

Texas Epiphany Ministries

Manifesting God to Incarcerated Juveniles

Volume III Issue VI, November 2012

www.texasepiphany.com

From the Chair's Corner:

After the Election

1. YHVH will still be on His throne
2. Yeshua will still be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
3. The Bible will still have all the answers to every problem.
4. The tomb will still be empty.
5. Yeshua will still be the only way to heaven
6. Prayer will still work - it will still make a difference and YHVH will still answer prayer
7. Yeshua, not the government, will still be our salvation
8. There will still be room at the cross.
9. Yeshua will still save anyone who places their faith and trust in Him.
10. YHVH will still be with us always - **He will never leave us or forsake us.**

Once again, on behalf of Epiphany Ministries of Texas,
Thank you!!

May our God bless you with the same measure you bless
others!

Your State Board Chair,

Sinda Berge

**"Commit to the Lord
whatever
you do and
your
plans will
succeed."
Proverbs 16:3**

Epiphany Weekend Reports

Corsicana #20, Feb 17-19: It was a great weekend. Stars were older and more aggressive than normal.

Post #10, March 2-4: Weekend started with 17 TJJD stars. One of the stars was scheduled to be discharged on Saturday and one star chose not to complete the weekend. It was determined that one star had already completed an Epiphany weekend and he was moved into a Superstar role. Seven staff members participated in the cross ceremony. One staff and 11 stars accepted Christ during the weekend.

Brownwood #24, March 16-18: Overall the weekend went very well. There were not as many girls as usual. There was an issue with a team member. This problem has been addressed by the UAC.

Giddings #19, March 16-18: The Giddings staff requested that 3 stars who were scheduled to be released soon be added to the weekend. Also, a star who was deaf required a signer so a 7th table was added to accommodate the additional stars. The team was reduced in size when the date was changed, very last minute, from March 2-4 to March 16-18. Also just before the weekend one team member was in ICU with serious heart issues. While one of the roughest beginnings to a weekend, it was also one of the most incredible weekends with God showing the way to a great finish.

Clemens #33, April 13-15: The weekend was attended by 30 stars and 34 inside team with 7 outside team. On Saturday the electricity was off for 3 hours. The schedule was adjusted accordingly and we all had to remember to "trust in our Heavenly Father and know that it is His weekend."

Krier #12, April 13-15: The weekend started with 30 stars and finished with 27. There were 5 or 6 new team members. It was a great weekend with excellent talks.

Gainesville Epiphany #25, July 20-22: A great weekend overall even though TJJD administration predicted interruptions and failures and demanded extra adult supervision. Chaplain Payne went to bat for the Epiphany team and an additional table (7 tables) with 3 extra adults settled the issue. Additional TJJD security was not added. An additional bright spot to the weekend was 2 visitors from Oklahoma who are beginning to plan Epiphany events in Southern Oklahoma.

Brownwood #25, August 31-Sept 2: This weekend became an amazing display of what God can do through Christians in 3 days' time. It is impossible to have a disappointing weekend with Chaplain Allison Voss as our advocate and constant support. On Sunday we celebrated the release of 1 of the 3 superstars to the Hope House in Early when she left us on Sunday. Another previously released superstar helped in the kitchen on the outside team.

Clemens #34, Oct 19-21: The Epiphany 34 weekend at Clemens Unit went very well. We had 19 Stars attend the weekend. However, since we had more volunteers than Stars, it enabled each Star to better engage in the "one-on-one" time with his Star Guide volunteer. It also enabled members of our team, assigned to the inside kitchen, to minister to the superstars. Overall, the Star participation was good. We had an excellent team! An outstanding Fourth Day speaker, Mr. Charlie Burton, gave an inspiring talk at the weekend closing.

Epiphany Weekend Prayer Opportunities

Nov 16-18, Krier #13, Mariah Rodriguez, LD

Nov 30-Dec 2, Giddings #20, Steve & Tara Wilson

Jan 19-21, Gainesville #26, Jerry Landrum, LD

Feb 16-18, Mart #19, Stacy Strassman, LD

St. Francis of Assisi and Celebrating Christmas

Saint Francis of Assisi (born **Giovanni Francesco di Bernardone**; 1181 – died: October 3, 1226) was an [Italian Catholic friar](#) and [preacher](#). He founded the men's [Franciscan Order](#), the women's [Order of St. Clare](#), and the [Third Order of Saint Francis](#) for men and women not living monastic lives. Though he was never [ordained](#) to the [Catholic priesthood](#), Francis is one of the most venerated religious figures in history.

