

**Gary Wyder**  
**Prison Evangelist**

# The Florida Prison Evangelist

*"...He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners..."* Luke 4:18

**January, 2012**

**(352) 377-0058**

**LAKE BUTLER CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**www.afn.org/~ccpm garywyder@cox.net**



***Grow In The Grace and Knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*** II Peter 3:18

On Saturday, January 7th, Off The Chain graduated five brothers; Ron Hensley, David White, Paul Gregory, Russell Jones and Ollie Savander (3rd, 4th, 6-8th in top row). Also pictured are Bert Rogers, Abe Guillermo and John Witt; all prison volunteers and mentors to the men and Daryl Townsend (seated), Director of Off The Chain.

Many coming out of prison are looking for a helping hand to get on their feet. Very few are willing to humble themselves to a disciplined, structured program. A program that dictates where they can go, how they can spend their money, who they can call or visit and in addition to that expects them to be involved in Bible studies or program activities almost every night after a hard day at work, cooking, laundry and household chores. They are held to self responsibility and have accountability to other residents and overseers. Of course, all church events are mandatory.

Only those who realize their lives are a mess, that their best thinking got them where they are at and willingly and humbly ask others to help them set goals, directions and seek Godly guidance in making decisions are even considered for Off The Chain Re-entry program. Learning how to think and act according to God's pattern is a life long challenge, to learn the basics takes at least six months (required minimum for the program), but most men need one year. Only one of the men that completed a year re-offended. He has repented and desires to come back upon release.

***"But this is a people robbed and plundered; All of them are snared in holes, And they are hidden in prison houses"***  
Isaiah 42:22

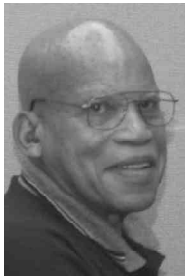
The Florida Prison Workshop will be held Saturday, March 17th at the Middleburg church of Christ. Residents and graduates of Off The Chain will speak, host and share their faith with us. The theme is, ***Snared in Holes, Hidden in Prison Houses***. While Isaiah is speaking of the condition of Israel, Paul states that men are "cheated through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world" (Colossians 2:7).

Through both speakers and classes, we will present methods, materials and examples of how to effectively release those bound. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., the workshop ends at 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Map, schedule and motel information is posted under Workshops on our website (listed above). Limited housing with members is available on a first come, first serve basis. Contact me if you need help or have other questions or needs.

The 6th Annual Jail/Prison Workshop of New Life Behavior Alabama is Friday and Saturday, February 17-18, 2012 at the Rainbow Church of Christ in Gadsden, Alabama. While the classes highlight New Life materials, there are classes for all workers. I will be teaching a class on Saturday morning, entitled, Things I Have Learned in Prison Ministry. For schedule and more details see [www.alabamaprisonministryworkshop.org](http://www.alabamaprisonministryworkshop.org)

The 39th National Jail/Prison Ministry Workshop will be held June 13-15 in Nashville, TN. The theme is ***Life Beyond the Bars***. Host is the Jackson Street congregation. Contact them for registration, motel and program information ([office@tnprisonministry.org](mailto:office@tnprisonministry.org) 615/321-0530).

A new National Directory of congregations doing jail and prison work is being updated. In 2010, there were 10,383 baptisms Nationwide reported from jail or prison works, 538 came from Florida. Statewide and National figures for 2011 are still being compiled. Help us with data from your work.



### Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant

In the last newsletter, I reported on the work of Leon Green and Jack Holroyd of Stuart. Leon died December 7th at the age of 83. He died "with his boots on", still active in the jail work at Martin County Jail. Pray for Alice, his wife of 63 years, their family, Jack and the church family. Please read the following article: <http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2011/dec/15/leon-green-remembered-for-his-work-with-inmates/>

Leon loved the Lord, his family, the church and the lost. It was a great honor to know him and be mentored by him.



### 2011 is History

Jimmy Hood, Jeff Conner, Gary & Ray Hagins spoke at several congregations in South and mid-Florida. Most of you have heard me speak many times, it is wonderful to have the brothers who were converted inside that are now out to present powerful Biblical messages to supporting congregations. Invite us to come visit your congregation and make sure your young people are present.

In 2011, 71 were baptized due to our work. That is the first time in many years there were less than 100 baptized. This is due to more time spent discipling new babes. Real lasting change involves strong mentoring and teaching. These brothers are the future of the prison ministry. We need some donated cars. Ed walks ten miles one way to work. Then he works hard at landscaping and walks ten miles home. Both our ministry and Off The Chain are non-profit 501 (c) (3) organizations, so donations are tax deductible. We send financial statements and quarterly reports to all supporters.

In 2011, 71 were baptized due to our work. That is the first time in many years there were less than 100 baptized. This is due to more time spent discipling new babes. Real lasting change involves strong mentoring and teaching. These brothers are the future of the prison ministry. We need some donated cars. Ed walks ten miles one way to work. Then he works hard at landscaping and walks ten miles home. Both our ministry and Off The Chain are non-profit 501 (c) (3) organizations, so donations are tax deductible. We send financial statements and quarterly reports to all supporters.



### Jambalaya For All

Every New Years, I make jambalaya and we have a house full. Mostly ex-cons from House of Hope and Off The Chain and some workers. We were to have 24, some could not make it. Apparently, I am a good cook. We reflect on the previous year, how the Lord has blessed us and speak about our plans and prayers for the New Year. FYI, Ed from previous article, is the one kneeling (must have worn his legs out walking).

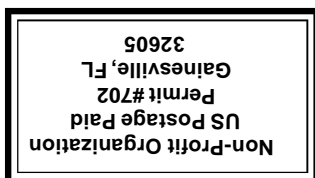
### 2012, 30th Year at Lake Butler



We moved to Lake Butler from Atlanta in July, 1982. This congregation had been involved in prison ministry since 1955, with worship services at Union CI in Raiford ever since then. They obviously have fed me well; both physically and spiritually. The brethren at Lake Butler are awesome. Even though we moved to Gainesville in 1985, as I was the Chaplain at the Road Prison there and Pat soon was working in the school system there, they continue to support, oversee and love on us. No long term success occurs without strong local backing.

We continually work to recruit new workers, me for prison; Pat for the jail ministry. We hear daily from those now out who are faithful to the Lord and obey the law. What a blessing this work has been to us. We pray for many more years of service.

We continually work to recruit new workers, me for prison; Pat for the jail ministry. We hear daily from those now out who are faithful to the Lord and obey the law. What a blessing this work has been to us. We pray for many more years of service.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lake Butler Church of Christ  
PO Box 776  
Lake Butler, FL 32054-0776

