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Denying parole at first eligibility: How much public safety does it actually buy?

Contrary to popular belief, denying parole when people first become eligible does very little to reduce crime rates; people convicted of homicide and sex offenses rarely commit new crimes against people; and serving more time does not increase the likelihood of success upon release. These are just some of the findings from research on prisoner release and recidivism in Michigan conducted by the Citizens Alliance on Prisons and Public Spending (CAPPS), a Lansing-based public policy organization. A report on the study entitled “Denying parole at first eligibility: How much public safety does it actually buy?” was released August 25, 2009.

Said Barbara Levine, executive director of CAPPS: “Reducing Michigan’s prisoner population to save limited resources and effectively managing the risk of serious new crime by parolees are not contradictory goals. They require only a willingness to set reasonable expectations, to abandon assumptions not consistent with the evidence and to incarcerate only those parole-eligible prisoners who are objectively determined to pose a current threat to public safety.”

The study, using Michigan Department of Corrections data, examined how much it actually improved public safety to continue incarcerating people *Continued on page 15*

Mentally ill prisoners, media report

Josh Rushing from *Al Jazeera's* English-language news has produced a two-part video report on the mentally ill in US prisons, focusing particularly on Texas prisons and the Harris County jail (which is the largest mental institution in Texas, according to the report).

Part One: <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/faultlines/2009/09/2009917132219605302.html>

Part Two: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dv-S0M9tak&feature=channe

The two pieces run around 20 minutes in all. Part one contains some interviews with staff and inmates at the Harris County Jail and focuses on the relationship between homelessness and the criminalization of the mentally ill.

Part two focuses more on the politics and history of how we reached our present situation. There are some interesting interviews with volunteers from the Restorative Justice Ministries Network .

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Prison Mail.Org – Connecting inmates with families and friends

By Dee Johnson

Jason Garber was trying to maintain communication with a friend in prison. He thought if only he could send e-mails, it would make the task much easier. Then he had a brainstorm. And with the help of family and friends, PrisonMail.org was born.

PrisonMail.org takes e-mails and converts them into letters – each up to eight pages long and then sends the letters to incarcerated individuals.

"It can get more letters in the hands of your loved ones in prison and that means more communication with the people they care about on the outside," said Matt Garber, spokesman for the organization.

This is how it works: You open a mailbox for your incarcerated loved one, and others can join the mailbox at no extra charge. You can login to the mailbox anytime and write as often as you like. Automated software gathers up your electronic messages and prints them chronologically - up to eight pages. And each week, your loved one receives a letter or two, depending on your service plan.

In a press statement, a prisoner's wife said: "I don't have a lot of uninterrupted time. With PrisonMail.org, I can sit down at my computer for five minutes, jot down a couple of thoughts, hit send and know that if I don't have a chance to do more, my husband will get something from me in the mail that week."

"You can't possibly know how powerfully that encourages me and others like me to open an envelope and see that five or 10 people were thinking of me over the past few days," an inmate recipient stated.

"We think this service can be a phenomenal blessing for people who are incarcerated; keeping them connected with those who love them can be positive," Garber said. "PrisonMail.org also makes it simple for children to communicate with an incarcerated parent or loved one."

And, he hopes church groups and others interested in becoming pen pals, or ministries committed to writing inmates will eventually use PrisonMail.org.

For further information go to <http://www.prisonmail.org>.

Pornography—no small matter

By Dick Witherow
Prison Minister, Florida

What role does pornography play in our nation's war against sexual crimes? Consider this quote from Ted Bundy given just hours before his execution: "I have lived in prison a long time now and I've met a lot of men who were motivated to violence like me. And without exception, everyone of them was deeply involved in pornography." In an interview Bundy gave to James Dobson, he admitted that it was pornography that caused him to traverse from a healthy, educated young man to a serial rapist and killer.

Pornography destroys the innocence of children.

It has been estimated that approximately 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be sexually molested before the age of 18. Sometimes the molesters are themselves a minor. This is easier to understand, when you realize that the average age in which a boy is exposed to pornography is eleven. The relationship of pornography to child sexual abuse is compelling. Seventy-seven percent of those who molested boys and 87 percent of those who molested girls said they were regular users of hard-core pornography. Pornography is big business. "U.S. News and World Report" reported the industry grossed an estimated \$8 billion in 1997.

Continued on page 7

Ministry Resources: Restorative Justice Ministries Network

1229 Avenue J, Huntsville TX 77340

Recommended for ministry people:

Restorative Justice Ministry for Pastors & Church Leaders - **Emmett Solomon** \$12.00 _____
 Guidance for leaders interested in beginning RJM in the local congregation

Challenging the Impossible: Discovering Beautiful Trophies for Jesus- **Joe Fauss** \$12.00 _____
 The inspirational story of Joe and Charlotte Fauss, who have spent the past 31 years reaching out to prisoners.

The Real World of Restorative Justice Ministry- **Pastor Dave Umfreville** \$12.00 _____
 Timeless principles in a restorative justice ministry arena. Dedicated to those who labor in this field.

Recommended for ministry & offenders:

Serving Time, Serving Others - **Tom & Laura Lagana** \$17.00 _____
 Acts of kindness by inmates, prison staff, victims, and volunteers

Chicken Soup for the Volunteer's Soul -**Canfield,Hensen,Oberst,Boal,Lagana** \$17.00 _____
 Stories to celebrate the spirit of courage, caring and community

Chicken Soup for the Prisoner's Soul -**Canfield,Hensen,Lagana** \$17.00 _____
 Stories to celebrate the spirit of courage, caring and community

Karla Faye Tucker **SET FREE-Linda Strom** \$12.00 _____
 Her Death-Row transformation captured the world's attention. Uplifting, good read
Spanish version also available \$12.00 _____

Recommended for offender's families and friends:

Reflections of Life: Through the Eyes of a Convict - **Blake Holmes** \$15.00 _____
 Written with the intent to educate, inspire and motivate the reader to lead a positive and productive life.

