a simple thing to pull yourselves away from our hearts.

As you embark on the next phase of your lives, you have many new experiences. We hope most of them will be enjoyable but if the past is a teacher – you will encounter a few valleys, too. There will be times when you rejoice you are no longer “tied down” with the obligations and restraints of being the Pulpit Minister for Kings Crossing. But, I guarantee you that there will be other moments when you will “miss” us just as we will miss the two of you.

One memory I will always treasure is the first time we met you. It is when you “tried out” in the summer of 2002. As soon as you entered the pulpit and started preaching, I thought: “This is the guy we need to get.” Before you left town the next morning, we (you, Linda, Janet and I) met at Cracker Barrel for breakfast. While eating, you asked: “Buck, what do you think I can do or bring to Windsor Park that you have not over the last 25 years?” My answer came easy and fast: “Mark, I could tell as soon as you started preaching that you LOVE to preach. Windsor Park deserves a preacher who loves to PREACH and I don’t want to do that . . . I want to do *prison ministry!*” I saw “my” role here very clearly - I would become your #1 fan. I would always try to build you up. I think every member knew that I was very pleased with choice our elders made for the pulpit. Every preacher will have their “friends” and “enemies” and you made it easy for me to be your FRIEND. No, we didn’t “hang out” together – you had your job and I had my job and I think we supported each other well through these years. As you make this move today, we remain good friends and I support you! Thank you for the support you have given to me as well.

So, as you leave Corpus Christi, it is not easy because we are not just losing a preacher, we are losing a *friend*. Perhaps there will be times in the future when our paths will cross. If not, we still have

our memories and, of course, we anticipate winding up at the same location in The End.

May the Lord always be with you and bless you,

NewLife Behavior Ministries

**3833 S. Staples, Suite S-101, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411
(361) 855-3372 (Prison Office) ► (361) 992-8251 (Church Office) ► Fax: (361) 855-7469**

May 31, 2011

Chaplain Mary Gonzalez
Glossbrenner Unit
5100 S. FM 1329
San Diego, Texas 78384

Dear Chaplain Gonzalez,

Greetings!

Our *NewLife Behavior* classes will be resuming soon. We will bring CASA workbooks with us to the first meeting. We appreciate your help and tremendous support of these classes. We know “things change” but we are hoping and praying that you remain the Chaplain there for as long as the Lord wants to keep us all here on earth. We know there are lots of “ups” and “downs” with TDCJ (or any prison) but you always go out of your way to keep us informed and minimize any potential discouragement.

You may recall that 3-4 months ago we shipped several boxes of James Lee’s book – “Reflected Wisdom” for you to share with offenders at your discretion. I do not know the *religious background* of the author. These are excellent books with positive messages and nothing that might be argumentative or problematic for you or the security of the institution.

I hate to add to your “paperwork” but, if possible, please drop a short “Thank You” to the folks making these books available. Of course, James Lee is the author. James Ard is a dear friend and strong supporter of good works in many places. It was James Ard that first came up with the idea of sharing these books with prisoners. He is the one that boxed, shipped and paid the freight to get them here.

Donors sometimes “wonder” if their gifts actually “make it” to intended target(s) and like to hear results. I would consider it a personal favor if you would drop these good people a line or two.

James E. Ard
Ard-Knox Insurance
5200 Keller Springs Road, Unit 822
Dallas, Texas 75248

James V. Lee
Salado Press
P. O. Box 852011
Richardson, Texas 75085-2011

Sincerely,

Buck Griffith, President

December 29, 2009

Mr. & Mrs. Eddie Read
P. O. Box 6156
Corpus Christi, Texas 78466-6156

Dear Eddie & K-Linn,

Janet & I trust that you experienced a joyful Christmas and are headed into a safe and pleasant end to 2009. We are blessed to count you among our “special friends” at Kings Crossing. A “little bird” often tells us about some kind, thoughtful and courteous thing(s) you have done. Of course, you do not do these things for recognition but you do them anyway.

One of these incidents occurred around Thanksgiving. I understand you entertained my good friend and partner in the prison ministry – John Henry Pruitt – to an evening meal. He greatly enjoyed it and he probably gave you his “life story” of God’s Amazing Grace. He is a blessing to be around and encourages so many others. Thank you for reaching out and being a friend to him.

Also, just before Christmas, I was given an “extra” check. I don’t recall what the “memo” line said – something like “appreciation” or “bonus” or *whatever*. I didn’t know who to say “Thank You” to but it didn’t keep me from *cashing* it! Ha!

Finally, Bro. Willie Kosarek (one of our “little birds”) revealed to me that the funds were made available through YOUR generosity. I thanked Willie for letting me know because I really wanted to express our gratitude for this act of kindness and generosity. As you likely know, the Prison Ministry is pretty much “on its own” financially and with our economy in the tank, the ministry is cutting back in every expense area. Out personnel has not had a salary increase in two years and were informed at Thanksgiving not to expect any increase in 2010 either. With God’s help, things will get better. In the meantime, we will continue to do the best we can with what He places in our hands.

In spite of the economic climate, we are excited about the upcoming New Year. We had a record number of baptism requests in 2009 (1016 to be exact). We are gathering reports from

across the USA at this time so we can report the total number of baptisms in jails and prisons as a direct result of churches of Christ. We believe the number will exceed 10,000!

Again, thank YOU for your thoughtfulness. We rejoice that we are able to worship together as part of the Kings Crossing family. If you ever know of anyone we might be able to reach out and minister to through *Kings Crossing Prison Ministries*, be sure to let us know. May God bless you richly in the coming year.

Sincerely in Christ,

October 10, 2009

Dear Nathan,

We are REALLY missing you this week! You don't know what you have missed . . . I looked for you just yesterday to see if I could "borrow" you *and* your pick-up truck to move Janet Elliott to her new place on Padre Island – *Ha!* I know you would have enjoyed that immensely. Just kidding . . .

We really do miss you though. You and your family have endeared yourselves to all of us at Kings Crossing in so many ways. We love you, our kids love you, their parents love you, the 49ers love you, and we all hope that you stay a very long time (like *for the rest of your lives*).

Naturally, I love you because you and I share a love for souls in trouble. The "average" Youth Minister focuses strictly on the kids that show up anyway. You look for those who are on the "fringe" and lurking just *outside the circle*. They desperately want to get inside the circle but often feel shut out. Nathan, thank you for providing a "way" for such young people (like EJ). I understand that this is challenging and adds to the load both for you and your family. But, the dividends are eternal.

Also, I recall when our *R&R Team* went to the juvenile facility in Corsicana. I was pleased to stand at the back of the room and observe how *relaxed* and "at ease" you appeared addressing those young men. This is an ability that few possess at your age. I look forward of other opportunities for you to be with us in the future. I wish we had a crew of younger men and women who would accept the challenge of conducting weekly sessions with the juvenile offenders in Nueces County. Of course, we must be "wise as serpents" because everyone will not appreciate you taking time away from your primary duties as our Youth Minister.

Again, I want you to know how deeply loved you are at Kings Crossing and how we miss you being here during this time. I know you are being blessed by being there and you, as always, are blessing the lives of others around you. We do look forward to seeing you back in Corpus Christi very soon.

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith
Director

April 28, 2009

Mr. Holland L. Boring III
TDCJ #1116220 Gib Lewis Unit
P. O. Box 9000
Woodville, Texas 75990

Dear Holland,

It was good to get your recent letter and glad to know that things are going well for you there. It always helps to have a decent job to occupy some of your time. It also helps to have contact with good people like Bro. Turner and Bro. Bellamy.

I hope your mother is doing well in her move back to the DFW area. Of course, we miss her here in Corpus Christi and at Kings Crossing. She was a joy to be around and very helpful in the Lord's work.

