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**The CCM
HERALD**

*Change a
Heart...*

*Change a
Life...*

*Change
a City.*

Volume 23 Edition 04
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Changing Lives *Impacting the region... one life at a time.*

RACE Program Graduation

This Sunday at Hilltop Worship Center we are not only celebrating The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we are also celebrating the graduation of three of our men from the RACE Program. Here are their testimonies. Please join us in prayer that God will use them to fulfill His purpose for each of their lives.

Jim Conerly

My mother and father had nine children, and of the nine I'm the youngest. I come from a wonderful Christian family.

I came to the ministry from prison on parole. CareCenter Ministries opened their doors to me when no one else would. I came here to

experience God. With the help of Care-Center, God has changed my whole life. Now I'm a better man. My spiritual eyes are open and my family can see the real me. I do not need drugs anymore. All I need to do is seek the Kingdom of God and let Him do His work in me.

Albert Collins

When I came to CareCenter, I was off track concerning the word of God. Also, I was broken and did not know what to expect from the ministry. Studying the word of God and the teaching provided by the leaders of the ministry on correction and obedience has turned around my understanding the right way. I now live in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, my Lord

and Savior, and have been saved. Restored with the Lord and my family, I have a second chance in life to be a good, loving, caring, compassionate Christian, who goes out into the world to help others less fortunate than me in life, as I was helped.

Lee Lawrence

I am a full blood Choctaw from south east Oklahoma. When I came to CareCenter Ministries I had lots of problems, including alcohol and lack of self worth, controlling my life.

About two months into the program, Jesus took my hand and said "walk with Me". Now I plan to be a workman and not be ashamed for Jesus Christ, who is my Lord and Savior.

CareCenter ACTS to Establish New Ministry Outposts in the Community

In 2006, after operating in East Dallas for twenty years, we began establishing our ministry outreach operations in the 75217 zip code. We believe we are called by God to take back the Pleasant Grove area from the spiritual powers that have ruled over it for decades.

When we first established our presence here and began our prayer walks over the area, we encountered much resistance. But due to God's grace and our persistent, ongoing efforts of prayer and personal ministry, doors are now opening in many areas.

It took almost three years of corporate prayer to be allowed to bring outreach ministry into the **Bruton Oaks Apts**, a large complex in the heart of Pleasant Grove, yet three more complexes have opened to us within the last month.

Just a few days after our annual banquet, Pastor Sawyer and four other representatives from CCM attended events at **Trinity Trails Apartments** and **Creekside Villas Apts**, sharing about CCM and its programs and ministries. **Spruce Square Apts**, the first place where we held Sidewalk Sunday School when we came to Pleasant Grove, has also recently called and spoken with Pastor Sawyer about having us come

back into their complex as well.

After praying and asking God for an umbrella name for this outreach, Pastor felt led to name this collective effort **ACTS**, an acronym for **Apartment Community Transformation Services**.

ACTS will encompass a broad range of on-site services to residents including;

Sidewalk Sunday School A Bible-based children's program on alternating Saturdays.

Overcomers A Christ-centered 12-step program for people struggling with addiction problems.

Life Skills Classes Techniques for success using time proven Biblical principles.

Block Parties On-site parties where the Gospel is preached openly.

Drop In Centers Where Ambassadors of ACTS become residents of the



ACTS 2009 Outreach season opened with an event at Bruton Oaks, March 27. The children played games and received bikes and toys. Many were reached through prayer and personal ministry.

complex, providing ongoing ministry to the other tenants.

ACTS will also provide referrals to other CareCenter Ministries, including: **The Basket** food pantry ministry, **The RACE Program** and **Tree of Life**, men's and women's discipleship and residential care programs for those struggling with life-controlling issues.

Contact Karen Edwards, ACTS volunteer coordinator to participate in our ACTS . 214-824-9852



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**Come see what
God is doing!
Sundays
at 10 a.m.**

The Mission Field is Right Here!

Spring has arrived and it's time for outreach. If you would like to take a mission trip without ever leaving the city, come with us as we take Sidewalk Sunday School to the children of the Pleasant Grove apartment communities.

Saturday, April 18 Meet at Hilltop Worship Center, 9:00 a.m. to go to the apartments contacted through our ACTS ministry (see ACTS story inside). We will be visiting, handing out bags of candy and flyers about Sidewalk Sunday School to the children.

Saturday, April 25 Ministry teams meet at Hilltop Worship Center, 9:00 a.m. to go to the apartments for Sidewalk Sunday School. We will do events at four apartment complexes, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. We are asking for volunteers from other churches in teams of at least 8 from each church to do Sidewalk Sunday School every other Saturday.

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**You can make a difference!
Become a volunteer...**

Go to the mission fields in the inner-city. For 1 day outreach ministry opportunities, visit: www.carecenterministries.org

For directions and/or more information contact Karen at 214-824-9852.

Annual Banquet Focuses on Relationships

Past, Present and Future

The "Spring Friend-Raiser" banquet, held at Eddie Deen's Ranch on March 26, turned out to be a very special evening indeed. Not only was it a great venue with an Old West theme and "Presidential" class barbeque, but the music of Christian artist John Cox, who came in from Nashville for the event, was excellent. The event featured a slideshow on two screens showing scenes and faces from CareCenter's various outreach ministries and a video presenting testimonies of men and women whose lives had been changed forever through the discipleship ministries of CCM. We had a great turnout including many old friends of the ministry, going back to its earliest days, as well as many new ones who were attending for the first time.

