

CAM UPDATES

Christian Aftercare Ministries for Ex-Offenders
Non-profit Organization www.christianaftercare.com

November, 2009
Established 1994

FROM THE DIRECTOR By Paul R. Roussel

OVERCROWDING OF CORRECTIONS?

By Rev. Trent Threlfall
CAM Board Member

AT THE CAM DINNER the Lord blessed us with uplifting speakers and music. **Peter's** testimony was an insight into the Lord's faithfulness in transforming and then blessing lives. **Sue Brown's** music touched many hearts. The Lord led His people to give generously to CAM and we give Him praise! With our main speaker, **Jane Coplan**, now program director at Sullivan County jail, we have an open door to share the gospel there. She spoke about the prisons of NH and her appreciation for the work of CAM.

CAM OFFICE WORK. The Lord continues to send more men and women to our office in Manchester. In the past 12 months we have ministered to 300 men and women. They're looking for a compassionate friend, or have a need for clothing or jobs. We try to assist each one with these needs plus rent money, furniture and bicycles. We always share God's plan of salvation, and introduce them to pastors and Bible-believing churches. For the Christians believers, we lead weekly Bible studies and pray with them. When they attend church regularly, read their Bibles and pray, we find that the Lord blesses their lives abundantly.

BLESSED BY CLOTHING: Several churches and individuals donated a lot of clothing recently. A friend from Amherst First Baptist passed away and his wife donated all of his beautiful clothing. Another friend in Nashua who is in a wheelchair, asked if he could help someone with a clothing request. He went out and purchased

all of the items requested and insisted on delivering them himself to the ex-offender in Manchester. What a testimony to the recipient! **THANK YOU to all of you for your clothing donations – especially winter coats given by the Ladies Bible study group at Merrimack Valley Baptist Church.** ALL donations are welcome

PRAYER MINISTRY. The Lord faithfully answers prayer. We prayed for an ex-offender who we had ministered to for years – then he moved to Florida! That blessed all of us on the CAM board. Thank you for your prayers. Please continue to pray for all of us on the CAM board, that we remain sensitive to the Lord's leading as we endeavor to help those being released from prison.

“Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

Psalm 37:4-5

The incarceration rate in the US has more than tripled, violent crimes have doubled on per capita basis. So, will our tough economy add to the numbers?

Well, it's quite evident the Dept. of Corrections, including jails & prisons, are already overcrowded without the impact of the economy. The closure of NH's Laconia facility and transferring inmates to Concord & Berlin facilities, in order to save the state money, created another problem: a safety issue for both inmates and the public.

Because of overcrowding, inmates are housed in such close environments that it doesn't take much for an incident to take place. Living incarcerated for any offense is dangerous and any one of us could be a victim. To try to reduce these conditions, the state has a plan to free up prison space by reducing the punishment for well-behaved inmates, including some murderers. Be good,
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learn a trade, and get out early.

In the meantime, because of budget restraints, many programs to help the offender be prepared for re-entry to society have been curtailed. The public is also at risk with the pre-release of inmates who can't get adjust to society living. He needs a job and a place to stay and can't get one because of the economy and therefore commits crimes in order to survive. We all know what that does to the recidivism rate.

Yet the mindset of some of those critics believe one of the reasons our prisons and jails are so crowded is because the "punishment" of being behind bars is too light. **I will challenge them on that belief.** I have been involved with Corrections for more than eight years, and from my perspective find just the opposite is true.

I see a society that has more social and mental health issues where our prisons and jails become a haven for those types. Being in jail and prison is not a nice and easy place to live. In most cases, for an inmate to survive, he gets hardened to protect himself any way he can. Inmates who have served time in other states have told me that New Hampshire has the toughest crime laws and sentencing.

With the population increases in Corrections, there is also a trend where criminal offenses have risen with a younger age group, and with more females being arrested. **The economy has even driven some inmates who served out their court-ordered sentences to prefer jail to struggling on the streets** during the winter as the homeless shelters are already overpopulated. Even though they would normally opt out of jail, it is better than freezing or starving to death on the streets. So they commit crimes to survive and ultimately return to jail or prison.

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PRAISE for the faithful churches the Lord has raised up to support our ministry.

MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY

By Chris Audet

To my fellow Christian brothers and sisters:

February of 2008 is a year I will never forget. My wife of 14 years told me that she wanted a divorce, that she didn't want me anymore. Since I grew up with depression, I started doing what I normally do – drink away the pain. Then I lived alone in motels for about two months, and despite a no contact order from my wife, I continued to call her.