What Is Jail, Mommy? - **Jackie A. Stanglin** \$12.00 _____
 It is the author's firm belief that it is incumbent on each of us to provide age-appropriate facts to young inquiring minds.
 To do otherwise will be evident in future generations.
Spanish version also available \$12.00 _____

Family Arrested: How to Survive the Incarceration of a Loved One - **Ann Edenfield** \$15.00 _____
 Ann Edenfield is Executive Director of Wings Ministry, a ministry to families of inmates.
Audio tape book also available \$22.00 _____

An Inmate's Daughter - **Jan Walker**
 Jan Walker taught parenting and family relationships to adult felons for eighteen years.
 She used her background and success with incarcerated dads to create this "true fiction" novel. \$10.00 _____

Recommended for offenders:

Behind The Walls A Guide For Families and Friends of Texas Prison Inmates \$15.00 _____
J. A. Renaud - A practical guide for inmates' families, and new inmates, to understand the system.

A Map Through the Maze - **Rollo, Adams** \$12.00 _____
 Overview of the correctional experience of offenders and their families

Man, I Need a Job- **Ned Rollo** \$10.00 _____
 Provides offenders the insights and skills they need to find and keep a job following release

99 Days and a Get Up - **Ned Rollo** \$12.00 _____
 A guide to success following release for inmates and their loved ones.

Life Without A Crutch - **Ingraham, Bell, Rollo** \$10.00 _____
 An introduction to recovery form addiction

Total \$ _____

All prices include shipping and handling. We can mail books to prisoners on your behalf.

SEND BOOK(S) TO:
 INSTITUTION: _____ INMATE #: _____
 NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____
 CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
 PURCHASER: _____ PHONE: _____
 EMAIL ADDRESS: _____



Note from the Editor:

If you enjoy Richard Blake's *California News* section in each issue of the Restorative Justice News, you will also enjoy reading his insightful analysis on book reviews which can be found on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Reader Views, and Midwest Book Review.

Just Google his name: Richard R. Blake and it will bring up several sites where his book reviews are posted. If you put "prison ministry" after his name it will bring up extra websites where his articles are posted.

Richard is a gifted writer. We appreciate his faithful support for the R. J. News.

Sacramento

Faced with a twenty-six billion dollar budget deficit, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is seeking ways to cut \$ 1.2 billion dollars from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's spending plans.

Rising costs of salaries and additional prison staff, recent trends in tougher sentencing, the three strikes law, and longer prison terms have added to the over populating of the state's 33 prisons. Another factor in increased costs has been the raising of standards of health, medical, and dental care ordered for prisoners as a result of Federal Court orders. These costs have added to the per capita expense of incarcerating each of the approximately 160,000 inmates. This is nearly double the number of prisoners the facilities were designed for.

A proposal for reducing prison population by 40,000 during the next two years is being drawn up. A current plan calls for diverting 27,000 inmates to county jails and a proposal to release others to a home detention program. Appointing a panel to study and review prison sentencing is also in the works. Another proposal calls for change in California's stringent parole policy as well as early release dates for inmates who complete rehabilitation programs. Consideration has also been given to exploring the possibility of relocating some of California's inmates to state prisons available in Michigan to alleviate the overcrowded conditions.

The unanswered question remains: Can nonviolent, least dangerous offenders (those serving time for drug offenses, property crimes, and parolees with technical violations) be punished through a plan of Community Corrections or through proactive Collaborative Corrective Justice Courts (problem-solving courts) combining rehabilitation and community services as a means of restorative justice as opposed to retributive justice?

If California cannot come up with a plan to reduce its prison population the federal government will step in to do it for the state. Governor Schwarzenegger is opposed to the federal government dictating the state's prison program. **As of this writing the California State Assembly has again postponed the vote on the state's prison reform bill.**

San Rafael

In light of California's budget crisis, Governor Schwarzenegger has submitted another proposal for selling the 432 acre waterfront land housing San Quentin State Prison, the historic maximum security penitentiary. Objections to the proposal include a concern for assimilating the current 5,300 inmate population into the already overcrowded conditions within the existing facilities.

Chino

Gang related violence and racial tension may have motivated the recent riot at Chino State Prison that left nearly 250 injured and more than 50 inmates hospitalized. It is reported that 1,300 inmates in seven dormitories were involved in the melee. 80 prison guards used foam projectiles, pepper spray, and batons to restore order. The prison facility was all but destroyed. Many of the inmates had to be transferred elsewhere. This one incident will cost the state millions of dollars in unexpected and added expenditures.

Continued on page 5

New program for children of inmates

Crossroad Bible Institute, a non-profit ministry providing in-depth biblically-based reentry education to men and women behind bars, announces the launching of a new children's program aimed at the children of people in prison.

Using a Bible study titled *Manga Messiah*, the program enables children of imprisoned men and women to learn biblical lessons in an easy-to-read format. *Manga Messiah* adapts the words of the Bible into the format of a graphic novel. The ten Manga Messiah Notebooks provided by CBI to work with this study are written at a third-grade level; they include puzzles, Bible verses and practical application. So far, children enrolled in the program are between the ages of 6 and 18.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, on any given day, 1.5 million children have at least one of their parents in prison. With eight years old being the average age of these children, a program that encourages and empowers them is needed. "Research reveals that these children are likely to be involved in the justice system in the future; this program was designed to be a positive influence and source of encouragement in their lives," says president of CBI, Dr. David Schuringa.

Following a similar format to CBI's program for imprisoned persons, the program provides the opportunity for the child to develop skills through lessons that yield a greater understanding of what the Bible means for their lives while increasing their literacy skills. In addition, each corrected lesson includes encouragement in the form of a personal letter written by the instructor.

With a parent imprisoned, many children experience social stigma and instability; this program allows students the opportunity to be proud of their new skills as well as find comfort and stability in a deepened faith. CBI asks their current students to give their child an enrollment form "to encourage them to grow in Christ." As one child said "Christ has made a big difference in my life."

For information contact Dr. David Schuringa, President, Crossroad Bible Institute, david@cbi.fm

California News

Continued from page 4

Marin County

The Bay Area Chapter of the Peace Alliances recently honored Restorative Resources with the North Bay Peace Builder's Award in recognition of their work with Restorative Justice in Sonoma County.

