

Action!



Teaching the Word.
Reaching the World!

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FREEDOM I

Freedom! The word rings pure, like a crystal-clear note.

Its loss may come in various forms. Illness may rob us of mobility and independence. Harsh governments may oppress us. Bad habits may addict us. The wheels of justice may grind us down. Debt and poverty may enslave us. Circumstances may conspire against us. When we look at others who have lost some measure of freedom we can truly say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

This page's large photo was taken at the pre-Columbian Cape Coast fort in Ghana. The profile

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John Reese

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Hope for Zambian Prisoners

By Ruth Orr

Any list of today's outcasts would include prisoners. They are locked away from family and friends, away from their careers, and from all the things once valued. People are afraid of them. But Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for others, even in prison.

On July 2nd, David Harper of the Concord Road church of Christ in Nashville and I boarded a plane for Zambia, Central Africa, for the sole purpose of visiting three prisons in Lusaka. Kabwe prison, the largest in Zambia, houses the most severe criminals. It takes months of preparation, mounds of paper work and endless official signatures just to begin entering one prison. We had merely written a letter of request, which was all we

thought was needed. We were turned down twice but finally found someone to speed the process, and we were granted permission into all three prisons.

Three years ago I had one WBS student, Sitali Sitali, in the Kabwe prison. He studied and became a Christian and enrolled many more. He himself had a Bible study group of 45 inmates, and we soon enrolled those in WBS. Today, all 45 of these are Christians.



Sitali Sitali

What a joy it was for me to meet them all, including Sitali.

As we work with these new members, we try to help their families. If the prisoners are released, we help them find their way back into the world that put them away. Only this time they will be Christians. If they choose, we try to put them into the Mapepe Christian college to grow spiritually and re-establish family life. We were privileged to stay on campus at the Mapepe college with David and Lorie French. They were immensely helpful in making our arrangements.

We have helped three of these families so far in the past two years. The change God has made in these men is remarkable. Thomas, for example, was released after spending six years in prison for "stealing strawberries" because he was hungry. He grew up an orphan, never having anyone to love him or care for him. After his release, I helped him get into the Mapepe college. Because of his Christian faith and his abilities he has been hired to work there at the college when he graduates. He also goes back into the three prisons and ministers each Sunday. The officials use him as an example of what they can become if they try.

Today, we have three worship services going on at the Kabwe prison every Lord's Day and one service at the other two prisons. We teach approximately 800 prisoners in the three prisons through WBS correspondence.

able, and water and electricity outages were commonplace for everyone. Lines for fuel and food often stretched for blocks, when they were available.

Yet amidst all this, we found a very friendly and courteous people, long-suffering and also open to God's Word. We are thankful for this opportunity to partner with fellow-Christians in Zimbabwe.

We ask for your prayers for that country, for the Christians there, and for the follow-up

We signed up another 300, plus 35 juvenile delinquents, whose ages range from 8 to 16. They are all in there for stealing because, as the warden said, "they were hungry." But they will have to spend at least four years in prison before being released. The warden begged me to get them started on WBS as soon as possible.

Their lessons have already gone out.

The social worker, guards and officials all praised what WBS has done for the prisoners. All treated us with the utmost respect. There had never been a "white woman" allowed in these prisons before, so we know God was in control. We thank Him and give Him the glory for the 33 who requested baptism in the Kabwe maximum and condemned sections. I believe it was the providence of God that I got Sitali, a prisoner, as a WBS student three years ago. What a joy it was to meet him face to face and talk about his plans when released. His wife died while he was in prison, and he has three children to re-unite with: 14 year old twin boys and an 11 year old girl.

There are just no words to describe the horrible conditions of the prisons. We can't do anything about that, but we can take the Gospel to the prisoners. We can give them hope. And that is what we are doing.

Over and over we heard from the prisoners, "I would not be a Christian today if it were not for being in prison and the WBS lessons sent to me."



Guard: "Please come teach these people. Please! WBS is changing lives here in this prison."

FREE from page 8

mail flowing in Zimbabwe in much larger volumes than in previous months.

Near Harare, we visited the new Chivero Children's Home and Health Clinic. This is one effort of the churches in that area to reach out to the community with tangible evidence of God's love in the devastation HIV/AIDS has wreaked on Zimbabwe. It was an inspiration to see how this facility will impact that area.

While in Zimbabwe, we witnessed a continued degradation. Often bread was unavail-



Tammy Short with Zimbabweans

with the WBS students who are signing up right now.





Roger and Tigest Talanyi

Flight To Freedom

All human effort had failed me and my friends. Darkness ruled the cruel, desolate nights. Inside, my heart knew that out there, there is a God who saves and He is able. Like Cornelius, God was hearing my constant prayers.