We, too, are disappointed that you likely will not be coming here upon release but going back to Arlington or that general vicinity. Still, we must learn to "roll with the punches" and "make the best" of every situation. While there are negative influences there to deal with – those bad influences are in every community. Plus, you know that there are many good and positive influences in the Arlington area. The Richland Hills church (Craig Williams) has several CASA meetings weekly. You can be a big help to them if you will. Also, the Southside church in Fort Worth has a 12-Step faith-based support group (but I don't think they call it "CASA"). And, of course, the old Turnpike church in Grand Prairie needs someone to "revive" its CASA program since Joe Almanza moved to Abilene. A similar group (the James Group) is in Dallas at the Webb Chapel Road church. There are lots of opportunities in that area and I trust you will choose to get involved and help one or more of these.

Pray for us here in Corpus Christi. We are hosting the *36th National Jail & Prison Ministry Workshop*, June 10-12. I wish you could be here for it. Most of the classes will be held at the Holiday Inn-Emerald Beach (on Shoreline). We expect 250+ to attend from all across the United States. This will be a huge challenge for us.

Again, thanks for writing, You are in our fervent prayers. Hang in there and let God keep using you in His service.

In the Lord,

May 17, 2013

Mr. & Mrs. James Hicks
628 Heather
Friendswood, Texas 77

Dear Jim & Beverly,

I apologize for being SO late getting this letter of gratitude to you for your VERY generous gift of stock/bonds to the Jail/Prison Ministry's *Endowment Fund*. As you know, this is extremely important to our long-term future. I realize that Bro. Kosarek has already provided you with the letter for IRS purposes but I wanted to write and express my *personal* thankfulness!

The *Endowment Fund* will play a crucial role in our current process to find and secure the services of the individual who will ultimately assume my role in the leadership of this good work. I do not know how much Willie has shared with you but we have initiated a five year "transition" plan. As soon as possible, we hope to bring this man on board and start the process of unloading 20% of my load annually. Of course, there' is no guarantee that he will *stick*. He may stay a year and quit. Then, we must start the whole process again. Please, pray for God to bless this important mission field.

Also, I want to apologize that your initial phone call was not answered. On Thursdays and Fridays, John Henry (who normally answers the phone) and I are in prisons most of the day and into the evening. We have so much mail with our 32,000 Bible students that we have to get it to our mail service before 4:30 p.m. or it will not go out until the next day. This necessitates someone leaving the office by about 4:00 p.m. In a recent staff meeting, we assigned one of us to always be *in the office* until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Failing to answer such calls should not happen.

We are headed to the 40th National Jail/Prison Ministry Workshop at Heritage Christian University in Florence, Alabama (June 12-14). Since all our staff will be there, we will (unfortunately) miss several more important calls. The "answering machine" should record them and we will follow up the following Monday.

Again, thank you for your generosity and faithfulness. A day rarely goes by within thinking of Walter Hicks. I often mention his name when speaking to offenders. He was such a great servant and was deeply loved by so many. Wow! What a legacy.

In God's love,

Buck Griffith

April 7, 2009

Mr. & Mrs. Tom Peeples
14177 Joel Court
Largo, Florida 33774-5107

Dear Tom & Sandy,

Thank you, Sandy, for such a nice note and I certainly do recall your baptism and I also remember when Bro. Peeples was the preacher for the Downtown congregation. Naturally, your parents and mine were members at Central at that time. I always thought Brother Ralph Thomas was one of the most humble men I knew. I did not know

him other than as a young person growing up in the congregation but I loved his mild and quiet spirit. If you knew my Dad, he was much the same way – not one to make a big “splash” or be seen or heard much.

I was 21 years old when you were baptized in 1964. Wow! It seems like yesterday, doesn't it? I am glad that you have remained strong in the Lord all these years. I am in Florida a few times each year and one time I visited on a Sunday morning in San Jose (Calvin Warpula was the preacher at the time). I think my return flight was from some airport nearby. I've also preached in St. Petersburg but in conjunction with a prison ministry workshop being hosted by the 20th Street congregation. More recently I was in Tampa for a similar event. I love Florida and the St. Pete area reminds me a lot of Corpus Christi.

I married Janet (Ellis) on August 14, 1964. She & I were both born in Corpus Christi and actually attended the First Grade together (but did not know each other). We met during a VBS at Central in the summer of 1961 and went to ACU together. Her sister and brother-in-law (Norman & Marlene Glasson) were members at Central. Upon graduation from ACU, we moved to preach for 3 years in two rural congregations near Lubbock. In 1969, we moved to Grand Prairie where I preached for 8 years at the Burbank Gardens congregation. It was while there that I first visited a man in Dallas County Jail. I ended up baptizing him and he introduced me to others and I have not been able to stop ever since.

We moved to Corpus Christi in 1977 and I preached for this congregation for the next 25 years. All the while, I was getting more and more involved in the jail and prison ministry, aftercare and substance abuse recovery. So, two years before my 25th anniversary as the “pulpit guy” – I told the elders to be looking for my replacement because, Lord Willing, I will do prison work for the rest of my life. I have never regretted it. This is the most rewarding work I have ever done in all my efforts to serve our Lord.

I love to see people change the way they live. I am attracted to seeing the drastic way offenders (and addicts) change their everyday lives. At the same time, I am *discouraged* when I see members of the local congregation who seldom change. I have “preached my heart out” from the pulpit only to see minimal change in people's lives. In fact, most brethren often appear “insulted” when they hear me exhorting them to change. I would be satisfied if I could just get them to *cuss* a little less and *show up* at church meetings a little more. Most offenders (and addicts) know – without a doubt – that they *need* to change and more importantly, they desperately *want* to change.

Ed Brown (the preacher at Central when I was a teen growing up) really inspired me. He was so dedicated. I watched Ed preach and sometimes his face turned so red I thought he was going to have a heart attack and die right there in the pulpit. I saw tears come from his eyes while hoping someone would respond during the invitation song. When I went off to Abilene, I did not “intend” on becoming a “preacher” – I went there to play football, enjoy myself, earn an Art degree, land a high-paying job as a commercial artist, and live “The Good Life.” Ha! The Lord has a way of turning us completely around, doesn't He? ACU's Art Department at the time was into “Modern Art” (it looked

like someone threw some paint on a canvas, stood back and named it something crazy. Obviously, that was not my idea of art. When I got serious about serving the Lord, I wanted everyone else to get serious – starting with my football team. Well, most of them didn't "want" to change either.

Still, something about a "challenge" has always been attractive to me. It is a challenge to try to change college-level athletes. In each place where I preached after getting out of Abilene, I was always drawn to husbands who would not come to church, thought they had to be "macho", drank, smoked, cussed, etc. So, when I went into the Dallas County Jail, I was attracted to trying to encourage men to change (whose lives were a total disaster). And, strangely enough, I found many who genuinely wanted to change.

I work on the principle that "I cannot care more than *you* do." As long as I see a person willing to change, I stick with him and bend over backwards to help. When I see him slacking off or turning away, I have no option but to do the same and turn my attention to the next person I find who is serious about change.

Well, I didn't mean to go on and on and on . . . I apologize.

Again, thank you for writing and may God richly bless your lives in His service. I hope to see you again some day.

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith
Director

Buck Griffith, Director
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Corpus Christi, Texas 78411
E-mail: bucknlb@yahoo.com
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May 6, 2005

Ayers Street Church of Christ
Attention: Trustees
1612 Lawnview
Corpus Christi, Texas 78404

Dear Brethren,

First, I want to express my gratitude for the invitation to speak there on the prison ministry effort on Sunday, April 10th. I had wanted to do this for a long time. My purpose was not to ask for *money*. I wanted to provide information for members to contact us when learning of one

incarcerated or struggling with addictions. Please call us if and when you are aware of such. Since returning to Corpus Christi in 1977, it has been a privilege to minister to many family members and friends of Christians throughout South Texas as well as many other cities and states.