Francis was the son of a wealthy cloth merchant in [Assisi](#), and he lived the high-spirited life typical of a wealthy young man, even fighting as a soldier for Assisi. While going off to war in 1204, Francis had a vision that directed him back to Assisi, where he lost his taste for his worldly life. His Order was authorized by [Pope Innocent III](#) in 1210. He then founded the Order of Poor Clares, which became a [closed religious order](#) for women, as well as the Order of Brothers and Sisters of Penance (commonly called the Third Order).

In 1219, he went to Egypt in an attempt to convert the Sultan to put an end to the conflict of the [Crusades](#). By this point, the Franciscan Order had grown to such an extent that its primitive organizational structure was no longer sufficient. He returned to Italy to organize the Order. Once his community was authorized by the Pope, he withdrew increasingly from external affairs. In 1223, Francis arranged for the first Christmas manger scene. In 1224, he received the [stigmata](#), making him the first recorded person to bear the wounds of [Christ's Passion](#). He died during the evening hours of October 3, 1226, while listening to a reading he had requested of [Psalm 141](#).

On July 16, 1228, he was pronounced a saint by [Pope Gregory IX](#). He is known as the [patron saint](#) of [animals](#), the [environment](#), and is one of the two [patron saints](#) of [Italy](#) (with [Catherine of Siena](#)). It is customary for Catholic and Anglican [churches](#) to hold ceremonies blessing animals on his [feast day](#) of October 4. He is also known for his love of the [Eucharist](#), his sorrow during the [Stations of the Cross](#), and for the creation of the Christmas creche or [Nativity Scene](#).

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord,
Make me an instrument Of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that
We are pardoned.
It is in dying that we
Are born to eternal life.

Amen

Visit your Texas Epiphany Ministries website to see what is there and make suggestions to webmaster, Sinda Berge for additions
www.texasepiphany.com

Mercy Heart

A ministry to families of inmates

For more information:

email info@mercyheart.org

call 817-514-0290

write James Guerra, PO Box 163783,

Fort Worth, TX 76161

Giddings State School Celebration Employee Appreciation and

In Support of Prison Ministries:

Coalition of Prison Evangelists

COPE's purpose - to equip you for YOUR purpose. Founded on a vision to build an army of ministries coming out of prison, COPE is a professional service organization for all of you who serve in Criminal Justice Ministry.

Whatever you call it, if you are involved in ministry to inmates, their families, victims, ex-offenders, juveniles, etc., COPE is for you!

COPE leadership brings its abilities, experience and resources to recruit, establish and strengthen Christian ministry to criminal justice systems throughout the world.

Keep coming back and discover COPE's website for new Resources, Events, Members, and our latest Newsletters.

The COPE website is www.copeconnections.org/

Hope Inn for Christ--a home for young men who have been released from the Texas Juvenile System. PO Box 1572, Decatur, TX 76234

Phone: 940-399-3333

www.HopeInnChrist.org

Cindy Willis, Executive Director/House Parent

Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association

The mission of CMCA is to connect, encourage, equip and strengthen Christians as they fulfill the Great Commission in Corrections.

Vision:

The vision of CMCA is for Christians to work together in correctional ministry to advance Christ's Kingdom and enhance public safety.

Values:

- We value the sacrifice Jesus made for mankind, therefore we are committed to making Christ known
- We value the power and primacy of prayer, therefore we pray
- We value God's love for people, therefore we enjoy fellowship with them
- We value Jesus' forgiving love, therefore we forgive
- We value Christ's redemptive power, therefore we bring His healing to the hurting
- We value God's earthly plan for humanity, therefore we submit to those in authority
- We value God's creative diversity, therefore we respect people's uniqueness
- We value the Church's teamwork in the harvest, therefore we work together
- We value God's perfecting work in us, therefore we strive for excellence
- We value God's patience with his people, therefore we are longsuffering
- We value a life of faith, therefore we forge new ministries
- We value each individual's calling to share God's love, therefore we affirm you.