As if it was a dream, a stranger at the place of prayer offered me WBS material and an address in the USA! My flight to freedom began. Everything became clear like lighting a candle at the end of a tunnel. Getting a stamp and an envelope costs a day's walk away to a small town, and there was no assurance that a letter would get to its destination. In 1994, I started a WBS correspondence course with a teacher from Woodfields church of Christ, Ohio. Her name is Mary Henthorn. Many friends in the camp could not believe how soon I was quoting Scriptures about salvation.

Conditions worsened in the camp. Poor sanitation caused frequent outbreaks of diseases. I fell seriously ill and was referred to Addis Ababa on medical grounds. It was there that I first met the church of Christ! I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Behailu Abebe. He taught me many more Scriptures, and on November 23, 1996, I put on Christ in baptism. I was free at last! My favorite song was "Asante Sana Yesu." It means "Thank You, Jesus." We sang it in English, Swahili, Amharic, Arabic, Nuer, French and other languages.

Eager to serve God, through the help of brother Behailu and John Ed Clark, an elder in California, I established Kebona church of Christ. It was our first [Sudanese] church of Christ in Addis Ababa, and it met in my sitting room. Many teachers brought by John Ed instructed me further in the Scriptures, including teachers from Sunset Bible Institute.

continued on page 5

by Roger Talanyi

In 1992, I was compelled to seek safety and freedom when a period of political persecution forced me to leave my country. At that time I thought I was free and far off, but the real freedom started when I sought refuge in Christ. As a refugee in an African camp full of insecurity, disease, hunger and nakedness, I constantly lived in fear and uncertainty. Many refugees were dying hopelessly of what could have been treatable diseases.



Above & Beyond by Kevin Rhodes

No cameras allowed in here.

That's to be expected, I suppose. Third world prisons are nasty, brutal places. Crude, ugly, squalid, *horrible* places. I've been to a handful—in Central America, in Asia, in Africa. It still unsettles me to consider how dire it is for a human being to be sentenced to such a dismal plight.

But, you know, I've also met *Christians* at those prisons, too. Lots of them. Full of the joy of the Spirit. Free in Christ. Washed in the blood of Jesus. Cleansed by His grace. *Just like me.* Except I could enter, and I could leave as I pleased—always trying to forget the badness of it all. And now, just as the memory had begun to fade, colleague John Reese announces that we would do an *Action!* focused on *prison* outreach around the world!

But what an encouragement to be reminded of how WBS teachers are touching the lives of prisoners the world over! The Good News of Jesus is being shared—even in dark dungeons and cell blocks. It also reminds me of the joy of giving to support high impact works like WBS. This ministry shares *freedom in Christ* with every soul who seeks it. Your gifts are appreciated. *Help us reach a condemned world with Jesus.*

NO PICTURES

Action!

EDITOR John Reese

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FREEDOM FILES

Angel of Mercy

Before his unexpected death in February 2007, South African Eddie Angel wrote these memorable words:

About 14 years ago, the South African government changed its approach to prisons. Rather than considering prisons places of punishment, they wanted to make them places of correction. Hence they became Correctional Centers administered by Correctional Services. This huge change in thinking led to the realization that this involved spiritual care.

This ministry [in Natal, South Africa] started 24 September 2004. We were given permission to hold a one hour Bible study in Westville Correctional Center, Medium "B" Cell Block. Knowing nothing about prison ministry, I felt as if I had been thrown into the lions' den. The Spiritual Care Clerk arrived with ten Zulus. Only two spoke in broken English, yet here I was trying to teach Zulus in English.

Soon I approached Sam Pakade, a long time Zulu preacher and asked him to join me in this ministry. Sam was overjoyed since he had wanted to enter prison ministry for some time but had never had the opportunity. At the close of 2005, this ministry had baptized 184 into the body of Christ. In all my 50 years in the body of Christ, I had never experienced such faith and commitment to the Father's will as in B Block. They handed me a document that they wanted typed. It

was a covenant that they had decided to make with God. Now they have taken the initiative to form themselves into a congregation within B Block. They search the Scriptures daily and are dead serious about promoting the Gospel of Christ. Many of them have taken it upon themselves to write letters to the people they



Sam Pakade

have wronged, asking for forgiveness. Sam delivered these letters and made known the change that had taken place.

Sam, who has long used WBS and also translated it into Zulu, recently wrote:

We are now involved with prisons in Westville, Umzinto, Kokstad, Port Shepstone and Empangeni. In Westville itself we have five prisons but we are already teaching in the two which are medium "B" prisons with very bad prisoners serving life sentences, 25, 15, 10 years etc. We are also in medium "C" prison with those waiting for eventual release. Most are really hungry for the Word.