Second, I want to express sadness at seeing the Ayers Street property sold and the Lord's work there coming to an end. As you know, I was baptized at Ayers when we worshipped at North Beach in the 50's. Several members from Ayers assisted with that work. Thus, I am aware of the variety of emotions you must be experiencing as you face the final business matters before you now. Hopefully, there will be a spiritual pride and sense of relief once you complete these tasks.

Finally, it was suggested that I submit to you – in writing – some of our pressing “needs” in the prison ministry. I am glad to do so. Let me begin by briefly defining the difference between **NewLife Behavior Ministries (NLB)** and **Windsor Park Prison Ministries**.

The needs I present are on behalf of Windsor Park Prison Ministries which is under the oversight of the elders at Windsor Park Church of Christ.

NLB is a separate 501 (3) (c) non-profit, tax-exempt organization formed in Dallas in 1984 and operates under a board of trustees. NLB is a “curriculum-based ministry” meaning that it develops life-changing curriculum primarily for prison ministry use - worldwide. It has no paid employees. Since NLB asked me to become its President in 2002, we closed the Dallas office and combined it with that of *Windsor Park Prison Ministries* to cut expenses and utilize whatever leadership ability I possess. The available staff of *Windsor Park Prison Ministries* is “icing” on the cake.

Under the oversight of the elders at Windsor Park Church of Christ, funds contributed to *Windsor Park Prison Ministries* are accounted for by the elders. I cannot sign on the bank account and all expenditures paid require receipts. Checks are signed by two elders. We supply quarterly and annual financial reports to donors. We firmly believe donors have a right to know exactly how funds are used. We can receive direct transfers of stock and other material assets (land, homes, vehicles). We occasionally receive proceeds from wills/estates of individual Christians. *We do not accept any government funding*. We believe this to be the work of the church and thus, of Christians rather than the *world*.

Although there are a multitude of aspects to *Windsor Park Prison Ministries* (Christians Against Substance Abuse-CASA, *Baptistries Around the World*, Follow-Up on Ex-Offenders, *FamilyNet*, Little Angels, etc.), I will highlight our most pressing needs.

- **\$150,000-\$200,000** – My highest priority is to find the right man to join us as soon as possible to begin on-the-job-training as my eventual replacement. This is not part of our budget. This individual will need counseling, writing, organizational and managerial skills. He must be a gifted teacher and public speaker. Fund-raising ability is essential. We want a person between the ages of 30-40 to spend the rest of his life growing with this ever-expanding ministry. I will remain active for at least 8-10 more years so duties can be shifted gradually over time. This is the largest prison ministry in our brotherhood and it is critical that we take steps to insure its continuity and effectiveness. We have other needs but none is more important than this. These funds will allow the right person to come in and systematically replace these funds, sustaining his future salary.
- **\$25,000-\$30,000** – We need to replace our 1997 Dodge Caravan that is used almost daily in going back and forth to prisons (current mileage: 120,000). Every

Sunday and Monday we drive 360 miles (roundtrip) to the Three Rivers prison. Periodically we drive to the Lopez State Jail in Edinburg on Wednesdays (160 miles roundtrip). Thursdays, we make two roundtrips to two Beeville prisons (280 miles roundtrip). We go to the Glossbrenner Unit at San Diego on Fridays (110 miles roundtrip). We visit three different county jails and a juvenile detention center. Fifteen weekends are spent in "Gospel Meetings" inside various prisons in and outside of Texas annually.

- **\$25,000** – We want to add a person to our staff upon completion of the licensing procedure this summer, becoming a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC). This individual is a fantastic teacher and we need him to provide leadership to our CASA program. With this addition, we will be able to touch many more lives as an intensive out-patient alcohol and drug treatment program. And, he will remove a huge load from my back.
- **\$25,000** – We spent \$40,000 in 2004 to place permanent and portable baptisteries in jails, prisons and church buildings throughout the United States and foreign countries. This was seriously under-funded by donations . . . to the tune of about \$25,000. Unless these funds come in, we must reduce the number placed in 2005.
- **\$12,000** – We need to purchase a minimum of 2,000 "Serenity" Bibles in 2005. These are used with our CASA program graduates in prisons. The 12 Steps are highlighted in the Bible, addressing each "step" in the recovery process. Through a special arrangement with the Nashville publisher, we can purchase these at 50% below their retail cost but they must be purchased all at one time.

I could go on but I hope this gives you sufficient information to decide what you want to do. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. I have been ministering in prisons for 34 years and I believe I know how to do it. Still, *I learn more every day*. Since I am in and out of prison (and out-of-town, also), you can reach me best on my cell phone (361-947-5494).

Again, thank you for your thoughtful and prayerful deliberations and decisions.

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith
Director

March 6, 2005

Dear Friends,

I'm sitting in Jacksonville International Airport (Florida) waiting to fly home. Prior to leaving Corpus Christi, I prepared the enclosed sheet but wanted to send a letter with it. So, I'm trying collect my thoughts in spite of the past several very busy days. Let me share a little of what has been going on . . .

Our *Reconciled & Renewed Seminar* "team" (Pat & Glenda Watson, Karen Jones, Joan Bruster, Pam Zapalac, John Henry Pruitt & I) conducted a Saturday event at the women's facility in Lockhart, Texas on February 12. It went very well and the Chaplain now wants us to come to the same at the men's unit.

The next morning Bob & Maggie Wachtel, John Henry & I went up to Vanderbilt. They are an evangelistic group, supporting many good works – one of which is this ministry. Bob taught the Bible class, I preached, we enjoyed a great meal, and John Henry spoke to the after-dinner crowd. John Henry & I stayed to teach both the male and female inmates at the Jackson County Jail in Edna, Texas that evening.

I left February 17 (by car) for an in-prison seminar at two federal facilities in Forrest City, Arkansas. I had been at two *state* prisons in Memphis (Tennessee) two weeks earlier. I took my car and left early for Forrest City because I needed to contact area volunteers to follow up with *NewLife Behavior* courses. I did so and met with all four briefly after the Sunday morning service. The new Chaplain at Forrest City is begging to have NLB offered to residents there. Pray that this will soon be a reality.

It was a privilege for me to speak three times to the men in the two federal units (my participation in these events is in cooperation with *Federal Outreach Prison Ministry* out of Nashville). The weekend ended with 5 baptisms, 3 rededications, and about 50 enrolled in Bible correspondence courses! The Chaplain is already trying to schedule us to return. A strange thing happened at Forrest City. Many of you remember our much-loved prison ministry secretary that we lost to cancer several years ago – Sharon Wanzer. One of her sons, Mark, is a corrections officer. I saw him over the Christmas holidays and he told me he was transferring from California to a new prison. Well, as we were going into the prison on Friday night, Mark Wanzer was leaving for the day! It was great to see him and he sends his love to all!

After the Sunday afternoon baptisms on February 20, I headed for Abilene and reached Grand Prairie a little past midnight. I enjoyed breakfast the next morning with James Curry (one of our newest NLB board members) before hitting the road, arriving in Abilene in the early afternoon. Bob & Maggie Wachtel had graciously carried our display up to the ACU Lectures on Saturday and had everything set up by the time I got there. Two prison ministry classes were offered this year: Bill Crossman (Leavenworth, Kansas) and James Freies (Lancaster, California). Prison ministry workers enjoyed a noon meal on

Tuesday at University Church of Christ. I met some that I had not known previously. We hope to make this an annual gathering.