CMCA website is www.cmcainternational.org

[Correctional Chaplains: Keeper of the Cloak](#)

By W. Thomas Beckner

In recent years, the faith factor has been identified as both a significant variable in positive inmate adjustment and a potential remedy for recidivism. At the same time, little has been written about the primary facilitator of religious services inside our nation's jails and prisons—the chaplain. In *Correctional Chaplains: Keepers of the Cloak*, Dr. Thomas Beckner has provided a comprehensive perspective of this vital profession.

Dr. Beckner briefly reviews the history of correctional chaplaincy and its development within the American criminal justice system and summarizes several significant studies of the profession. He examines the critical premises on which chaplaincy rests and presents a unique structural model of chaplaincy consisting of four critical dimensions: personal, pastoral, administrative, and community. Beckner then shows how this paradigm serves as a template for the development of a chaplaincy plan that will meet the needs of a specific institutional setting and can be monitored for effective results.

[Offender Re-entry \(2012\)](#)

“Each year, more than 700,000 individuals are released from state and federal prisons. Another 9 million cycle through local jails. When re-entry fails, the costs—both societal and economic—are high ... Because re-entry intersects with issues of health and housing, education and employment, family, faith, and community well-being, many federal agencies are focusing on the re-entry population with initiatives that aim to improve outcomes in each of these areas”. This annotated bibliography addresses issues surrounding the re-entry of offenders into the community organized according to: re-entry websites; re-entry in general; re-entry by category for community corrections, jails, prisons, community and family support, employment and housing, health and safety, and special populations; and reentry skills building. Source: Nat'l Institute of Corrections Information Center (Aurora, CO).

Borrowed from the Godfruits Newsletter

Do you know much about C.S. Lewis? He's especially famous for writing *The Lion, the Witch, and The Wardrobe* among many other books. He wasn't always a Christian. He was raised in the Church of Ireland before becoming an atheist as a teenager. Through the years of studying at Oxford University, serving in World War I, and then beginning his academic career, he fought the idea of God.

Slowly, through reading the works of George MacDonald and G.K. Chesterton, and through his friendship with J.R.R. Tolkien (author of *The Lord of the Rings*), he returned to Christianity.

As a lay theologian, he was brilliant at finding the perfect analogy to illustrate a truth. Here's one that will make you think! It's from Lewis's *Mere Christianity*.

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.

Watch the video "Why Hire Ex-offenders?" at www.youtube.com. After watching it, share it with employers you know. This video was made in October in Austin, TX.

With the help of Restorative Justice Ministries:

MUSIC FROM THE BIG HOUSE became a theatrical success this Summer! Now we would like to show our appreciation...The film is now out on DVD

Help us spread the word, receive a discount for your community and a donation for Epiphany Ministries of Texas.

MUSIC FROM THE BIG HOUSE is an extraordinary story about finding hope, joy and music behind bars. Rita Chiarelli, Canada's Queen of the Blues, takes a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the Blues: Louisiana's Angola Prison – formerly the bloodiest prison in America. Rita's trip turns into an historic jailhouse performance, playing with musician inmates serving life sentences. Their shared bond of music, and Chiarelli's ebullient personality, draw striking revelations from the inmates. Rather than sensational stories of convicts, we witness remarkable voices of hope as their love of music radiates humanity and redemption on their quest for forgiveness.

MUSIC FROM THE BIG HOUSE showcases restorative justice through visually-moving storytelling. It offers a fresh and current glimpse into the human spirit's ability to forgive, heal, and connect.