Castro Valley

Rev. Glenn Morrison, president of Follow Up Ministries International has alerted the God Squad Members, FUMI Leadership Team, and the organization's constituency that, "We are facing a major challenge in a constantly changing prison system, which is increasingly apparent in California. There appears to be a variety of reasons for this including an exploding prison population that is both younger and more violent...often leading to lock-downs. Religious programming is also under fire, which affects parts of our ministry, especially the seminars. This is because so many religious organizations are seeking equal time in the use of chapels, especially protestant chapels. Financial restraints are also causing a shortage of staff, and in some cases limiting chaplain's responsibilities."

Morrison concluded his responsibilities with the American Correction Association at the 139th Congress of Corrections in Nashville, Tennessee. He has served 20 years as the Coordinator for Hospitality Prayer and Meditation, which provides chaplains services for the 6,000-7,000 correctional professionals in attendance.

Oakland

Rev. Valerie Mitchell oversees the Jail & Prison Ministry program at Shiloh Church in Oakland. They minister at Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center, Santa Rita Jail, Contra Costa County Jail, San Francisco Jail, and San Quentin Prison. Their focus is evangelism, disciple making, mentoring, and teaching inmates, as well as ministry to their families. Orientations are a prerequisite for serving in jail and prison facilities. Shiloh offers this ministry orientation through the Follow Up Ministries under the direction of Mary Rodrigues, director of the God Squad Orientations offered quarterly through FUMI.

Investing in restorative justice

By Marian Head
Denver Post
May 28, 2009

At a time when state legislators are burdened by the difficult task of budget cutting, it is important for taxpayers to know that one budget item continues to grow: Colorado corrections.

Like most states, Colorado is faced with an exploding prison population. The cover of the March 29 Parade magazine screamed "What's Wrong with Our Prisons?" revealing the startling statistic that America's prison population of 2.3 million is nearly five times more than the world's average.

The U.S. incarcerates 750 inmates per 100,000 persons to the world's average rate of 166 per 100,000. The bottom line on that cover stated, "Either we are the most evil people on earth or we are doing something very wrong." I believe it is the latter. Our criminal justice system is broken, and the reasons are complex. One of the many contributing factors is that our penal system's focus on punishment is not working. You would think that after their first time behind bars prisoners would never do anything to wind up back there; yet the opposite is true.

In December 2007, the Department of Justice estimated that two-thirds of all released prisoners will commit new offenses within three years of their release. In addition to the great human toll of incarceration, \$68 billion of our taxpayer dollars are paying for this travesty.

Due to the leadership of State Representative Michael Merrifield and State Senator John Morse, Colorado provides at least one segment of our citizenry, children, with a legal alternative to the revolving door of the penal system.

In March 2008, Governor Ritter signed into law the bill sponsored by these two legislators, which authorizes judges to offer youth offenders a restorative justice option.

One example of this type of restorative justice program is the Longmont Community Justice Partnership (LCJP). Longmont Police Officers refer offenders of all ages who take responsibility for their crime to LCJP.

These offenders are given a chance to meet with their victims and community members in a respectful process where they can learn the full impact of their crime and agree to repair their harm. On average 90% complete their agreements and are welcomed back to the community. What a different model from "lock 'em up!"

You might think it is dangerous to allow lawbreakers back into the community, yet the opposite appears to be true. The average re-arrest rate for offenders who participate in Longmont's restorative justice program is 10%. Compare that to the nearly 70% national recidivism rate for the penal system. And according to participant feedback data, every group engaged in the LCJP program - victims, offenders, parents and community members - reported 95% or higher rates of satisfaction with their restorative justice experience.

In order to serve their community's needs, most of Colorado's local restorative justice programs have to raise money beyond whatever government support they may receive.

Can you imagine if the corrections department had to do bake sales and fashion shows to afford to run their prisons? It is a crime that more of our tax dollars aren't reallocated from the costly prison system to more cost-effective, life-affirming restorative justice programs.

Each Colorado prisoner costs taxpayers about \$30,000 per year. For the cost of only ten prisoners, a community-based restorative justice process could help hundreds of people who commit crimes and are ready to be held accountable for their actions.

In restorative justice, because victims are heard and offenders repair the harm of their crime, they become higher functioning citizens able to work and make a contribution to their community, including paying their share of taxes.

Why aren't our legislators suggesting reallocation of criminal justice resources to restorative justice along with their other budget cutting ideas?

The Parade article said of our nation's prison system, "We are wasting billions of dollars and diminishing millions of lives." Of our community's restorative justice programs, I say, "We are saving our taxpayer's dollars and *Continued on page 7*

Oregon's decline in crime

By David Rogers

Oregon exceeds the national average in its decrease in violent crime, according to data recently released by the FBI. Oregon's violent crime rate dropped 10.6% from 2007 to 2008, the largest decrease of any state in the nation, and property crime also decreased by 6.9% statewide. Our violent crime rate has not been this low since 1970 and it was 1966 since we've seen property crime rates this low.

Oregon's continued and significant reduction in crime has followed smart public policy choices that have focused on prevention and treatment of addiction, while de-emphasizing expensive and ineffective incarceration strategies.

In 2005, at the height of the meth epidemic, Oregon could have taken a reactionary approach, but instead, we learned from best practices around the county regarding the most effective ways to address meth and addiction-driven crime. Oregon chose to reduce the availability of substances used to manufacture meth and invest meaningful financial resources into drug treatment and drug courts which have proven to reduce recidivism and future crime. The reduction in Oregon's crime rate is indicative that those strategies have been successful.

"Oregon policymakers need to be wary of people who want to peddle expensive tough on crime policies, like last year's mandatory minimum sentencing scheme (Measure 61)," says David Rogers, Executive Director of the Partnership for Safety and Justice. Partnership for Safety and Justice (PSJ) is a statewide, non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to making Oregon's criminal justice system more just and better equipped to strengthen public safety.

"We've clearly seen that Oregon can reduce crime more effectively and less expensively when we invest in a treatment and prevention approach that emphasizes strategies like drug courts, rather than sinking hundreds of millions of dollars into building new prisons."

"We're deeply concerned about whether or not Oregon can continue to see this level of public safety progress. In order to do so, we need to strengthen funding for community-based addiction treatment and the legislature needs to stay focused on being smart on crime."