Bob & Maggie brought the display back on Thursday but I got home in time for the CASA class on Wednesday, February 23. The next few days were spent getting ready to host the statewide “Winner’s Circle” conference at the Bayfront Inn, Saturday, February 26. “Winner’s Circle” is affiliated with A.A. and our local “Sparkling City” group is sponsored by CASA. Rick Cantu is our *main man* locally. Rick and Jerry Hinkes did most of the work in pulling this event off successfully.

The Arlington Height congregation (another of our supporters) is between preachers. They asked me to “fill in” on Sunday, February 27. I said “yes” on the condition that I would be able to give them a report on the prison ministry. Between the morning and evening services, I ran up to Three Rivers to preach at the Federal Prison Camp.

Monday, February 28, I signed a 3-year lease on our office that includes more space down the hall for group meetings and a small office for myself. We have been putting this off for a long time. The space became available and someone else was going to snatch it up. They are doing some painting and remodeling in the new space at this time. We can begin using it April 1.

Things got busier the next few days. Jerry Stephenson wanted me to speak at a Prison Ministry & Alcohol/Drug Conference this last weekend at Midwest Church of Christ in Louisville (Kentucky) but I had already committed to speak at Florida's statewide meeting at University City Church of Christ in Gainesville. So, John Henry went to Louisville and I went to Gainesville. Each of us took a load of sample materials. John Henry & I ran into each other making airline connections in Houston on our way home late tonight. We feel our time was well spent. Brother Stephenson is the preacher and an elder at Midwest and he now needs our display and more materials to take to Nashville for the National Conference of Black Ministers on March 15.

Early in the morning, I'll make copies of this letter and get it in the mail to you. Thank you so much for your prayers and financial support. The enclosed sheet gives you an idea of the information we need to get out to be more effective in 2005. as mentioned in our year-end report, we suffered our great loss in 2004 in a drop of support from outside of Texas. We must close this gap and much of the answer involves communicating the facts. Thank you for helping us *spread the word!*

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith

February 6, 2005

Mr. Miguel Cavazos #1232108
Larry Gist Unit (A-4-42)
3295 F.M. 3514
Beaumont, Texas 77705

Dear Mr. Cavazos,

Thank you for taking our Bible studies by mail, doing so well with them, and enrolling others. The religious education materials requested will be sent. However, I will not send anything, at this time, to the Chaplain you mentioned in your letter. Let me explain why and, hopefully, you will pray about it and agree.

Please begin with the concept that people actually "believe" what they say they believe – right or wrong. Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christians and the church with a conscience that was absolutely clean. The other option is to think others deliberately teach error – knowing that it IS error that they teach. I know many ministers that sincerely do not believe that immersion in

water is necessary. But while they do not teach or practice baptism as we do, they will not stand in the way of others practicing *their* faith. We must allow chaplains a right to their personal beliefs just as we want our own to be allowed.

You (as an offender) nor I (as a free-world volunteer) are not in a position to change the beliefs of chaplains. Hopefully, at best, we can have their cooperation and permission to send religious teaching materials into institutions such as Gist. Doing so, recipients (like chaplains) can choose what to believe. On the other hand, chaplains have the authority – backed by wardens, assistant wardens and other staff – to deny our teaching materials to even enter the Unit.

Third, you may elect to contact *another* chaplain (unless the one you mention is the only chaplain there). The majority of chaplains that I know are excellent in trying to accommodate offenders' beliefs. They must allow a variety of practices that go *against* their personal beliefs in doing so (such as special diets, holy days and celebrations, etc.). In their position, these allowances are necessary. When an offender starts pushing for additional items, the chaplain may be tempted to throw up his hands and quit!

The additional items I am referring to are things like acapella singing, full Sunday services with the Lord's Supper every Sunday (with unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine), etc. At some prisons, ALL these are permitted while NONE are allowed at others. It all begins with a request from an offender but the request must be made "in meekness and fear" rather than in a *demanding* way.

I hope these thoughts will be helpful in days ahead. Also, I am not suggesting that your belief is "wrong" in any way. I pray daily for patience, wisdom, and understanding. May God bless you in your continuing study of His Word.

Sincerely,

June 8, 2004

Mr. Holland L. Boring, Jr. #1116220
Lynaugh Unit, TDCJ
1098 S. Highway 2037
Fort Stockton, Texas 79735

Dear Holland,

Thanks for writing. I got your hand-written note one day and your type-written letter the next day! Guess which one was the easiest to read? Smile . . .

No, I'm not doing the preaching any more and I am really enjoying the fulltime work in Prison Ministry and Christians Against Substance Abuse (CASA) and NewLife Behavior Ministries. Of course, it keeps me busy and off the streets – Ha!

Our new pulpit guy is Mark Pugh. He came to us about 2 years ago from Shreveport. He is about 10 years younger than I am, three children (all grown and out of the house), and a wife who is a schoolteacher. He really loves preaching and he has been SO good for Windsor Park. We have grown and will start on our new building this August. We have bought about 11 acres off Staples & Yorktown – close to the Kings Crossing subdivision. It will be called "Kings Crossings Church of Christ" and will have a parenthesis under the name for 5 years that says ("Formerly Windsor Park Church of Christ").

It was great to hear from you and everyone here says "hello" to you, too. A bunch of us will be on a long flight next Monday to Anchorage, Alaska . They will be hosting the 31st Annual/National Prison Ministry Workshop. We will be there a week (returning the next Monday). John Henry, Frank Capo, Sr., Bob & Maggie Wachtel, Pat & Glenda Watson, Ruby Blackmon, Nelda Harles, and Gary & Ann Thompson will all be there. It will be good to also reunite with workers from all over the country. Next year (June-2005), it will be in Houston at the Westbury congregation . . . maybe YOU will be out by then and able to attend with us?

Glad to learn that you will be given a shot at parole this December. Don't be too upset if you don't make it. Few make it the first time around and you are being observed. If you freak out, they know they made the right decision! As you said, it is all in the hands of God and we operate according to HIS timetable anyway.

You hang in there (right side up, of course). You are deeply loved and in our prayers. Pray for us, too. We don't know what crisis is coming next but as a good friend once told me in Grand Prairie: "Life is not reaching a state of ease – it is moving from one crisis situation to another crisis situation." Once I accepted that truth, I quit telling myself that I was going to be happy when I got a little more money or went on vacation or got to go fishing . . . Some folks postpone happiness all their lives. Someone else said, "Live life as long as you are alive." In other words, don't be a "dead man walking."

God bless,

October 30, 2003

Mr. Walter White
Route 2, Box 389
Rusk, Texas 75785

Dear Bro. White,

I apologize for being so long in responding to your letter of September 1 telling of your opportunity and desire to begin a new work in the state prisons of Texas. This is exciting news! Of course, I regret the loss of your position as a TDCJ chaplain but pray this transition will open even *more* doors.

Please send me one of your "information packets" because I want to get to know you much better. I salute the Court Drive congregation in Palestine for their willingness to oversee and sponsor your work. Yes, you are strategically located to do enormous good in multiple prisons of that area. As a volunteer, you will be able to minister to a multitude of offenders rather than tied to an *assigned unit*.

Have we ever met? I thought I personally knew all the Texas chaplains affiliated with churches of Christ but your name does not "ring a bell". My questions are probably all answered in your packet but I wonder . . . how long you have served as a TDCJ chaplain, at what units, your educational background, training, other church-related activities, "home" congregation, wife, children, age, etc. Have you done any work with those inside the Rusk facility?

And, I don't believe that you are included in the *National Directory of Churches of Christ & Individual Christians Involved in Jail/Prison Ministries*. If you would like, I'll be glad to add you. One of the positive results of your letter is the improved "networking" as fellow prison workers

seek help via referrals (this is the purpose of the “National Directory”). Others need to know about you, too.

I applaud your efforts and want to encourage you in every way possible. I am sure you are well aware of how difficult fund-raising for this ministry is – especially outside our primary circle of influence. I imagine the bulk of your support will come from Court Drive and congregations in your immediate vicinity.

