

Love and Compassion Ministries

In the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit

August 1, 2011 In The Year of Our Lord

NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 8

AN INTERVIEW WITH PASTOR JAMES HOLBROOK ABOUT OUR PRISON MINISTRY

I think everyone *knows* Pastor Holbrook was the Senior Pastor at McGregor Baptist Church for thirty years.



During that time, McGregor grew to what is described by some as a mega church. More than 10 years ago, Ron Willis asked Pastor Holbrook if he would be willing to go to the Lee County Jail and share God with the male inmates. He has been doing it ever since. We wanted our readers to know what the inmates mean to him, and why he keeps doing it, so we asked him several questions.

Did you pastor any churches before coming to McGregor in Fort Myers?

Right out of seminary, in 1957, I went to be Pastor of Burtonsville Baptist Church. Burtonsville is a suburb of Washington DC. There were 20 people including kids. We remodeled an old two room school house with volunteer labor. It grew to 300 while I was there for eleven years.

How did you know it was God's will for you and Gean to move to Fort Myers and pastor at McGregor Baptist Church?

I had lead a "Youth-led Revival" (Was I ever that young?) in 1966 at McGregor. It was quite a moving time. When the pastor moved on two years later, they asked me to come.

I asked the Lord for three "fleeces": a great demonstration of His power, at the trial sermon; a unanimous call; and to be able to sell my house quickly. I preached the same sermon which I had used the Sunday before at my Maryland church. Half the congregation came forward. People wept on their knees, in the aisles. People publicly confessed their sins. It was overwhelming!

Soon they called and said it was the first vote on which that church had ever been unanimous. I put my house on the market on Monday, and had cash for it by Wednesday. That assurance helped me through hard times in the first few years.

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How big was McGregor when you came?

McGregor had about 100 in attendance. (Interviewers note: If you look on the internet today, McGregor is described as a mega church as a measure of the number of people attending.)

How did you know it was time and God's will to move the church from McGregor Blvd. to the swamp on Colonial Blvd.?

It was killing me. We had three morning services plus a PM service. We had bought three houses (with pools) to tear down for parking spaces. We had no where to go. So we began to knock, and the door on Colonial was the only one that opened.

When Ron Willis asked you to come to the stockade to teach the men, had you ever done anything like that before?

Yes. I started preaching in jails while in college. I had a captive audience while I tried to learn how.

You've been working with the inmates in the Lee County Jail for a long time, and I've heard inmates really enjoy your messages and the time you spend with them. How do you make them like your messages and see how the messages will work for them?

I preach the same sermons I preached at McGregor. The Word of God is the Word of God! But I have enthusiasm, and I love them, and they can sense it!

And, why do you keep doing it? Is there one thing you stress to the men? Is it Jesus and Salvation?

I feel that, as long as God gives me fantastic health, that is so I might serve Him. So, I try never to turn down an opportunity. I stress that "the best is yet to be," if they will walk with Jesus, I Corinthians 2:9, (a little out of context, but true.) I give an invitation to salvation no matter what the theme may be. (I always did!)

I was always surprised and impressed with how many of the inmates already knew Jesus, and how well they knew God's Word. Many could quote a Scripture for almost any situation, yet they keep getting in trouble. Why? And, do you have any suggestions that will let them let God have control of their lives?

I assume, that if they are saved, they just haven't grown strong yet. I have besetting sins over which I have not had complete victory yet.

Most are there on drug charges. I never ask why they are there. I don't even hang around to chat. I preach and leave.

It seems like everybody, including those who don't know God well, turn to Him when times get tough. Are the men in jail more anxious or willing to hear about Jesus than many on the outside?

Why did Israel turn to God, when things were rough, and then return to their sin? The temptation is strong, and most do not hook up with a support group. But the recidivism for those who know God is less than the general population in jail.

Accepting Jesus is so easy, why is it so difficult for so many?

I wish I knew. Pride, peer pressure, Satan's lies which blind their eyes.