Pornography—no small matter

Continued from page 2

In a "White Paper" I wrote recently I told how our Supreme Court had declined to review a lower court ruling that permanently blocked enforcement of the Child Online Protection Act (COPA). This in effect gives license to those who make sexually explicit material available to minors. Today many parents are worried their children will become the victim of an attack by a sexual predator! The greatest risk is not so much of their being attacked, but of them becoming a sexual offender. Probably 50% of youth between thirteen and eighteen years old will commit a sexual crime before their eighteenth birthday. In spite of all the publicity about the alleged danger of sexual predators, the very real danger is that our children may end up being labeled a sex offender.

Mother: Do you know what your child is watching on the Internet? On TV? Do they have pornographic magazines? Their whole future could hinge on the answers to these questions!

Investing in restorative justice

Continued from page 6

uplifting thousands of citizens' lives."

Marian Head is a volunteer for Teaching Peace, the nonprofit parent of the Longmont Community Justice Partnership, which provides Longmont's restorative justice alternative to the penal system. She currently serves as president of the board of directors. Ms. Head is also the CEO of Head2Wellness and author of *Revolutionary Agreements: Twelve Ways to Transform Stress and Struggle Into Freedom and Joy*. She lives in Longmont.

Use this Ministry ID Key to locate Ministry Emphasis:

*1=Prison *2=Non-residential Aftercare *3=Victim *4=Professionals *5=Juvenile Offenders *6=Family
*7=Resources for other RJMs *8=Residential Aftercare *9=Jails *10=By Mail

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 info@prisonmail.org
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5,10 Epiphany Ministry Inc
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1,2,3,10 Prison Lighthouse
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**6 Family Connection/Children's
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605-357-0777
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**1,2 Prison Congregation of America
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605-624-3123 **Fax**
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2	Manasseh Ministries Muriel C. Roger 6705 FM 279 Ben Wheeler 75754-5205 903-852-4402 manassehministries7@juno.com	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10	Newlife Behavior Ministries Buck Griffith 3833 S Staples Ste S-101 Corpus Christi 78472-2188 361-855-3372 361-855-7469 Fax nlbcasa@yahoo.com www.nlbm.org	5 Juvenile Justice Ministries Network of TX Weldon Fox PO Box 765156 Dallas 75376-5156 214-696-7834 info@jjmnt.org www.jjmnt.org
1	Holy Ground Prison Ministry Johnny T Horan PO Box 2526 Brenham 77833 979-836-6328 daphne@gcfchurch.us	1,9	Prayer-Life Seminars Inc Hugh White 630 Meadowbrook Dr Corpus Christi 78412-3019 361-993-7651 361-985-8615 Fax hughlwhite@aol.com www.prayer-lifeseminars.org	1,2,3,9 R O D Ministires Dale Truitt PO Box 710385 Dallas 75371-0385 214-827-8555 214-824-5355 Fax ddtruitt@hotmail.com www.rodministries.org
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2,3,6,7,9	Young Adults Healed John W. Harrington 801 Delaware Dr Bridge City 77611-2423 jharrington003@gt.rr.com	1	Christian Fellowship Enrichment Jim Lang PO Box 700023 Dallas TX 75370 972-283-7871 jimlang41@aol.com	1,3,6,7,9,10 Texas Baptist Men Don Gibson 5351 Catron Dr Dallas 75227-9927 214-828-5353 214-381-7600 dgibson@bgct.org www.baptistmen.org
1,2,8 (F),9	New Beginnings / TAX Bryan & College Station Pat Howard PO Box 3785 Bryan 77805 979-219-0671 979-361-4291 Fax phoward@co.brazos.tx.us	1,2,4,5,7,9,10	First Baptist Dallas Prison Min. Jerry Bedison 1707 San Jacinto St Dallas 75201 214-969-7746 214-969-7720 Fax jbedison@firstdallas.org www.firstdallas.org	1,7,8,9,10 The Salvation Army James Guerra 6500 Harry Hines Blvd Dallas 75235 214-956-6276 214-956-6059 Fax james_guerra@uss.salvationarmy.org www.salvationarmytexas.org
1	St John Baptist Church Rev R Michael Stromille 1508 S Broadway Dr Carrollton 75006 972-242-9194 SJBC@saintjohnncarrollton.com www.saintjohnncarrollton.com	1,7,9,10	Freedom Outreach Ministries Mel Gipson PO Box 180941 Dallas 75218 214-325-9583 214-824-3499 Fax pastormelvin@yahoo.com	1,2,3,5,9,10 Walking Through the Light Prison Ministry, Inc. Eleuterio Z Adame PO Box 4761 Dallas 75208-0761 972-365-5103
1,9,10	Redeemed Ministries Betty G Oates PO Box 891 Chico 76431-0891 940-644-5237 940-644-2982 Fax RedeemedMinistry@hotmail.com	1,7	Inmate Discipler Fellowship/TX Baptist Men Mark Hollis 5351 Catron Drive Dallas 75227-9927	7 C O P E Fauhn Schierer 1001 W Eules Blvd Ste 212 Eules 76040-5032 817-684-7870 817-684-7876 Fax office@copeministries.org www.copeministries.org