Windsor Park Prison Ministries has been going strong since 1977 (I began in Dallas County in 1971) and it is still a huge struggle to keep our heads above water financially. I’m sure the same can be said for others working full-time in this field in Amarillo, Lubbock, Abilene, Wichita Falls, Dallas/Fort Worth, Huntsville, Houston, Sugar Land, Texas City, Austin, Palestine (I assume you know Dale Arnett and Bill Brewer), etc., plus dozens of others ministering on a part-time basis. All of us are earnestly seeking finances to stay alive. At this time, I know of at least two in Texas who are seeking to go “full-time” in prison ministry.

Hopefully, we can encourage and lift each other up in this common but very challenging cause. As prison missionaries, unity helps while division and bickering destroys. Count me as one of your friends and as we get to know each other better, we will simply become better friends! While I cannot contribute financially to you (*nor you to me*), I believe we can enhance one another by “being on the same team” in this great work.

When you have follow-up needs in South Texas, please call on us. If I am not available, feel free to contact any of my co-workers. Unfortunately, Brother Pinky Bates passed away June 19. However, I want you to be aware of others in the office that you may talk with from time to time . . .

John Henry Pruitt: Usually answers the phone. John Henry works mostly with NewLife Behavior Ministries – teaching, sending out curriculum, taking care of correspondence for *Baptistries Around the World*.

Gary Thompson: Keeps up with curriculum records – students enrolled, grades, certificates, correspondence, coordinating efforts of volunteer graders of courses. He also teaches behind bars.

Glenda Watson: Coordinates *FamilyNet* activities involving offender families, newly released parolees going to various communities, teaches ladies’ classes, handles our “Little Angels” program.

Debbie Wilson: Handles all the names and addresses for our newsletters. She takes care of adding, deleting and correcting addresses. Debbie sees that our bulk mailings get sent out OK. She is the “regular” church secretary at Windsor Park.

By the way, we host an annual NewLife Behavior/CASA Conference in Grand Prairie at Turnpike Church of Christ each October and would love to see you there. I hope you are aware of the *National Prison Ministry Workshop* (in June each year). It moves around the country to be nearer local workers that may not be able to travel to it every year. For instance, it will be in Anchorage, Alaska for the first time in 2004 (it was in Searcy, Arkansas *this* year). It will be at the Westbury congregation in Houston in 2005 (very convenient for Texas workers)! Have you attended any of these in the past? I hope to see and meet you personally at one of these events soon.

Again, I applaud your efforts and pray for your success. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith

May 30, 2003

Oneta Hair
19905 SH S. Highway 377
Dublin, Texas 76446

Dear Oneta,

Thank you for indicating your interest in utilizing the bank draft opportunity in support of this ministry. I apologize for the delay.

This is how it works. Complete the enclosed form and return it with a voided check from the account on which funds are to be drawn. If you are like me, you may not know how to read the "routing number" but it will be on your voided check anyway so, don't bother with it.

If you have specific interest in a particular aspect of the ministry, check your preference (s). If you check more than one category, the number of your selections will divide your contribution evenly. If you have no preference or if you do not check a selection, your donation will be applied to *daily operations*.

Again, thank you for helping facilitate your support of this exciting ministry. We value highly your personal interest, prayers and the confidence you express in us as we join in this spiritual partnership venture on behalf of souls!

It is our belief that by using this method of giving, it will help donors accomplish what *they* desire and actually increase the total amount support to this work. Of course, everyone is not comfortable with *automation* and we do not want to persuade *anyone to do anything* with which they are not completely comfortable.

I will be keeping a close eye on these procedures for several months to be sure it is working properly. Do not hesitate to contact me if you spot any discrepancy. May God bless you as you continue to serve Him and allow Him to use you in serving others.

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith
Director

August 5, 2002

Brethren
Hawk Pride Church of Christ
5345 Hawk Pride Mountain Road
Tuscumbia, Alabama 35674-7203

Dear Brethren,

I want to sincerely say "Thank You" for the opportunity to tell you more about this ministry. And, thank you for your willingness to support Windsor Park Prison Ministries in the amount of \$50 per month. This is a significant amount for the size of the congregation and other commitments you already have to other good works. The Hawk Pride congregation has done much good through the years of your existence and you are continuing this excellent tradition today. You are influencing the lives of so many – near and far!

As you know, I am now "officially" *out* of the pulpit and *into* the prison. My full-time presence also means more work for everyone else around me (John Henry Pruitt, Gary Thompson, Pinky Bates, Debbie Wilson, Frank Capo, Pat Watson and all our volunteers). This is already producing in more positive results. It now appears that ALL our statistics will end up considerably higher at this end of this year. Your support will help us meet rising costs.

When you send your check, just make it out to "Windsor Park Church of Christ" and earmark it *for Prison Ministry*. You can mail it to my attention at 4420 S. Staples, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411. You will begin receiving our monthly newsletter – "Walking In the Light" – right away. Also, we send out quarterly financial statements. We want to keep our partners informed. We have nothing to hide so, feel free to ask ANY question that comes to mind.

May God bless you richly. You are "special" to us. Never stop praying for us. Nothing means more to us than your prayers! We pray for YOU as well. You are doing a great work. Never quit. God is rewarding us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith
Director

P.S. At this moment I am in Alabama with an opportunity to present our curriculum to the Deputy Commissioner of state prisons. With his approval, we can carry it into every state prison in Alabama! Then, August 10-11, John Henry will join me for a CASA Seminar in Birmingham at the Roebuck Parkway congregation. Pray for God's Will to be done.

August 5, 2002

Elders
Springtown Church of Christ

P. O. Box 96
Springtown, Texas 76082

Dear Brethren,

Thank you so much for your recent \$300 contribution to provide a "portable" baptistry! This means more than words can adequately express.

Since this ministry began in 1991 we have been blessed to place 164 permanent and portable baptistries in 28 different states (including 49 in foreign countries). Thus far, 123 congregations in 29 states have participated in various degrees in making this possible.

Rarely does a week go by without receiving a call from some congregation or a prison seeking information and help in getting a baptistry for prison, domestic or foreign use. We would love to say "Yes" to every request but, of course, we are limited by the amount of funds available.

For this reason, we request that you consider making this an "annual" donation. While we seek help from other states when requests come in, we normally are looking for help to place at least two or three in TEXAS jails and prisons every year! Still, we must look for help within Texas for out-of-state prisons since many of them are in areas where the church is weak.

All this is simply a means to say "Thank You" in the most humble way we know how. We do not really look on this as a *Windsor Park* effort but a good work done on behalf of the churches of Christ everywhere. This is why we ask for the plaque on the side of permanent baptistries to read: "Donated by Churches of Christ." Glory is to be brought to God through the church and we hope this is being done a way that allows Him to get all the glory!

May God bless you and every member there.

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith
Director

P.S. A few months ago it was a joy to be present at two federal prisons in Florida and see over 30 male and female offenders baptized on one Sunday afternoon in one of our portable baptistries. The Chaplain was so impressed that we left it with him!

June 19, 2001

Acting Chaplain A. Rosenbaum
Lopez Unit
1203 El Cibolo Road
Edinburg, Texas 78539

Dear Captain Rosenbaum:

Thank you for all you do to assist the offenders at the Lopez Unit and for your assistance to us with the Christians Against Substance Abuse (CASA) Course. Let us know if or when we can be of any help.

A few months ago I gave you the name of an offender desiring baptism by immersion. You indicated that you could see that the request was taken care of and I appreciated that very much.

We network with a number of other ministries around the country who distribute Bible correspondence materials to offenders. Then, when there is a need for some kind of follow-up, they contact us to see if we can assist. One such ministry (Walnut Hill Church of Christ, 10550 Marsh Lane, Dallas, Texas 75229) just contacted me about another offender who has requested baptism by immersion . . .