We have 400 baptized members, with 30 more pending baptisms in medium "B", plus 30 baptized members and 12 pending baptisms in medium "C". This has happened in about three years. We have more open doors both in many more prisons and with

the prisoners' families and their friends throughout South Africa. We follow up on released prisoners, and the number is increasing from requests by inmates to take these lessons to their people in different places.

The need is great, and we need much help. The people are dying without Christ. It is our duty to spread the Word and the time is now.



Bibles and Shoes for Belize Prisons

By Lincoln Jones

This prison ministry was started on a firm footing in 2000 by Lloyd Earles, a missionary from Los Angeles, and Lincoln Jones. The Department of Correction lets us work with certain sections of both the male and female prisons.

Since the program began, some 315 inmates have been baptized. Males are



Lincoln Jones Family

baptized in a pond. Lloyd had a baptistry constructed at the female section.

My wife Margarita and I enrolled some 400-500 students throughout the country of Belize. WBS is also a very effective tool at the Department of Cor-

430 prisoners have been baptized, with 42 pending, and more open doors.





rection. I believe this means of teaching Christ has caused many inmates to be baptized.

Thanks should be given to all the U.S. brethren who have contributed to growing the prison ministry. Among them are Bill Amason, Windel and Barbara Kee, Rick Tribby and Maurice Hinchliffe. David and Connie Adcox were instrumental in obtaining shoes for inmates. Since this



John Reese and Greg Smith fit shoes.

program began, many thousands of tennis shoes have been distributed. What a difference this simple way of giving care makes in the lives of the prisoners.

Editor's note: Earlier this year I joined Bill Amason, Chuck Wilson and others for a "Fishers of Men" campaign that took us into Belize prisons. Along with each pair of shoes, Bibles and WBS lessons were offered. Postal costs were not a factor to inmates because WBS answers were collected by a converted inmate and handed regularly to Lincoln who forwarded them to U.S. teachers.

One highlight was the baptism of a female guard who had been touched by the campaigners' love and the Gospel message. The Lincoln Jones family, the Melvin Davis family and others



God Works in Surprising Ways

By Louis Gerber

I went to baptize some correspondence students in Baviaanspoort prison, South Africa. While there, I found students studying lessons from Rob and Lydia Cook, and others studying with Marge and Alwyn Hefer from a neighboring congregation. I also knew that some of these men had been studying the New Life Behavior (NLB) lessons.

In August 2006, I baptized five of these students. Then on February 27, 2007, I baptized seven more.

When I went to baptize these particular World Bible School (WBS) students, they told me about the students studying "One Nation Under God" (ONUG). While in the prison chapel discussing the Bible, another group overheard our topic and joined us.



Tex Williams, H.M. Motsinger (Founder of NLB), Louis Gerber, John Reese, Ron Pottberg

At the end of the meeting, two new strangers came up to me. One asked if I knew Lydia Cook in Benoni, South Africa. That shocked me. How did they know about my friends? I confirmed that I worshiped at the same congregation as



Prison officials (l. and r.), ex-offenders and NLB instructor display earned New Life Behavior certificates from Louis Gerber.

Lydia and her family. Then he startled me with, "Ok. She wrote to us that she would send someone to come and baptize us. Are you Louis Gerber?"

That was when I said, "Yes, I am. Thank You God! Thank You!"



FLIGHT TO FREEDOM from page 3

My freedom came closer when Bahailu sent me back to the camps where I taught, baptized and established five more congregations among the Sudanese people. These congregations still grow. I am glad God used me, on my road to freedom, to become a preacher and servant of God to many souls.



In 2006, I was resettled in South Dakota under the refugee resettlement program. I am now a member of South Eastern church of Christ, Sioux Falls. I enjoy serving at His table. I'm married with two sons and three daughters. Even if I enjoy the best of freedoms with employment and good schools for my children, my plan is to go to a Bible College here in USA and go back to Africa and help with the work God has called me to do. I request your



T[💡]ips for Teachers!



Returning BRMs arrive at Alice's WBS Service Center in Zimbabwe...

By Mary Nell Kemper

It's working! It's working! The Business Reply Mail (BRM) envelopes that have been sent to World Bible School students in Zimbabwe are being used properly and are being returned to WBS teachers!

This is the first return mail with BRMs from Zimbabwe that we have received here at World Bible School. We have received more than 1,300 BRMs from this first return.

Alice, at our Zimbabwe Service Center, says that one student called her office to say

that she and her friend are delighted that study helpers are sending them BRM envelopes.