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2,6,7,9	Mercy Heart Roger Hollar 4805 NE Loop 820 Fort Worth 76137 817-838-7534 817-281-7413 Fax roger@mercyheart.org http://prisonministry.net/mh	1,2,3,5, 6,7,9,10	C O O L Ministries Inc Boyd Harrell 5005 West 34th Street, St 130C Houston 77092 866-992-2665 713-956-0355 Fax we.cool@cfait.com www.coolministries.net	1,7,9	Oil of Joy for Mourning Rev Rhonda Arias PO Box 720768 Houston 77272-0768 713-419-1214 oilofjoy@sbcglobal.net www.ojfm.org
1,6,7	Parents and Children Together (PACT) Rev Suzanne Boeglin 2836 Hemphill St Fort Worth 76110-3214 817-924-7776 pact1924@sbcglobal.net	1,9	Crossover USA Gary R Nichols 911 Westmont Houston 77015 713-545-7991 713-455-7060 Fax gnichols@crossoverusa.com	1,2,3,5, 7,9,10	Restored to Christ Harold Travis 14147 Ivy Bluff Ct Houston 77062 281-488-5110 281-488-8218 Fax harold@clearlakemethodist.org
7	World Bible Translation Center Glenn Peden 4028 Daley Ave Fort Worth 76180-8600 817-595-1664 817-589-7013 Fax glenn@wbtc.com www.wbtc.org	1,3,4,5, 8,9,10	Epiphany Ministries of Texas Chuck Talbot PO Box 590578 Houston 77259 chucktal@msn.com www.texasepiphany.com	1,3,4, 6,9,10	Servants of Christ Prison Ministry Sibble Knight PO Box 111275 Houston 77293-0275 281-449-2703
10	Write-way Prison Ministries Inc Ralph Nichols PO Box 461582 Garland 75046-1582 972-840-9798 972-864-9692 Fax writewaypm@juno.com	5,7,10	Initiatives for America's Youth Boone Vastine 15153 Kimberley Ct Houston 77079-5130 281-493-4556 Iayjjm@aol.com	1	Skills for Life Inc James Lynn Arnold PO Box 38553 Suite 113 Houston 77238 281-733-1223 281-447-1784 Fax arnojl@msn.com
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10	Encouraging Word Ministries Margaret Hackler PO Box 5148 Gun Barrel City 75147	6	Newgate Connection Wesley Stevens PO Box 96333 Houston 77213-9633 281-452-2352 wfstevens@pdq.net	1,2,6	Covenant Fellowship Rev David Valentine PO Box 10769 Huntsville 77340 936-435-0993 dbhvalentine@suddenlink.net www.cf huntsville.org
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<p>6 Hospitality House 912 10th St Huntsville 77320-3937 936-291-6196 www.thehospitalityhouse.org</p>	<p>1,6,7 Prison Fellowship Ministries Kelly Purselley PO Box 54987 Hurst 76054 Kelly_purselley@pfm.org www.prisonfellowship.org</p>	<p>5,7 LifeChange Mentoring Shirley Orr Smith PO Box 9535 Midland 79709-9535 sos@lifechangementoring.org www.lifechangementoring.org</p>
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		8	House Where Jesus Shines Pastor Nilsa Latimer 18320 Gholson Rd Waco 76705-5823	His Sufficient Grace Ministries Larry Groom 2424 130th Pl SE Everett 98208-6708 425-357-8596 ldgroom@comcast.net
		1	Prisoners for Christ Outreach Ministry Greg Von Tobel PO Box 1530 Woodinville WA 98072-1503 425-483-4151 425-467-1680 Fax gvt@pfc.com.org www.pfc.com.org	

Denying parole at first eligibility: How much public safety does it actually buy?

Continued from page 1

who had completed their minimum sentences and were eligible for parole.

A total of 76,721 Michigan prisoners sentenced to indeterminate terms after 1981 and released for the first time between 1986 and 1999 were followed for four years to determine whether they came back to prison for a new crime or for a technical violation of parole conditions. The cases were divided into nine offense categories: homicide, sex, assault, robbery, larceny, burglary, drugs, weapons and motor vehicle

“The findings are similar to those of many other studies,” Levine said. “However, it is useful to draw these conclusions from such a large quantity of Michigan data that covers such a long period of time, especially since parole board policies changed sharply mid-way through the study period. Focusing on the substantial differences among offense groups is important for cost-effective parole decision making and reentry planning.”

Among the findings are:

- While 18% returned to prison with a new sentence within four years of their release, only 4.5% were returned for a new crime against a person. Returns for larceny, drugs and burglary were by far the most common.
- Re-offense rates vary widely by crime type. People who commit financially motivated crimes are the most likely to return to prison. Only 3% of sex offenders returned for a new sex offense and less than 1% of homicide offenders returned for another homicide.
- Overall, 61% were released when first eligible but that also varied widely by offense. About 30% were kept one or two additional years, then released. The people with the lowest re-offense rates were most likely to be denied parole.
- Sheer length of time served was not associated with success upon release, although older age, lack of prior prison terms and good institutional conduct were.

CAPPS estimates that if everyone denied parole for up to two years had been released when first eligible, on average, it would have saved more than 2,300 beds a year. The overall rate of returns with new sentences would have increased by only 1.7 points. Annual arrests would have increased by less than 0.4%.

These findings, CAPPS says, have numerous implications for corrections policies, including:

- A presumption of parole upon completion of the minimum sentence for all prisoners, subject to individualized risk assessments, would avoid unnecessarily imprisoning people who have served their punishment and are at low risk for reoffending. It would also save tens of millions of dollars a year.
- The use of sentence reductions or community placements as incentives for good behavior would not reduce public safety and might increase it by encouraging self-discipline and program participation in prison and by promoting structured reentry to the community.
- The application of stringent supervision conditions to whole categories of parolees and of employment and residence barriers to whole categories of people with criminal convictions is not necessary to protect the public.
- Since the majority of former prisoners will not reoffend in any event, reentry efforts will be most cost-effective if targeted at the people who are at highest risk, such as those who committed financially motivated crimes or who need treatment for mental illness or substance abuse.

“Lengthy incarceration for the sake of being punitive is not a reasonable crime control strategy,” Levine said. “We must stop confusing the seriousness of a person’s past crime with the risk that he or she will commit a new one. We routinely incarcerate thousands of people who have served their minimum sentences and would not pose a threat to anyone. The cost to prisoners, their families and taxpayers is enormous.”

The complete study can be found at the CAPPS website: <http://www.capps-mi.org/recidivismstudy>.

28 Inmates earn seminary degrees — Mississippi

By Gary D. Myers
Baptist Press

PARCHMAN, Miss.-In some ways, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's extension center graduation May 20 mirrored any other seminary graduation ceremony.

The service included singing, prayers, a sermon and the recognition of God-called ministers. Proud families and friends were in attendance to share in the joyous occasion. The 28 men receiving undergraduate degrees even wore traditional black graduation caps and gowns. But this was no ordinary graduation service. And these were not ordinary graduates.

This graduation, held at the Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman, Miss., took place under the watchful eyes of numerous prison guards. Instead of a beautiful chapel, the setting was the prison's stark visitor's center. Striped prison pants were visible below the hem of each robe. Nineteen of the graduates are serving sentences of 25 years or more; 13 of those have life sentences.

Even though many of the graduates will never experience a life outside the walls of Parchman, they each expressed joy and hope. As trained ministers, the inmates are better equipped to reach their mission field - Parchman prison.

One smiling graduate, Tommy Smith, said he has found new purpose in helping others during his time as a student. In his ministry to others, Smith himself has been changed.