Aaron Barrios #1003969
1203 El Cibolo Road
Edinburg, Texas 78539

By the way, if you ever want me to, I will be glad to come down there to actually do or assist with baptisms. Just let me know.

Again, thank you for the extra effort you put forth on behalf of the offenders, fellow staff and volunteers like myself.

Sincerely,

Buck Griffith
Director

December 23, 2002

Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Hutchins
5813 Del Starr
Corpus Christi, Texas 78413

Dear Jerry & Erlene,

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! The Lord has blessed us richly in 2002 and we believe He will continue to bless us in the coming year. Once again, we have "blown the top" off prior records (in terms of baptisms, prayer requests, baptistries placed in prisons and the number of Bibles, study lessons and religious tracts distributed). The December issue of *Walking in the Light* will give you exact figures.

As this year swiftly closes, we want to say a special "Thank You" to those that responded to our plea to provide a semblance of *Christmas* for what we choose to refer to as "Little Angels". We call them "Little Angels" because they are innocent children if we truly believe Ezekiel 18:20 ("*the child shall not bear the iniquity of the father*").

Unfortunately, many "Little Angels" are born into and grow up in highly dysfunctional home and family settings. Regardless of the sins and crimes of their parents behind bars, these children should not be made to suffer any more than absolutely necessary. We want these children to know that they are deeply valued and loved by churches of Christ.

Thanks to you . . . we were able to purchase \$25 Wal-Mart Gift Certificates for 100+ children! A few more contributions have been promised and expected soon so we will give a "final" count early in 2003. Next year we want to start on this project in earlier (like November 1st) and, hopefully, *double* this year's number of children and families helped.

Again, thank you for your encouragement and faithful prayers. The enclosed envelope is for your convenience the next time you elect to contribute. A few donors have suggested we save money by not using them. At least one donor has indicated he will stop sending *anything* if we fail to provide one! So, we try to include one with almost every mailing. You can always place a stamp over the "postage-paid" box if you desire.

Smile. And, enjoy a fantastic New Year!

Sincerely in Christ,

Buck Griffith
Director

P.S. If this letter sounds vaguely familiar, you are likely one of our special friends that also contributed to the "Matching Fund Drive" for the *Endowment Fund!* We are blessed to have many that help *over and over* with needs like these. Thanks!

December 17, 1999

Dear Friends:

As each year winds down and a new one is on the horizon, we extend an invitation to everyone we can to make financial gifts to the Prison Ministry. It just so happens that *tax-wise*, this is a good time for many. Duplications *will* occur. This means that some recipients may have already given and are "regular" donors (if so, we regret the duplication and say "Thank You" for your generosity). In the interest of time and with limited secretarial help, we are unable to "personalize" each letter. Some of you may not know much about this ministry and thus, we hope to share valuable information with you. We are confident that many will eagerly accept an opportunity to "visit those in prison" through this ministry with a contribution.

So . . . ***what is this ministry really about?***

Obviously, we go directly behind bars taking the Gospel to prisoners in juvenile facilities, county jails, and state and federal prisons. If interested, we can supply you with the names and locations of specific institutions, days and times of services, etc. We also conduct weekly classes at the Parole Board. We work with probationers in fulfilling community service requirements. We minister to inmate family members and frequently counsel crime victims. Through our Bible Correspondence School we distribute about 75,000 Bible lessons, 50,000 tracts, and 5,000 Bibles each year with 400-500 or more requesting to put Christ on in baptism!

Speaking of baptisms, since 1991 when we began the ***Baptistries Around the World*** effort, we have placed approximately 150 baptistries inside jails and prisons. Plus, many have gone to missionaries in foreign fields. We “project” placing 6-8 baptistries annually but pleas come from prisons where taught souls are patiently waiting to be baptized (some have been waiting over a year) and it is difficult to turn them down. So, at the end of each year we try to “make up” the budget deficit in this category (which now stands at \$7,237.76). It seems that ALL of us ought to enthusiastically support efforts to immerse believers into Christ. We’re talking about people who have already been taught, they believe, they have repented, and they are crying to confess Christ as God’s Son and be baptized. We need help.

In 1983 we began the *Christian Training School for Ex-Offenders*. What good is it if we immerse millions behind bars if there is no follow-up when released? About 50 ex-offenders from 12 states went through our residential program. In 1993 we ceased the residential aspect of the program and started focusing on helping local congregations to do follow-up effectively in their own communities. It was quickly apparent to us that we could not receive in Corpus Christi, Texas - ALL Christians being released from prisons all over America. However, we *can* (and do) help many but through networking and training others, we assist far more!

Christians Against Substance Abuse was begun in 1988 and has proved highly successful in encouraging recovery from addictions of all kind (especially those in the grip of alcohol or other drugs). Today, this program is licensed by the State of Texas and exists both in free-world communities as well as behind bars. Many Christian families are hurting because of addiction. A number are sent here for treatment but we cannot fully underwrite the cost. We do not operate a *residential* program but offer extensive out-patient treatment (and local private-pay detox facilities can be utilized). A few families are able to assist to a degree but we need more help. We do not “win” them all. In fact, we worked for years with the only son of a blind widow but with minimal success. He died at an early age last year. A few months later his mom died and left her small estate to the prison ministry. Before she died, she said she realized that we could not help her son without his cooperation but perhaps through her assets, we would be able to help someone else’s son!

This work operates under the oversight of the six elders at Windsor Park: Ron Cardwell, Bob Hughes, Jack North, John Poynter, Larry Reynolds and Jimmie Russell. It is my honor to serve as “Director” of this exciting mission effort and P.J. (Pinky) Bates is our full-time *prison missionary*. At this time, we are financially unable to have a full-time secretary and due to local ordinances, we have had to bear the expense of an office away from the church building (to preserve our Christian education program there). Ex-offenders cannot be on the same site with minors. Unfortunately, this adds up to an added \$10,000 a year expenditure which *wrecked* our “regular” prison ministry budget. By paying for a year in advance, we get one month *free* and the lease runs out at the end of March, 2000.

As of last year, we added a line item to the budget for “Follow-up with Ex-Offenders” and this allows donors to assist individual ex-offenders as needs arise. As you can imagine, many such needs surface throughout the year. Often, these are “start up” costs as an ex-offender gets a place to stay, utility deposits, food, tools/special clothing for a new job, etc. One such *ongoing* need concerns John Henry Pruitt. Many of you already know this 71-year-old brother and the tremendous help he has been in this work. Since John Henry spent 37+ years behind bars, he enjoys almost no Social Security benefits. He works mornings at the City Hall for minimum wage, but we don’t know how long that will last. When unemployed, his Section VIII rent was \$47 per month (all bills paid). When he went to work at City Hall, the rent jumped to \$277 per month! It appears that our nation penalizes those who work but John Henry is a proud man and

wants to do what he can to pay his own way. But who wants to employ a 71-year-old black man with a criminal record longer than your arm?

In the afternoons, he comes to the prison ministry office and assists us there. John Henry also goes into juvenile centers, jails, prisons, facilitates CASA groups, and teaches in training seminars to prepare free-world volunteers for effective service in this mission field. We cannot afford to add him to our paid "staff" but we are hoping there is sufficient interest among those receiving this letter that contributions will be sent and ear-marked "for John Henry."

All donors receive our monthly publication, *Walking In the Light*, and quarterly financial statements so you can keep up with all that is going on. May God move you to take advantage of this opportunity to donate to this productive mission field. More than anything, we covet your prayers. Our God meets ALL our needs!