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Our newsletter goes to many who are in prison. What would you say to them to make them feel more at peace while they are incarcerated, and how can they keep our Lord and Savior as their only God when they leave prison?

I would encourage them to find a support group. Find a good Church, but also get into a Sunday School Class where you can be encouraged, and where they will notice you if you drop out.

Families and friends of inmates sometimes suffer more than the inmate. Do you have any suggestions they might use to keep God as part of the inmate's lives when they are released?

Get with a Spiritual program yourself! Grow with them! Years ago, I led a man to Christ at jail. His mother attended our church, I called him at her home and invited him to our Wednesday prayer meeting. She brushed it off, saying he just got out and needed some pleasure time. That night he was picked up in the vicinity of a crime. With his record, he was a prime suspect, and he was back in jail. Why wouldn't she have tried harder to bring him to church with her, rather than making excuses for him?

Do you have a story of something special that happened as a result of your ministry at the jail?

I have a man in my Sunday School Class who was saved in my ministry at jail. One stormy night, they were sure that I wouldn't make it. He tells it so dramatically. They looked out at the black stormy night, and here I came, silhouetted against the lightening flashes. That night I told them Jesus loved them no matter what they had done. That night it seemed to take. Jesus continued to deal with him while hospitalized. He had been drunk for 25 years. Today he is sober, radiant, victorious, hard working, and on fire for the Lord. What a joy!

I know of your love of cars. Do you share that with the men?

No, I really don't get into cars with them. However, I once won the man who was head of design for RCA by letting him photograph my 1/43 scale carved cars. I also won "Candy Apple Joe" Bailon, who invented candy apple red paint, to Christ after carving him a model of his most famous custom and taking it to his California home.

All of us here at Love And Compassion Ministries appreciate Pastor Holbrook's service to the Lord and his dedication to share the Word of God with the men at the Lee County Stockade.



Many come to know Christ through a jail or prison experience

CHRISTIAN HUMOR

A little boy who wanted \$100 very badly prayed for two weeks, but nothing happened. Then he decided to write God a letter requesting \$100. When the postal authorities received the letter addressed to God, USA, they decided to send it to the President. The President was so impressed, touched and amused that he instructed his secretary to send the boy \$5. Mr. President thought this would appear to be a lot of money to the little boy. The little boy was delighted with the \$5 and immediately sat down to write a thank you note to God that read, "Dear God, Thank you so much for sending me the money. However, I noticed for some reason you had to send it through Washington DC, and as usual, those devils deducted 95%."

The Fisherman's Club

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen.

And, lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact, the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish, and the fish were hungry. Week after week, month after month, and year after year, those who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to go fishing.

Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. They sponsored costly nationwide and worldwide congresses to discuss fishing and hear about all the ways of fishing, such as the new fishing equipment, fish calls and whether any new bait was discovered.

These fishermen built large and beautiful buildings called Fishing Headquarters. The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do; however, they didn't fish.

All the fishermen seemed to agree that what is needed is a board which could challenge fishermen to be faithful in fishing. The board was formed by those who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, and to promote the idea of fishing in far-away streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived.

Large, elaborate and expensive training centers were built whose purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Those who taught had doctorates in fishology. But the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing.

Some spent much study and travel to learn the history of fishing and to see faraway places where the founding fathers did great fishing in centuries past. They lauded the faithful fishermen of years before who handed down the idea of fishing.



Many who felt the call to be fishermen responded. They were commissioned and sent to fish. And they went off to foreign lands ... to teach fishing.

Now it's true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen clubs.

They anguished over those who were not committed enough to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men?"

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Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who don't catch fish were really not fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be.

Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? Is one following if he isn't fishing?

If Christ were to return to this Earth today in physical form, would He find us fishing, in obedience to Him, or would he find us organizing, talking about fishing, and making plans to be the best Fishing Headquarters anywhere?

Author Unknown

Love and Compassion Ministries Goes Fishing

Love and Compassion Ministries mission statement consists of nine steps. The first is to: **Introduce as many lost people to Christ as possible.** So, we go fishing for the lost every day.