"Ministering to other people is something that brings out the best in me," Smith said. "That's something I didn't understand until God got a hold of me and changed my life."

Smith said the seminary training program has not only given him the skills he needs to minister to others, it also has provided opportunities to share his faith.

In his charge to the graduates, Chuck Kelley, the seminary's president noted that the ceremony did not signify an end or a completion, but a commencement, a beginning.

"It is not just what you have finished that we are recognizing, it's what you are about to do and what lies ahead that has such great significance," Kelley said.

Drawing from 1 Corinthians 1, Kelley noted that God often calls unlikely ministers. When God works through these unlikely people, he receives all the glory, Kelley said.

"The Bible tells us the ones God loves using most are the weak and the broken and the defeated," Kelley said. "Because when God does something through them, everybody knows it is God doing it."

Kelley said the world has every reason to forget or even fear the graduating class at Parchman. But, he said, "God is preparing do mighty things inside the prison through the graduates."

Using a glove, Kelley illustrated how God works through the weak and unlikely to accomplish his purposes. A glove can do nothing on its own, Kelley said. It is useless without a hand. On a hand, though, the glove can do many things.

"It's not the glove, it is the hand inside," Kelley said. "What you are as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ is a glove on the hand of God."

Kelley said with their own hands they can break someone's life and smother hope, but as a glove on God's hand they can bring restoration and become bearers of hope.

"Today marks the day to celebrate what you have learned and how you have grown," Kelley said. "But more importantly, today marks the day God takes your glove off the shelf ... so that he might make a difference."

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Waiting list for in-prison drug treatment ends in Texas

By Scott Henson
Grits for Breakfast, August 5, 2009

The Austin Statesman reports on an important milestone in Texas' efforts to reduce prison overcrowding by expanding treatment and diversion programs ("After 15 years, waiting list ends for prison drug treatment programs." <http://www.statesman.com/news/content/region/legislature/stories/2009/08/05/0805drugrehab.html>): For the first time since the Texas prison system's substance-abuse treatment programs began nearly 15 years ago, amid controversy over their cost and effectiveness, programs have no waiting list, prison officials said Tuesday.

In years past, thousands of drug- and alcohol-addicted convicts had to wait for months — in some cases years — for space to open up in the treatment programs, filling prisons with felons who could have been paroled, and confounding a smooth transition of convicts from prisons to programs to parole.

But officials said that because the Legislature voted two years ago to greatly expand the treatment programs, the chronic backlog that had plagued them since their inception, at the behest of then-Governor Ann Richards, is now gone. At the same time, the prison population has decreased slightly in recent months, part of a national trend.

This development will help further reduce prison overcrowding by allowing prisoners to complete requirements more quickly to qualify for parole, the Statesman reported: Rissie Owens, chairwoman of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, said the agency in past years had approved thousands of convicts for parole on the condition that they complete a treatment program, only to see them sit in prison for months — even years — because no space was available.

"We can actually vote them into a program now and have them get in," she said. "That's great."

Billed as the biggest shift for Texas corrections policy in years, the 2007 expansion of treatment programs by lawmakers greatly expanded the capacity of in-prison drug and alcohol treatment programs, opened transition treatment centers to help convicts succeed once they got out, expanded counseling and specialized drug-treatment programs, and opened lockups designed especially for habitual drunken drivers. The cost was more than \$227 million.

In 2007, Governor Rick Perry proposed building two medium-security prisons, but legislative leaders opted for expanding the treatment programs instead, despite some concern about whether the initiative would work.

State Rep. Jerry Madden, a Republican from Richardson who co-authored the 2007 legislation with Whitmire, said that having treatment beds available for convicts will mean that they can complete therapy programs before they are released from prison, giving them a better chance of success upon release. "This is exactly what we had in mind, where we wanted to be someday — even though I'm somewhat surprised we got here so quickly," Madden said. "We know the history of the programs shows they work if they're done right."

Loathsome prison conditions for mentally ill

September 15, 2009, Washington D. C. - With one psychiatrist for every 1,000 inmates, and more than two dozen current investigations into civil rights violations, America faces a human rights crisis in its jails and prisons. Senator Dick Durbin (D-Ill) called current practices of incarcerating people with a mental illness "loathsome, indefensible." Durbin chaired yesterday's congressional hearings, "Human Rights at Home: Mental Illness in U.S. Prisons and Jails."

The United States has the world's highest rate of putting people behind bars, and in the federal prisons, 45 percent of them have a mental illness. The rates are higher in state prisons (56%), and local jails (64%) said Sen. Durbin who lamented the country has taken a "step backward in time." He noted a "growing public revulsion."

Testimony of seven witnesses spelled out details, starting with the intake of inmates who have a mental illness or substance use disorder. Also noted are: solitary confinement for symptomatic behavior; lack of on-site psychiatrists; revolving doors of psychologists and psychiatrists; high rates of suicide; the transfer of youngsters to juvenile justice system to enable them to receive mental health treatment.

The federal prisons spend \$11.5 million on psychotropic drugs, about 18 percent of their

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National Prison Rape Elimination Commission

On June 23, 2009, the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission released its final Report and proposed Standards to prevent, detect, respond to and monitor sexual abuse of incarcerated or detained individuals throughout the United States.

The President, Congress, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services and other Federal and State officials received copies of this groundbreaking publication.

To watch the June 23, 2009 press conference announcing the release of the Commission's report and standards click here: <http://www.cybercemetery.unt.edu/archive/nprec/20090820154816/http://nprec.us/files/nprec4stream.mov>

Congress affirmed the duty to protect incarcerated individuals from sexual abuse by enacting the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA), taking the first national step toward a new understanding of the problem of sexual abuse in correctional and detention facilities. The House and Senate voted unanimously to pass the Act. As part of that work, Congress created the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission to study the causes and consequences of sexual abuse in confinement and to develop standards for eliminating abuse.

Upon its creation, the Commission undertook a comprehensive legal and factual study of the impact of prison sexual assaults on federal, state and local government functions and on the communities and social institutions in which they operate.

The Commission presented its final Report and proposed Standards on June 23, 2009 to the President, Congress, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and other federal and state officials. Within a year of receiving the report and proposed standards from the Commission, the Attorney General is required by PREA to promulgate national standards for the detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of detention facility sexual abuse. Pursuant to PREA, NPREC sunset August 22, 2009.