Sincerely,

Buck Griffith, Director

Larry Reynolds, Elder

May 8, 2002

Federal Correctional Institution/Three Rivers
Attention: Mr. Warren Rabb
P. O. Box 4000
Three Rivers, Texas 78071

Dear Mr. Rabb:

It is a pleasure for Windsor Park Church of Christ to be allowed to minister the Camp at Three Rivers and we hope to one day be able to return to the FCI as well. We understand our responsibility as a sponsoring organization for volunteers that enter your facility for religious services, Bible classes and faith-based substance abuse recovery classes.

We approve the following volunteer to serve in these efforts and consider him to be *an Ordained Minister*.

David A. Griffith
5109 Queen's Court
Corpus Christi, Texas 78413

Of course, we understand that final approval lies with those in positions of authority in keeping with established rules and regulations.

As you know, we use a large number of volunteers so we rarely send one man by himself. We believe this results in improved ministry to the offenders as well as helps keep up the morale of the volunteers. Thus, we trust that those in authority will give approval to each one submitted. Each has his unique personality, talent and ability to offer this field of endeavor.

I would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible. If any additional information is needed on this individual, please contact me. Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Larry Reynolds, Bishop

BG/dw

November 24, 2003

Walnut Hill Church of Christ
Attention: Walt Minchew
10550 Marsh Lane
Dallas, Texas 75229

Dear Walt,

First, I want to acknowledge – with grateful appreciation – the \$1,000 gift (check #170 dated November 9, 2003) to Windsor Park Prison Ministries! It was quite a surprise. It also arrived at a “perfect” time since we end each year with a special effort to raise funds and start the New Year in positive shape – fiscally.

I fondly remember Sy and Evelyn Allen. They visited us in Corpus Christi on more than one occasion and they heavily supported us financially until their health deteriorated and, of course, death overtook them. I was touched but not surprised when I first learned of their generosity toward the prison ministry in their wills. Still, with the proper staff and supervision, the challenge you brethren have as stewards is huge. I will be glad to visit with you (as mentioned at the end of your letter) about this at your convenience. I am often in Dallas and will be glad to meet with you (and any others interested) to discuss this matter at length.

I understand that the \$1,000 gift may be a “one-time” thing but we would be glad to enter into a partnership with you on a long-term basis, if possible. Allow me to share highlights of this mission field by sharing a little concerning the major areas of emphasis.

Through ***Baptistries Around the World*** we place baptistries (permanent and *portable*) in jails and prisons throughout the United States. We began this effort in 1991. Several go overseas to missionaries. Naturally, the number of baptistries placed depends upon the funds contributed for this purpose. To date, we have placed about 200 baptistries. We know of souls now waiting for a baptism in order to put Christ “on” in obedience to God’s Will. It is hard for us to say “no” when a prison chaplain asks for a baptism. In fact, we often say “yes” and then get ourselves into a bind trying to raise the necessary funds for it.

CASA (**C**hristians **A**gainst **S**ubstance **A**buse) began here in 1988 and has now spread nationwide and even to several foreign countries. If you are familiar with *NewLife Behavior Ministries*, CASA is Course VIII in that curriculum. This Christian 12-Step recovery program is in many jails and prisons as well as an outreach ministry in local communities. It is licensed as a faith-based treatment program by Texas Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse. It has the official approval of the Chaplaincy Division within Texas Department of Criminal Justice for use in all state prisons. We are finding more and more church members and families struggling with addictions. CASA exists to offer education, guidance, and encouragement.

Christian Training School for Ex-Offenders (CTS) was begun in 1983. We realized that many prisoners were being baptized but they were being “dropped” upon release. For 10 years we operated a “residential” aftercare facility and learned tremendous lessons about this important phase of prison ministry. We have ministered to a total of about 100 ex-offenders from at least 13 different states thus far. We no longer operate a residential facility because we do not see it as effective as one-on-one aftercare. We expect our next ex-offender to arrive on February 7. Untold numbers of other ex-offenders have been assisted as a result of helping *sister* congregations that have set up similar aftercare programs.

Of course, we remain extremely active inside jails and prisons across America. I participate in at least three in-prison seminars annually (Phoenix, Arizona, Marianna, Florida and Memphis, Tennessee) with the National Federal Prison Outreach Ministry headed by Ron Goodman in Nashville. Our large Bible Correspondence School reaches thousands annually with a student body of about 6000. We maintain a *National Directory of Churches of Christ & Individuals Involved in Jail/Prison Ministries*. This is a valuable tool if we are to effectively follow-up on ex-offenders and family members of the incarcerated. We also maintain a list of local contacts for follow-up in every state and federal facility in Texas.

Here is a capsule report on the first eleven months of 2003.

Baptism Requests: 588	Prayer Requests: 534
Bible Lessons Distributed: 97,977	Tracts Distributed: 78,286
Bibles Distributed: 8,341	Total Students: 5,689

Three years ago we started our "Little Angels" ministry. This is an effort to show the love that churches of Christ have for small children who are adversely affected by the criminal justice system. They did not commit any crimes so we refer to them as "Little Angels" (knowing how precious children are to Jesus). Depending on funds available, we purchase \$25 Wal-Mart Gift Certificates for the children. While we make a special push in November and December, this is not just a "Christmas" time project. We find children in need all year long. Most do not need toys but they need shoes, socks, underwear, and sometimes – medical or dental attention. Some friends contribute especially to this need every year and it is deeply appreciated.

Due to difficulties associated with having a lot of ex-offenders at the Windsor Park church building, the Prison Ministry was forced to lease office space at a commercial location (3833 S. Staples, Suite 10), just down the street from the church building. While this significantly increased our expenses, it also has opened many doors. People pass by and see the signs on our windows and come in to "check us out". I am convinced that most of these would never have stopped on Windsor Park's parking lot and entered the church building to "check us out". This reminds us on Romans 8:28 and how things work out for good!

We are excited about 2004 and *beyond!* We are looking for brethren who will join hands with us (perhaps in monthly support or once-a-year gifts to help with a particular project such as **Baptistries Across America** or CASA or CTS or "Little Angels" or . . .

On behalf of thousands of lost men and women locked up (along with their *families*), I want to thank you for any consideration you might give these efforts. If you have specific questions you would like answers to, feel free to ask. This ministry is under the direct supervision of the elders, Windsor Park Church of Christ. Quarterly financial statements are provided all donors.

May God richly bless you and all your efforts to glorify Him in 2004. I look forward to hearing from you again soon.

Sincerely In Christ,

Buck Griffith
Director

January 5, 2001

Chaplain Michael Mantooth
HC 67 Box 115
Kenedy, Texas 78119

Dear Chaplain Mantooth:

We appreciate your encouragement of the residents there and outside volunteers like our mutual friend, Wayne Rutland. Wayne has wanted our co-worker, John Henry Pruitt, to go into Kenedy as well speak to his local congregation as soon as Mr. Pruitt became an "approved volunteer" and was added to the TDCJ computer system. This has now been done, as you know.

Wayne recently called Mr. Pruitt to invite him. But, I told Mr. Pruitt to have Wayne pre-approved his coming into your facility. At Beeville, authorities need at least two weeks "advance" notice before bringing someone "new" in, even though they are on the computer. I suppose that Wayne checked with you because he asked me last night to send you a letter introducing Mr. Pruitt and give you my personal recommendation. I am glad to do so.

Mr. Pruitt was incarcerated over 37 years. He became a Christian at Huntsville's Wynne Unit where I first met him in 1984. We made plans for him to come here for training when released. He arrived at the Kerper House (a halfway facility no longer operating) in 1992 and Mr. Pruitt has worked with us faithfully ever since. He is now about 73 years old, in good health and a recovering alcoholic-drug addict. He is a fairly large black man, outgoing and friendly.

