

Regional R. J. Ministry Conferences held in five cities this Spring

By Emmett Solomon

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The Board of Directors of RJMN followed the leadership of the Lord and authorized the staff to organize regional conferences in the spring of 2007. This network organized Local Planning Committees which met in January and planned the one-day Saturday conferences. The programs were printed and distributed in each region.

The programs were tailor made for each region. "Prison Ministry and Beyond" was planned by the Beaumont group. In Dallas "Cell Block to City Block" and in College Station "Healing for All" were the themes.

On February 17, the conference was held at the Wesley United Methodist Church in



Connie Hilton speaks about Bridges to Life.

Beaumont with a very enthusiastic group in attendance. The keynote speaker was Judge Dennis Powell, Judge of the 163rd Judicial District. He gave great encouragement to all who bring healing to the criminal justice system. This network collaborated with the 1)Catholic Diocese of Beaumont, 2)Christian Life Crisis Intervention, 3)Operation Fresh Start and 4)Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church to develop a great conference.

On March 24, the conference was produced with the collaboration of the Cornerstone Church of **Corpus Christi** and was held at the Solomon P. Ortiz International Center. Estella Rocha and Hector Perez both did outstanding work in bringing together representatives of the Corpus Christi Police Department, Nueces County Sheriff's Department, Probation and Parole Departments as well as the Mayor, County Judge and State Representative. Paul Carlin delivered a rousing message about ministry in the criminal justice system. He highlighted the Therapon Dorms at the Eastham Unit for which his ministry provides the programming.

On April 14, the **Dallas** "Cell Block to City Block" Conference was held at the St John Missionary Baptist Church in collaboration with 1)Coalition of Churches in Prison Ministry, 2) Baptist General Convention of Texas, 3)Freedom in Community Restorative Ministry, 4)First Baptist Church of Dallas and 5)Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

On April 21, the East Texas Conference was held in **Henderson** in conjunction with 1)



Each regional conference has been well attended.

2)Calvary Commission, 2)Trinity Baptist Church, 3)Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, 4)Green Acres Baptist Church, 5)Bradshaw State Jail, 6)Prison Fellowship and 7)Texas Association of Ex-offenders (TAX). Chaplain Paul Ransberger gave a very encouraging message to all who were present. Two prison wardens spoke words of encouragement to the very enthusiastic group gathered at the Trinity Baptist Church.

On April 28, the Brazos Valley "Healing for All - Prison Ministry and Beyond" was held in the First Baptist Church of **College Station** in conjunction with the 1)Restorative Justice Ministries of the Brazos Valley, 2)West District of the United Methodist Church, 3) Save our Streets Ministries as well as the 4)First Baptist Church of College Station. Rev.

Paul Ford, a previously incarcerated person, spoke to the people about the needs of prisoners and Defense Attorney Travis Bryan III lit our fire with a rousing sermon about commitment to our Faith.

A total of 415 people attended these Regional Conferences. Much information was passed on and much networking was done. The Regional Conferencing in 2007 proved to be very rewarding.



Mercy Heart Ministries was one of the many exhibitors who participated in the conferences.



Sie Davis speaks about Overcomers, a substance abuse program for prisoners, and Ex-Offenders. Church starts.