In our prison ministries we talk about our Lord to the men who are imprisoned, and we invite them to accept Jesus as their Savior.

In our street outreach ministry we feed and talk to the homeless about Jesus.

In our youth ministry we talk to the young men in a youth camp about Jesus.

In our drug recovery ministry we talk to those addicted to drugs or alcohol about Jesus, and when possible, we get them into a Christ centered recovery program.

We talk about Jesus to all who come to us! Fishing is fun, especially when we catch one!

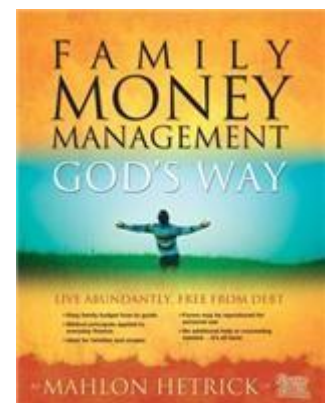
Would you like to go fishing with us?

Christian Financial Counseling

239-337-2122

For many years Christian Financial Counseling has served our Lord and Savior and our community by counseling people in God's principles for managing their money. Thousands of people have improved their financial situations using their advice. Now in these tough financial times, Christian Financial Counseling needs our prayers and financial support, so they can continue their ministry. Our community needs CFC. Please join us in praying for them. If you would like to help, their address is 2267 First St Unit 15, Fort Myers, FL 33901.

Thank You!



Blueprint To Break the Cycle of Homelessness

According to the Lee County Homeless Coalition there are more than 3,400 homeless people in Lee County today, and that does not include all the homeless people in the Lee County jail, or people who are in prison, who will come back to this area with no place to live when released.

People are living on the streets, out of their cars, under bridges, in the woods, behind dumpsters, in doorways of businesses, and various other places where law enforcement will allow them to sleep. These people know far too well how dangerous it can be to sleep in these areas, yet they have to because the homeless shelters we do have are full. Many of the homeless are trying to keep their families together, and the children are suffering because of it!

The government can't do much more than they are doing, because of the lack of money. Many of the homeless end up in jail, and repeatedly visit the hospitals or short-term mental health facilities. This costs the tax payers millions of dollars each year. The cycle of homelessness for most individuals and families begins with a loss of job, and to end homelessness it has to start with a job. Steady employment and permanent housing is what we all need. Emergency shelter or transitional housing is only a band aid. Breaking that cycle and preventing future homelessness are of critical importance to Lee County, the State of Florida, and to our nation because, to some extent, homelessness hurts us all.

That's the bad news. The good news is that these numbers are not so overwhelming as to be insurmountable, and we can change the tide by everyone doing their part. Back in the fifties, cities could not afford to build hospitals so the Baptist, Methodist and Catholics, to name a few, built and ran wonderful faith based non profit hospitals to provide the services needed after WWII. We need to look at what faith based organizations have done in the past and build on their foundation.

Recent cost-benefit studies show that programs, such as what Love and Compassion Ministries, Inc. has been proposing for years, not only are effective for the clients served, but are cost-effective for taxpayers as well. One study reflected that every \$1 spent on treatment for substance abuse resulted in a savings of \$7 in the criminal justice system, and a one-third decrease in the use of emergency room services.

I invite you to go to www.lovecompassion.com, and see the blueprint. This plan goes beyond care giving. It provides a broad plan to give people jobs and housing, while teaching many to stay off drugs and learn a trade. It provides for teaching discipline, education, team-work, and a sense of dignity and self-worth. Residents will be responsible for the function and upkeep of the facility. We will be self-supporting by raising our own crops, cattle, and manufacturing and merchandising items for sale.

We will focus on education, building self-worth and self-confidence. Everyone will have something to share, no matter how great or small. Love and Compassion Ministries blueprint is designed to guide our community to help us coordinate and develop programs and initiatives to break the cycle of homelessness, and prevent future homelessness. For this plan to become reality, we must have the support of dedicated, effective providers of services, along with funding from individuals, Churches and businesses.