Speaking at the National Press Club in Washington, members of the Commission said that sexual abuse of inmates, both by staff and other prisoners, is a major problem in many facilities across the nation.

"In my time on the bench I've sentenced thousands of individuals to serve time," said federal district court judge Reggie B. Walton, the Commission's chairman. "Not once has rape been part of the sentence."

The Commission's report details the causes, scope and consequences of a problem that is widely acknowledged, but poorly understood. A 2007 Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) survey based on prisoner self-reporting estimated that 60,500 federal and state prisoners had been sexually abused by staff and other inmates in a twelve-month period.

The report and standards identify certain populations that are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse, including immigrants and young offenders. "If the situation is bad for adult inmates, it's worse for juveniles, who get abused at a far higher rate," said Brenda V. Smith, a professor of law who served on the Commission. "That's simply intolerable."

The Commission's report acknowledges that some corrections and detention professionals have made progress in addressing sexual abuse, largely as a result of additional research and funding Congress mandated in 2003.

Sheriff Robert Garvey, a Massachusetts corrections administrator for more than two decades, applauded the Commission's work, saying the panel "is offering perhaps the most important tool yet to help us rise to the challenge we face as corrections officials."

The four volumes of standards include detailed prescriptions for corrections and detention administrators, including training/hiring policies for corrections staff, incident investigation and reporting protocols, access to treatment and mental health services and requirements for disciplinary action against perpetrators.

"The main lesson here is that leadership matters," said Pat Nolan, president of Justice Fellowship and a member of the Commission. "Dedicated corrections staff can make the difference between a safe facility and one that tolerates abuse."

Further information and copies of the report and proposed standards can be viewed at <http://www.nprec.us/>

Loathsome prison conditions for mentally ill

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drug budget, said Harley Lappin during a question and answer period. Lappin is the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Still, barely half of the 30,000 mentally ill inmates are receiving medication, and still fewer get other types of treatment. "Good drug treatment programs make big differences in people's lives" observed Sen. Tom Coburn.

Mission Messiah, A New Creation

Mission Messiah, A New Creation is a twelve-month, faith-based residential program for women and their children with campuses located in Odessa and Midland, Texas.

The primary qualification for residence is a sincere desire for change. The applicant must commit to a twelve-month, curriculum-based program with a heart willing to submit to and practice the principles laid down throughout the program.

Many women who come to Mission Messiah are dealing with drug or alcohol abuse, prescription medication dependency, suicidal tendencies, eating disorders, fear or depression that may be related to past abortions, rejection, or physical or sexual abuse.

Life at the Mission is very family-oriented rather than institutional. Mothers are encouraged to have their children with them during this time of healing. Their deep conviction, based on prior experience, reveals that both parent and teacher benefit greatly from working together during the program. Frequently children are reunited with their mothers during their time at the Mission, thus a true healing of the family occurs.

The Mission also accepts unmarried women who are pregnant. These mothers-to-be receive special training in parenting and child care skills.

At full capacity, Mission Messiah can house approximately 25 women and as many as 35 children.

Mission Messiah operates solely on private donations as a project of Texas Arms of Love, Inc. a 501(c)3 corporation. They receive no governmental funding, nor is there any cost to women who come to the Mission. It is their belief that if a place is provided where women can come free-of-charge to receive new life through Jesus Christ, their lives will never be the same and God will provide the means to accomplish His work.

Through a disciplined structure of prayer, Bible study, scripture memorization, Biblical counselling, work assignments and recreation, residents are taught life and leadership skills. Each woman also receives educational and career counselling as well as financial management training.

Beginning each weekday morning at 6:00 a.m. the ladies of the Mission and the staff meet for morning devotions. Once children are loaded on the bus for school, the remainder of most mornings is spent in classes which are expertly instructed by a wide variety of experienced volunteers. After lunch the afternoon is spent at one of their three work training centers. After work, dinner is prepared, then each trainee completes her homework and spends time with her children. Lights out occurs promptly at 10:00 p.m.

While the days are arduous, each participant is exposed to and trained in the skills necessary to live not just a successful life but an overcoming life--a life full of power and privilege as a daughter of the Most High God.

The Mission operates three job training businesses plus an online store. These businesses are essential components in empowering women to support themselves and their families. Their stores also provide opportunities for spreading the Gospel, as women and staff from the Mission share their stories and encourage and pray for their customers.

Mission Messiah opened its doors on Second Street in Odessa, Texas, in August of 1997. Jamie Berryhill, a young, successful businessman had no idea what God had in mind when He asked him a question that changed the course of his life: "How long will you profess me with your lips and not give me your heart?" Jamie, his pregnant wife Renda and their five children moved from opulence to squalor when the rundown motel on Second Street became their home. Thanks to many wonderful volunteers in the body of Christ, that motel is now a tribute to what God can do when His people work together.

Mission Messiah - Twelve Years of Miracles

1997-2006: Blessings Galore - a second-hand shop located on the Mission Messiah property in Odessa

2006: W.O.W. (Women of Worth) Fashion Warehouse - a large, fully equipped department store in Odessa

2006: Zip (Zeal, Integrity, Purpose) Supply - A full-service printing shop and retail store in Odessa

2007: Zip Supply, Midland Branch - A full-service printing and publishing company

The newest project at Mission Messiah is the recently completed Faith Hall -

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Inmates mentoring inmates at Indiana State Prison



Members of the first LifeChange Mentor Training for inmate mentors: 7 inmates, Wayne Beachy, Lifechange Trainer and their Bible teacher, Peter Bylen.

The idea of inmates mentoring inmates began in the heart of Wayne Beachy as he prayed for more volunteers to mentor the hundreds of inmates at the Indiana State Prison.

Beachy began mentoring in 2004 at a local county jail in Goshen, Indiana. Tim, the man he was mentoring was moved to Indiana State Prison (ISP). Tim never expected to see Beachy again and was very pleasantly surprised when he came to visit and offered to return weekly to visit him.

The Indiana State Prison is located in Michigan City, Indiana about an hours drive from Beachy's home. It is a maximum security prison for adult males; however, minimum security housing also exists on the confines. The average daily inmate population in November 2006 was 2,200.