Greg Isbell, Pastor of Grace Works Church, acted as MC and shared several stories of the early days of CareCenter Ministries and his association with Pastor Sawyer. The beginnings were traced back to an Overcomers group at Church on the Rock in Rockwall, TX under the leadership of Pastor Charlie and Sharon Burton and the covering of Senior Pastor Dr. Larry Lea; and to a small food pantry in East Dallas founded in 1986 as an outreach of that church, led by Leonard Brannon, now of Reconciliation Outreach.

That Overcomers group and that small food pantry for the needy of the inner city was the seed that has grown to become CareCenter Ministries. Pastor Sawyer shared how his life was changed from one of drug addiction to one of service to others by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and how he first found his calling while working in that food pantry.

There were guests from many churches, all of whom were asked to become "fruit inspectors" and examine the fruit of this ministry. But the testimonies of lives changed by the people who have come through CareCenter's programs, as well as the testimonies of their family members, was the most inspiring part of the evening. The personal testimony of John Emerson, who was accompanied by his wife Lori, left the crowd deeply moved.

We are very thankful to all of the people from all of the different ministries and businesses who came to support us. We are thankful for all of our old friends who have been in relationship with us for so many years and also for our new ones, for whom this was possibly a first introduction. May the Lord bless you for your prayers and support as we work together as laborers in the harvest.

New Creation Means New Responsibility!

By Eldred Sawyer, CCM President

There is nothing more exciting than to know that God has used you, a broken vessel, as His ambassador to help lives become changed. I'm a living testimony, but it's God's message and call for each one of us. The Apostle Paul said it best in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

God's call is for us to become "New in Him" and then do a new thing "For Him." We become a new creation as soon as God saves and rescues us. Then, God wants to send us out as His ambassadors to reconcile the world to Him.

I believe that a large percentage of backsliding is due to people not getting a revelation of who they are in Christ and then moving forward in ministry to release the gift of God in them to others. Instead of moving forward in the work of God, we become consumers, conditioned to receive and receive. It's the Dead Sea principle, and friends, this has to change!

Many years ago, there was a man named William Booth that raised up an army like the one I envision. He gathered the poor, the addicted, and broken. He changed a nation.

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, understood that people got saved and delivered not to simply sit around and be saved and delivered, but that people needed to get busy with the work of God. Booth didn't go after the rich and those of influence. He went to the same people we go after. He went to the same people that many of us are or used to be.

In John Chapter 4, Jesus had a powerful prophetic evangelism encounter with a woman who was considered the worst of the worst. After seeing Jesus for who He was, she immediately left her water pot and began to tell everyone she saw about this remarkable man she had met.

We have enough people who are affiliated with this ministry to change this neighborhood, this city, this nation, and this world. Jesus started with a rag-tag group of twelve. I look at all the people that God brings through CareCenter's doors and I know that God doesn't simply want to save them and deliver them, but also wants to use them as vessels to turn the world upside down for His glory

But here's the problem. Many people never enter into the work that God has for them, and the seed of the Kingdom is choked out because they become focused on themselves and the cares of this world. My job, and the job of those like me, is to help the saints get beyond themselves and onto the work of God. Ephesians 4:12 tells you and I that ministry leadership is created so that the saints can serve. *"...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."*

When I got saved, I immediately realized that He had plucked me from death's throws! So, my heart's cry was "God use me. Stick me in that food pantry and let me make food boxes." I had no interest in going back to my past. I now wanted to follow God's plan for the rest of my life. So I served, and I didn't wait till He fixed me to do it.

I promise you that if you view your salvation, healing, or deliverance in that way, then the sky is the limit. Don't limit yourself to your past. Don't take what Jesus has done in your life for granted. Where have you come from? What has God delivered you from? How has He healed you? The least you could do is say, "God use me!" Once you do, He will. In the process you will find out His purpose for your life.

We get so caught up in the mentality of "how am I going to survive," or "I've got to make it happen." God is saying, "Just



Pastor Eldred with his wife, Jeanmarie Sawyer

get a hold of your purpose. Walk out who you are in me. And, let Me take care of the rest." Believe me, He'll do a much better job than you of taking care of yourself, but it first starts with getting onto the work of God. If you want to find your calling, serve. If you're satisfied with the mundane and willing to risk drying up on the vine, then just sit in that chair Sunday after Sunday, receiving all you can get.

My personal call to ministry started when I began to serve. I served in a food closet. I went to the food pantry at 5:00 a.m., loaded up about 5,000 lbs of food, stocked the food on the shelves, put food in the boxes, carried it to the people, and I began to say to the people, "Is there something that I can pray with you about?"

As I began to pray for people, the word of God that I had been reading and meditating began to come out of me, and I started leading people to Jesus Christ. Lives began to be changed and people were transformed right before my eyes. And where did it start? In a hot, sweaty, stinky, food pantry, where only a third of the people who came in for food gave a "rip" about what we had to say.

Come to our outreaches and see for yourself. Don't just stand there with your hands in your pocket or just talk to your Christian friends. Talk to somebody in need and let the word of God come through you and into them.

Once you do, you'll learn what spiritual life is really all about. There is no better feeling in all the world than to see someone transformed and reconciled to God before your very eyes.

Heed God's call and become not only a new creation, but also take the responsibility to become an ambassador for Jesus Christ!