MAKING DONATIONS TO SUPPORT LOVE AND COMPASSION MINISTRIES HAS NEVER BEEN EASER

You can Use PayPal at www.LoveCompassion.com

You can Use your bank's Bill Pay, Or You can

**Mail your donation to:
Love And Compassion Ministries, Inc.
P.O. Box 152636
Cape Coral, Florida 33915**



Love And Compassion Ministries

Dear Friends,

Life is obviously filled with critical concerns, and no place is this more evident than in the responsibilities that God has entrusted to the leadership of this ministry. Because LCM is ministering to so many, all at the same time, through our Street Ministry, Prison Ministry, Homeless Ministry, Youth Ministry and Drug Program I have concerns as never before.

Opposition, hardships of various sorts and difficulties go with the territory of ministry in a fallen world. My Lord has given me many reasons to walk this line. but I can say the weight of ministry becomes stressful and despairing sometimes. We know our warfare is spiritual, not carnal. We must refuse to boast of our labors, but affirm that all the glory should focus on our Lord, for Christ's power is magnified in our weakness.

(Paul wrote in II Cor. 4:8-9) We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

The Bible teaches us that in the last days, difficult, challenging, hard, stressful and dangerous times would come. Ministry is often tough and filled with hardships and pressures, and sometimes the tendency is to run away! Many times it seems to be the only logical solution. Those in ministry work may simply feel, "Oh well, what's the use. This will never work!" To run away and make excuses is to become a servant of our own selfish desires, fears and false values. There is encouragement and motivation found throughout the New Testament to stay the course. Number one is having an adequate purpose for life that gives one a sense of destiny and meaning for living. Purposeful living comes from recognizing God's call and will for one's life. Having an adequate reason and goal for life and for pressing on, becomes tremendously motivational just as a soldier is motivated in battle.

If our lives are motivated by selfish desires like praise, recognition and success, then we have a totally inadequate and empty reason for living. We simply will not be able to endure the varied hardships, criticism, nor the battles that come along with ministry work.

Number two is being good stewards of the gifts and abilities God has given us. We are stewards of something which belongs to another, but which we have been entrusted to manage. This includes spiritual gifts and resources that God has entrusted us with.

Number three is keeping faith and a good conscience. To fail to follow through on God's call and the trust given to us, is to act in unbelief. It is to fail to believe God and trust Him, His wisdom, purposes, promises, and provisions.

Number four is maintaining Biblical motives and goals for ministry. Living for God's glory, rather than for the praise of men or for personal gain, is crucial.

I am very excited about how God will be using LCM through the rest of 2011 and beyond, because we have several new board members our Lord has raised up and given them responsibility for leading, protecting, feeding, and caring for His sheep. I believe there is a burden on their hearts for the people to whom we minister. They have a calling on their lives to love the unloved, reach out to the lost, and to show love and compassion to people of all walks of life. Please join me in coming alongside them in supporting and praying for them and LCM.

In the Presence of our Lord,

Ron Willis

Ron Willis, President
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www.LoveCompassion.com**

Stamp

**SEND YOUR PRAYER REQUEST TO ...
PrayerRequest@LoveCompassion.com**



If you would like to be a part of our exciting prayer team, please send us your e-mail address and we will send you updates of people who need our prayers.

It is a great privilege that we have, as

sons and daughters of the KING, to be able to come into HIS presence with our needs, our hurts, and our cares.

We know that we can leave them at HIS feet because HE cares for us and will always answer us in our time of need.

Prayer requests are very important to us! We always need people who are caring and willing to personally pray for others' needs.

As we pray for their physical, moral, and spiritual needs, we must understand that because of JESUS CHRIST'S love for all of us, we are

able to do this. CHRIST is the answer to every human's needs.

As members of the BODY of CHRIST, we have the privilege and responsibility to pray for our Churches, our missionaries, public officials, other ministries, and each other.

It is so exciting to see prayers being answered. May we always give CHRIST the Glory!