Go to www.vimeo.com and search for Music from the Big House to watch a clip of the movie. The DVD can be purchased at www.matsonfilms.com. Through our affiliate program, your community can use the link below to get a 20% discount on the DVD. Please be sure to tell them to enter your organization in the box next to the Buy DVD button. For every DVD sold to your members, Matson Films will donate \$2 to Epiphany Ministries of Texas. That website is http://matsonfilms.com/promo/music-from-the-big-house-affiliate-program/?utm_source=RestoreJ_Name_NoSupport&utm_campaign=a45150909a-MFTBH_RestoreJ_Name_noSupport&utm_medium=email

Lessons Learned from Troubled Youth

Excerpt

by Keith Wommack, *Austin American Statesman*,
March 17, 2012

As Keith Womack waited at the front of a classroom at the Barbara Culver Juvenile Detention Center in Midland, TX, he prayed, "Well, here I am. Thank you for leading me, animating me. Show me how I express your wisdom. Keep reminding me that each one that comes into this room belongs to you. Please, put your words in my mouth." Then the procession began, 31 of them hands behind their backs, not one smile, not one hello. I began to speak, an angel message taking over. I introduced myself and then challenged them to be a thermostat, not a thermometer. A thermometer rises and falls according to what is happening around it. A thermostat, on the other hand, regulates.

I challenged them to be spiritual healers. I told them that through their spiritual journeys they could become regulators, thermostats. They could make everyone they meet become happier, healthier because of having met them.

The next hour and a half flew by. What started out as 31 orange jumpsuits, turned into 31 precious friends. They smiled, they laughed, and they clapped.

As I drove away from the center, I was filled with a spiritual sense of life. I felt and understood that each life was a blessing. Life doesn't have to be vulnerable or confined. Life is about new beginnings. We have choices.

**Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous,
sing all you who are upright in heart!----Psalm 32:11**

Redeemed Ministries

Redeemed Ministries' focus is to meet the needs of victims of commercial sexual exploitation (Human Trafficking) in the greater Houston area. As defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

“Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. Victims of human trafficking are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor. Victims are young children, teenagers, men and women.”

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines “Severe forms of Trafficking in Persons” in these two ways:

- Sex Trafficking: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years; or...
- Labor Trafficking: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery. In both forms, the victim is an unwilling participant due to force, fraud or coercion.”

Redeemed Ministries founded in 2005 is a faith-based non-profit 501 (c) 3 incorporated in the State of Texas. We are an all volunteer organization with our people serving from a wide variety of church backgrounds with our unity found in serving Jesus our Lord and Savior. Because we have seen and understand the problem in our community, we have set our core competencies which include Outreach, Aftercare and Advocacy giving churches and their congregations the opportunity to network and find their place in the fight against human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Being a faith-based organization, it is our desire to share our passion and to bring unity to the whole church body and giving them the opportunity to engage as they feel led and called to use their gifts and talents in partnering with us to provide holistic care.

Field Ministry Group

Our Outreach is handled by our Field Ministry Group. This group is responsible for prayers, direct contact work with women in the commercial sex industry, and research.

Survivor Resources Group

Our Aftercare is managed by our Survivor Resources Group. This group is tasked with identifying resources, networking with pro-bono service providers and churches, providing care needed by survivors to have a fresh beginning. This group is also responsible for our safe house operations and host family support.

Advocacy Group

Our Advocacy Group provides a voice to the voiceless. This group empowers individuals and communities to seek changes at all levels of government and engage the church in its mission to work with the “*least of these.*”

Website for more information: www.redeemedministries.com

Green Chili Breakfast Soufflé

This is a popular breakfast dish at Giddings Team Meetings.

- 1 27 oz can Hatch whole green chili
- 12 eggs (large or jumbo)
Salt & pepper to taste
- ½ cup Milk
- 2 cups grated cheddar cheese (NOT low fat cheese!)

Beat eggs until light and fluffy in 2 quart container. Add ½ cup milk. Beat together with salt and pepper to taste

Place chili on bottom of 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Add egg / milk mixture

Add grated cheese to top

Bake at 350 deg. F for about 30 minutes or until golden brown on top and mixture has set.

Help Needed!!

This newsletter is the Texas Epiphany Ministries Newsletter. Please send stories about long-time serving Epiphany team members, success stories of Epiphany stars, recipes used in Epiphany weekends, reunions, or team meetings that are well received, and any other information that would be of interest to Epiphany volunteers. Tributes to staff at the TJJD facilities who are Epiphany fans and helpers are welcome.

Please email Marilyn Jackson at msjack99@att.net. Put *Epiphany newsletter* in the subject line so I will open an email from someone whose name I may not recognize.