At age 47 I had my first experience of going to Valley Street for about five months. I had attempted suicide prior to jail and landed in a hospital. At Valley Street I was on a suicide watch in isolation 23 hours a day. **I wanted nothing more to do with this life.** Everything was gone, my home, wife, dogs and a pension job. I felt that God had abandoned me as well.

Then I got a visit from a very articulate gentleman by the name of Paul Roussel. He could see my pain, and how far gone my mind was. He asked me if I had taken the Lord Jesus as my savior. I told him I had in 1999 but was not living a Christian life anymore and wanted to die. Paul said, **"I don't want to hear about suicide. We are going to put your life and circumstances into the hands of Jesus,"** then we prayed. Later that night – alone in isolation – I could feel the comfort of the Holy Ghost as I prayed to the Lord. I realized **God hadn't left me. He was there all along, waiting for me to open the door for Him to come into my life.** I was facing two years in jail, and I asked the Lord to change my heart, and change my life. Miracles then happened to me that are not possible in the secular world, but do happen in the life of a Christian. I was released from jail over a year ago. I got accepted into the Gemini House program. And guess what? Paul's ministry was right down the street from me.

I found as my heart changed, so did my life. I have been a faithful member of Gospel Baptist Church in Manchester. I see Paul once a week for Bible study. I have achieved 17 months of sobriety and handle my depression much better. My Lord Jesus Christ gave me the strength to accept my

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PRAYER REQUEST:

Once again, we ask for prayer - that the Lord would send committed Christians being released, to our transitional housing program.

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There is no easy solution to this problem, but **I believe God has the answer.** He has already provided a core of dedicated volunteers to help minister at my facility and other facilities across the state. They are dedicated to share God's love, teach them to live a Godly life and also to help minister in their aftercare.

I believe that with Christ's help and an innate faith in Him as their personal Savior and Lord will help to rethink their evil actions and choose to do what is right. They will then be able to stand above the negativity of incarceration and become a better person beyond what the world displays.

With their new hope in Christ, the inmate who practices his faith, and is mentored by a Godly person, will likely continue as a good testimony as he reaches outside the jail and prison walls. I believe we all have a responsibility to pray for those incarcerated, and also for those that are victims of this tough economy, not to falter.

Our faith in the power of God to always provide will meet any challenge!

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losses, and to move forward in a positive way. I told Paul recently that I had lost everything of this world, but that my relationship with Jesus continues to grow stronger – far outweighing anything of this world.

I'm so glad that Paul told me to put my life into the hands of the Lord. **Thank you Paul, for helping me to open the door so Jesus could come into my life.**

Be Faithful in sharing the Word of God, and God will use us for His glory in His time.

It is a blessing to bring God's word to the inmates at Valley Street Jail. The men are so hungry, with a willingness to apply what they have learned. God is always faithful in bringing just who He wants and giving me the study for what is needed to be heard.

The turnover at Valley Street is at times so fast that the size of the study group may vary from 1 - 15, yet I see God's hand in it all. During the summer for a few weeks, no one was coming – this can be discouraging. During this time, an individual was observing my coming and going for the study when no one came, so he finally signed up. **At the first meeting we had, he expressed that the reason he came was he felt sorry for me because no one was coming to the study.** I thanked him for his concern. We studied John, chapter three about being born again – the study I had ready for those weeks. He asked many questions and was very interested in the text and how it applied to his life.

The next time we met, the man said he accepted Christ as savior and now understood what it meant to be born again. Praise God! His eyes were opened to the truth. We continued to meet for a few studies which quickly grew to fifteen attendees.

Over the last four or five years, we have noticed a big difference in how volunteers are received and accepted at the jail. The doors are open to CAM and the administration is very supportive.

May God receive all the glory.

~Mike Grady

CAM UPDATE
Christian Aftercare Ministries
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Manchester, NH 03101

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TO:

CHRISTIAN AFTERCARE MINISTRIES

Co-Laborers with the Church in ministry to ex-offenders since 1994
www.christianaftercare.com

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CAM MINISTRY ALWAYS NEEDS:
Men's jeans, sneakers, work boots, gloves,
clean shirts in good repair, and
YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT.
Thank you for helping to meet these needs.

Tax deductible donations may be made payable to Christian Aftercare Ministries. Send to:
50 Lowell St.,
Manchester, NH
03101

Thank You

NOTICE: If you would like a CAM board member to visit your church or group to speak about this ministry, call Paul Roussel, Director, to schedule a date. Phone: (603) 669-5090.

Board Members: Paul Roussel, Mike Grady, Barry Brown, Kent Threlfall, Jean Metzger, Jack Shuler, Sampson Duclair, and Dave Rattigan.