Indiana State Prison was built during the Civil War to house prisoners of war. Today, three out of four inmates are in for murder, making it is one of the most dangerous and possibly one of the most dreaded prisons in the United States. The first thing one notices as they approach the facility is the massive wall fortressing the entire prison. No one can see in, and there is no way the inmates can see out. ISP is truly its own city behind walls.

Beachy and Tim's mentoring experience began with Beachy mostly listening to Tim share about his life. Beachy soon saw the need for a more structured learning experience whereby he could systematically share God's Word while applying it to Tim's daily needs.

Beachy located the LifeChange Mentoring Curriculum online. He became trained as a LifeChange Trainer and began using the discussion guides during their weekly meetings. Soon more inmates were asking for mentors. Beachy recruited and trained other volunteer mentors but the number of inmates wanting mentors far exceeded the number of available volunteers.

Beachy approached the Chaplain with the idea of training inmate mentors from among the spiritually mature residents of ISP. Their first inmate mentor training included 7 inmates and a volunteer Bible teacher, Peter Bylen.

The inmate mentors have many good things to say about the program. They all agree that it has brought new meaning to their lives to be able to help others.

One inmate mentor said when asked why he became a mentor said, "To bring the love of Christ to the people and show them they aren't forgotten. I believe it really helps the mentees to see that the other inmates care. It brings peace of heart and mind in their lives that they didn't have before."

He continued, "I had a person who felt like he had no hope of living life until I took the time to be a friend and show him how Christ can give you life in here as He did for Paul in prison. I'd like to see more inmates give of themselves in the program, see it grow in the prison and in other prisons."

That is Beachy's desire also, for godly men who happen to be inmates to have the opportunity to share the love of Christ with fellow inmates inside the walls of the prison system.

If you are interested in learning more about the LifeChange Mentoring experience and the inmate mentor program, contact Wayne@lifechangementoring.org or go to <http://www.lifechangementoring.org>.

Family re-united

The following letter written in Spanish was received by the Restorative Justice Ministries Network and First Contact Family Ministry, First Baptist Church, Huntsville, thanking them for their ministry to inmates upon their release from prisons in the Huntsville area. If you or your church would like to be involved in this very meaningful ministry to ex-offenders and their families, please contact Anita Parrish at arparrish@sbcglobal.net

Dear Servants of My Lord,

I greet you warmly and desire that all is well with you.

I am one that admired your work as I saw how much that you loved and received the families of the prisoners and how that you gave them a welcome back.

I had the honor of meeting you in February when my husband was given the opportunity to return home and be with his family and his children. I am thankful to God and His great mercy and thankful for the new opportunity that God has given us to be a family once again.

*Because it is written: "Therefore **what God has joined together, let man not separate.**"*

May God bless you all,

M. E. S.

Mission Messiah, A New Creation

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a multipurpose kitchen, dining hall, classrooms, events Center located on the Odessa property.

The hope of Mission Messiah is that every hurting woman experiences the unconditional love of Jesus and finds a new life in Christ.

The greatest evidence Mission Messiah can offer of the effectiveness of the program to which God has called us comes from the words of women who have graduated from the Mission Messiah program.

Every story is unique, but a common theme underlies each: the ability of God our Creator to take the broken pieces of our lives and reshape and refashion them into a beautiful mosaic.

You are invited to watch two short videos. http://www.missionmessiah.org/index.php/in_the_news/video_documentary is a documentary of the Mission.

The other "Does Anybody Hear Her" contains testimonies of life-transforming experiences by the residents of Mission Messiah (http://www.missionmessiah.org/index.php/in_the_news/does_anybody_hear_her)

For further information go to <http://www.missionmessiah.org/>

International Restorative Justice Week, Nov. 15—22, 2009

The theme for Restorative Justice Week 2009 is Communities Responding to Human Needs. Observed in Canada from 15 to 22 November, Restorative Justice Week offers an opportunity to educate community members and different organizations about restorative justice and related issue. To facilitate commemoration efforts the Chaplaincy Branch of Correctional Services Canada (CSC) and the Church Council on Justice and Corrections created various resources including a poster, bookmark, items for faith communities, and a training workshop.

All the resources are available from both the Correctional Service of Canada website (<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rj/rj2009/lett-eng.shtml>), the Church Council on Justice & Corrections website (http://www.cjcc.ca/restorative_justice.html), and Restorative Justice Online (http://www.restorativejustice.org/RJOB/2009rjweekresources?utm_source=RJ+ONLINE+UPDATE&utm_campaign=eac5a9f818-RJ_Online_October_2009_30_2009&utm_medium=email).

8th Annual Prisoner Reentry Conference

Baltimore, MD-October 15-18, 2009

Connect with hundreds of reentry stakeholders! Receive professional training on over 35 reentry issues! Meet people of like passion who faithfully serve the reentry population! Attend a special "Funders' Forum". Fellowship, laugh and network with your colleagues from the country. Don't miss this chance to learn, laugh and relax!

For information visit <http://www.capaassociation.org>.

School for Correctional Ministries

Introduction to Correctional Ministry, January 4-8, 2010

Residential course on the campus of Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, TX

This course will provide an overview of ministry to offenders and their families and the biblically-based role of the Church in that effort.

For information visit <http://www.bgcprisonministries.com>. Partial scholarships are available.

2010 Texas Regional Restorative Justice Conferences

- **March 6, 2010—Ft. Worth, Texas, True Vine Missionary Baptist Church ***
- **May 1, 2010—Plainview, Texas, Wayland Baptist University ***

* Check <http://www.rjmnTexas.net> for details as they become available.

Emmett Solomon, Publisher
Anita Parrish, Ministry Assistant
Shirley Orr Smith, Editor

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The board of the non-profit corporation includes: Jerry Groom, Larry Frank, Ed Davis, Richard Lopez, Roger Hollar, Mark Hollis, Mark Pickett, and David Umfreville. Emmett Solomon is Executive Director of RJMN Texas.

Comments, questions and news articles may be sent to Emmett Solomon, Executive Director at esolomon@rjmn.net. Articles are subject to space available.

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All contributions are appreciated and are used to offset the expenses of publishing the newsletter. The RJMN is a non-profit organization. All donations are tax exempt.