If you have WBS students in Zimbabwe and you would like to take part in this

special program to help these students return their lessons, please call Linda here at WBS and place an order. The cost for each envelope is five cents. The order line number is toll free: 1-877-393-0211.

We are looking forward to more, much more mail being returned from Zimbabwe because of this special service. If you are already taking part by using the BRMs, be sure to write in your code number on the front of the envelope: WBS Code #

No return address is required on the BRM. Your code number is the key to the BRM returning to you with your student's answers. For the present, WBS' use of the BRM service



for students applies only to Zimbabwe, which has suffered the most from economic difficulties.

...then Mary Nell in Texas forwards the BRMs to WBS teachers.



Notice: After current supplies of the Airmail envelope (GE-01) are exhausted, WBS will no longer offer this item for sale.

Notice: The AIDS tract has been reprinted and is available to purchase. The price is \$0.15 each, plus shipping charges.

A CALL TO SHARE FREEDOM from page 1

belongs to missionary Richard Benskin. He looks out through bars that once held slaves to be shipped to the Americas. The slave trade typifies so much that is repugnant about any person's loss of liberty.

Whatever our circumstances, each of us can identify with slavery in its worst form. Jesus revealed the basic truth about each of us: "I tell you the truth, *everyone* who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). All who are trapped in sin share the same grim losses — at the spiritual level — as the prisoner who deserves death row. That included us, until we met "Jesus" whose name signifies Deliverer. He paid the highest price to set us free. Now He declares our independence: "So you are no longer a slave, but



The gate—no longer in use—through which slaves passed on the way to ships.

The relevant news stories are so prolific that we should run two issues on this theme. This

son" (Galatians 4:7). To experience sonship is, by its very nature, to join the Son's war against tyranny.

World Bible School serves in the front lines of liberation.

present issue (September) is devoted to international examples. Lord willing, the next issue (November) will focus on American stories, mainly about the enormous impact of outreach to prisons in the United States.

Please let us know about your prison ministry. Both the present stories and the stories to come are astounding. They provide vivid testimony to the very real power of Jesus to liberate every sinner, even the most enslaved.

Truly, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom!" (2 Corinthians 3:17) These two issues inspire us all to join in the cause of liberty for all. Let freedom ring!



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Howard & Margaret Cox's many years of work in WBS

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Dr. Noel Ellis' 80th
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Doyce & Joyce Golden, my daughter & son-in-law

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FREE Free Courses & Free Postage for Freedom in Christ

by Lewis Short

My wife Tammy and I are missionaries in Milan, Italy. Recently we had opportunity to share the Gospel with different part of the world when we joined her parents, John and Beth Reese, in Zimbabwe for two weeks. God provided for us the whole time, even through apparent insufficiencies, as the country is experiencing severe economic and infrastructure difficulties.

We were hosted by Christians in Harare and Bulawayo, and



Chris Magadu with son

were touched by the generous hospitality of so many, despite their situation. One host, Jefta Mugweni, had studied in Milan and sent greetings to our older members there.

We worked with Alice Mhlanga at the Harare WBS office sending packages to church leaders in Zimbabwe for the **YOUTHREACH** initiative in which local congregations advertise the Bible courses in their area schools. The importance of this endeavor is magnified by the fact that the life expectancy for a Zimbabwean man is 37 and a woman is 34. In reality, today's high school students are almost literally tomorrow's leaders. There is an urgency for these people to know God through Jesus, and to know His impact on their lives and the lives of those around them. Since Zimbabwe is in such dire economic straits, WBS has instituted a business reply system within the country, where the student gets a postage-paid envelope with each of his lessons. People here often cannot even afford basic food staples. Many would not be able to have the "luxury"



of studying the Bible without this possibility of free postage.

With Tammy's parents, and Alicia Depwe, a WBS teacher from Austin, we visited many schools together with

the local **YOUTHREACH** coordinators: Chris Magadu and Brian Matutu in Harare, and Edmore Moyo in Bulawayo. We spoke to the principals at each school, and several called for immediate assemblies of the student bodies to hear our presentation. One example was the morning when Chris and I visited seven schools (total attendance over 10,000) where we distributed sign-up forms and also spoke to a couple of assemblies. It was normal for us to see interest among the teachers as well as the students, and all welcomed this opportunity for the students to better their knowledge of the Bible.

In conjunction with the Zimbabwean coordinators, we were able to collect over 7,500 names of high school students who had signed up during our short time there; since then another 8,600 names have also come in. The **YOUTHREACH** initiative has started WBS

continued on page 2

Upcoming with WBS...



The next issue continues an emphasis on **freedom in Christ.**

Are you sharing it with prisoners and others in America?

Send in your stories.



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