



# March 2015 Newsletter

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## *The Many Faces of FIT*

Pictured above is part of an eight-to-twelve-member team that meets every week at a restaurant for a great time of fellowship and to share success stories before heading out to facilitate FIT classes at Polk Correctional Institution at Polk City, FL. The group splits up into five tables to present the same lesson with 8-10 clients at each table. At the restaurant, success stories are shared by each of the groups. Not only are all facilitators treated equally but everything is done with a team approach. This works very well. Everyone has a servant attitude. Everyone works well together with no big I's and little you's. Everyone acts and feels like a part of team and enjoy each other's company. By having a larger group, individuals are able to spell each other when they cannot attend. Provision made for coverage ahead of time. Three denominations are represented within the group: Assemblies of God, Baptist, and Nazarene. There are no doctrinal disputes as FIT is cross-denominational in its very nature.

The group is led by Board Members Ed White (left) and Fred DeMouey (third from right). Going around the table clockwise are Todd Knaack (in black in chair facing away, Ed White, Johnny Ford, Jad Tremel, Fred DeMouey, Bill Howe, and Phil Harris (white shirt).

Several of the 100-hour (complete program) graduates stay on for more classes and a number have been trained to be peer facilitators. Peer facilitators are inmates who have completed the 100-hour program, have gone through leadership training by our staff, and have been approved by the local prison officials. Some of them are "lifers" and have gone as missionaries to another prison to carry on the work of FIT in prisons where we have no other representation. Each of the PCI peer facilitators have a separate individual mentor who supervises and critiques each lesson. PCI has experienced 585 graduations and 9,236 student-hours in the last seven years. The ministry started out humbly with little acceptance of our program and has grown fast during the last two years because of persistence and faithfulness in working with the prison officials.

The PCI team considers prison ministry their main calling. Other teams throughout the state work with jails, recovery houses, churches, family court, visitation, correspondence, or schools. Next month we will feature a group that meets monthly to address local community needs. It takes all kinds of people and efforts to get the job done.

## Inmate Visitation in Prisons



Prisons and jails are set up and function differently. Prisons are generally for long-time sentences of one year or more while jails are for shorter ones and holding until trial. It is usually easier to visit inmates in jail because they are often closer to home and can be visited more times per week. On the other hand, physical contact is not allowed and communications are through closed-circuit TV or through glass. Prisons allow longer but more intimate visits but may restrict them to weekends.

A recent trip by President Don Pratt to visit Jeremy Brownell illustrates a fairly typical prison visit. There are many people present with old and young, babies, and families. Everyone is in a good mood and people are polite to one another. There is an equal number of whites, blacks, and hispanics. Some of the children are feeding two sandhill cranes and smaller birds. Couples and families are taking walks around the enclosed 60 X 100 foot grassy area.

Pratt met Jeremy years ago when he was one of the pastors of the House of Hope in Bradenton, FL. After turning to Christ, Jeremy followed up by altering his not-very-Christlike tatoos. He

paid for a tato artist to change the knife on one arm to a picture of Jesus. Later, having no money, a church member paid to turn a questionable image on his other arm into an angel. After a period of time, Jeremy backslid and ended up in prison. In prison he has regained his footing and has turned back to God. His knowledge of scriptures is outstanding.

Jeremy repeatedly expressed gratitude for Pratt's visit. Pratt has been his only visitor since coming to prison. Other than being told by a family member that his father died, there has been no other contact.

Below is a timeline and description of the visit.

8:15 AM	left home for the prison
9:30 AM	arrive at the prison and wait in line to be process
10:45 AM	get to the front of the line; told to take some items back to the car
11:10 AM	finally get processed, patted down, and turn in visitation request
11:15 AM	got into commissary line to buy food
11:30 AM	inmate arrives (the first time it was a one and a half hour wait
12:00 PM	finally get through food line
12:20 PM	finally get an available microwave to heat food
12:30 PM	find a stone picnic table in an outside pavillion as the inside picnic area is full
1:30 PM	after eating and fellowship, the inside is less crowded and we move inside
2:30 PM	we find some Bibles and have a Bible study
3:05 PM	visitation is ended and we are processed out
3:15 PM	return to parking lot
5:05 PM	arrived home