Mr. Pruitt is a tremendous help in CASA (Christians Against Substance Abuse). While still at Wynne, he helped Dr. Hillery Motsinger design the first NewLife Behavior course, *A Sense of Self*. Also, he has written a tract, *What Keeps Me Free?* He works mornings (Monday-Friday) in the Engineering Department at the City Hall. In the afternoons he works at the Prison Ministry/CASA Office. He has been a Bible teacher in Nueces County Jail and Nueces County Juvenile Detention Center for years. He frequently speaks to church youth groups, schools, and at prison ministry workshops and seminars. I assign Mr. Pruitt to attend and man our Prison Ministry booth at various gatherings around the country from time to time.

Mr. Pruitt has been able to enter a number of different state and federal units on a "one time" basis prior to becoming a *TDCJ approved volunteer* (Hackberry Unit, Gatesville and the Federal Medical Facility, Fort Worth). We are fully incorporating Mr. Pruitt into weekly CASA programs at Lopez (Edinburg) and Garza West (Beeville) just as he already has been in Nueces County facilities. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. If you need more data, let me know.

Sincerely,

Buck Griffith
Director

BIBLE **CORRESPONDENCE** **CONTACTS**

There are approximately 4000 students (both free-world and offenders) who are receiving our Bible studies by mail. Students represent most of the 50 states and are in juvenile as well as adult facilities – county, state and federal. The courses we offer include . . .

There IS a Better Way (5 lesson series to lead the lost to Christ)
Prisoners of Hope (5 lessons - looking up scripture)
Pathway to a Better Life (a 10-lesson overview of the Bible)
Walking in the Light (10-lesson overview for free-world students)
Living the Better Way (6 lessons for new Christians behind bars)
Freedom Within (7 “letter” lessons from a Christian ex-offender)
Firmly Rooted (13 in-depth follow-up for Christians)
12 Steps to Unwind a Crooked Path (12 lessons on substance abuse)
Freedom Steps (12 lessons, substance abuse, evangelistic)
NLBM I – A Sense of Self (13 lessons to understand “self”)
NLBM II – A Sense of Family (13 lessons lifting up the family)
NLBM III – Parenting Matters (13 lessons to improve child-rearing)
NLBM IV – True Freedom (13 lessons centering on developing the mind of Christ)
NLBM V – Christian Marriage Skills (13 lessons to enrich the marriage relationship)
NLBM VI – The Christian Woman (9 lessons on the Christian woman, wife, mother)
NLBM VII – Attitudes & Behaviors (13 lessons on negatives & positives)
NLBM VIII – Christians Against Substance Abuse (13 lessons on recovery)
Studies in the Bible (30 lesson overview of the Bible)
Searching the Scriptures (26 lesson study of the Book of Acts)
Into All the World (10 lesson study of the Book of Acts)
In the Beginning, I (13 lessons on the first half of Genesis)
In the Beginning, II (13 lessons on the last half of Genesis)
In-Depth Study of John (15 lessons on John with a Study Guide)
In-Depth Study of Romans (12 lessons on Romans with a Study Guide)
Visualized Bible Study Series (5 lesson “Jule Miller” studies)

The Seeker Bible Study Series (10 lessons on finding the Lord)

Numerous volunteers grade these lessons and follow up is done by workers nearest the location of the student. In an “average” year we receive between 400 and 500 requests for baptism.

Current Classes/Services

Sundays:

Federal Prison Camp, Three Rivers, Texas

Mondays:

*Chemical Dependency Classes, CASA Office
Group Grading of BCC, Church Building
Winner’s Circle, CASA Office*

Tuesdays:

*Nueces County Jail, Downtown-Men
Nueces County Jail, Dometown-Women
CASA (Men), Church Building
Chemical Dependency Classes, CASA Office*

Wednesdays:

*Nueces County Jail, Annex-Men
CASA (Coed), Church Building
CASA I, Lopez State Jail, Edinburg
CASA II, Lopez State Jail, Edinburg*

Thursdays:

*CASA I - Garza West Transfer Unit, Beeville
CASA II – Garza West Transfer Unit, Beeville
CASA (Women) – Glenda Watson’s Home
Chemical Dependency Classes, CASA Office
Nueces County Juvenile Detention Center (Coed)*

Fridays:

*CASA – Glossbrenner SATF Unit, San Diego
Chemical Dependency Classes, CASA Office*

Saturdays:

*Family Trips to Huntsville
Workshops
“How To” Seminars
“In-Prison Seminars”*

TOTAL STATISTICS FOR 2001

Category:

Total for Year

Baptism Requests 468
Prayer Requests 374
Bible Lessons Distributed 57,802
Religious Tracts Distributed 51,547
Bibles Distributed 4,965
Total Students 4,766

February 19, 2001

Federal Correctional Institution – Three Rivers
Attention: Chaplain David Pequeno
P. O. Box 4000
Three Rivers, Texas 78071

Dear Chaplain Pequeno:

It has been quite some time since we have had contact. I know that you are extremely busy and I appreciate your efforts.

Services at the Camp are going very well. However, we are still interested in seeing if there has been any action on approving one of our long-time and most faithful volunteers . . .

Mr. Robert (Bob) Wachtel
15245 Caravel Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas 78418

We could really use his help at the Camp. The only thing that I have been able to think of that may have held up his status is that he got married and moved from his old address on Key West to the Caravel Drive address (both still here in Corpus Christi).

Also, the volunteer badge at the Camp for Mr. Walter Hicks has disappeared. One of the officers said that he had seen it at the FCI. Since we are not now entering the FCI, would it be

possible to get his badge over to the Camp? In the meanwhile, he has been having to leave his driver's license each Monday night.

One final item: We have received a grant for several hundred new "Easy-To-Read" Spanish New Testaments and we will be happy to share them with the FCI and Camp. They are boxed 96 in a case. All that we had to pay for them was the freight so there is no real "dollar cost" to them. If you will let me know the number desired (96, 192, 288, 380, etc.), I will be glad to bring them to the FCI, leave them for you at the Camp or ship them to you at this address. Let me know.

Again, thank you for your care and concern for the residents, staff and all of us who are privileged to serve as volunteers.

Sincerely,

David A. (Buck) Griffith

November 3, 2003

Holland L. Boring III #1116220
Lynaugh Unit
1098 S. Highway 2037
Fort Stockton, Texas 79735

Dear Holland,

Sorry to be so long in writing. Seems like I've been "around the world" twice since I last wrote. Actually, a great deal "has" happened but I'll get to that later.

I regret that you have Hepatitis C. Lots of my closest friends have it, too. You just learn to live with it (like folks have to do with diabetes and lots of other diseases). Knowing you have it, however, can help you understand better some of the things your body and mind experiences from time to time. At least, you know that you're not going nuts! Smile . . .

I had to go back to Grand Prairie twice recently. Once for a funeral (Rufus Sabedra used to be a deacon at Burbank Gardens about 100 years ago). Another time for the National NLB/CASA Conference at Turnpike and it was awesome – over 200 attended. I'm anxious for the day when you get out and can attend with us and speak and sing and rejoice in the Lord!

Also, regret that you feel like a “number” in the setting there. It can be a humbling experience but working through it builds us up. If we give in to it, of course, we just get weaker and stay weaker. I know you will battle through it with God's help. Others there need you and I am confident that you are finding ways to reach out and share the love of Jesus.

I've got to go to Phoenix on Thursday and participate in a weekend seminar at two federal prisons there. I go along with a group from Madison, Tennessee about 3 times a year. It's a “team” effort and very fruitful but I think I get more out of it than anyone. I always come back “charged up” and about 100 sign up for Bible study courses.

Keep me in your prayers. I had a place cut off my belly a few months ago that turned out to be cancer so they sent me to M.D. Anderson for some more surgery. It was successful and the doctors say it is all gone! Praise the Lord! Now, I just have to keep going by and let them examine me every 6 months (I think I can handle that – Ha!).

God bless,