

# Building Bridges

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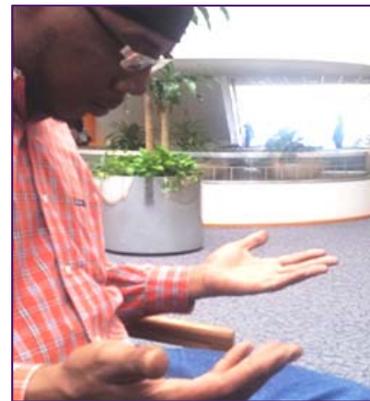
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## Worthy Suffering, Wasted Suffering

Pain and suffering can be devastating for anyone. And most of us have asked the age old question, "Why would a just and loving God allow this? It seems so cruel and unfair!"

Suffering is a part of every life in this world, but the question is better asked, "Is this a USEFUL suffering or a WASTED suffering?"

- King Pharaoh experienced the wasted suffering of stubbornness.
- King Saul tasted the wasted suffering of rebellion.
- Prince Joseph endured the useful suffering of submission.



Vertez surrendered his life to God and finally experienced peace.

- King Jesus bore the worthy suffering of surrender to God

Jesus' suffering stands alone in history, as He was perfect man and God suffering in our place.

In the court halls, men and women face difficult, "self-inflicted dramas" that can drive them one way or the other—to a total waste

or a total and useful surrender.

LET GO + LET GOD = PEACE.

God himself was so moved by man's suffering that he surrendered his only Son to live and suffer as a man and then die a uniquely Worthy death on the cross as payment for our sin.

## BTGM Highlighted by Reentry Alliance

The February 24 Greater Gwinnett Reentry Alliance meeting, attended by about 60

representatives of Gwinnett reentry ministries, saw Bridge the Gap introduced as the "front end" of

prison ministry in the court halls.

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## BTGM Highlighted

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*God worked in Jonathan to make wasted suffering into useful suffering for the Kingdom of God, and he shared that with the watching inmates.*

Bridge the Gap was also noted as a “lobbyist” at the jail, assisting inmates in their reentry into society with temporary housing, food, transportation, etc.

BTGM has recognized this emergency need, and now has a separate ministry account under the supervision of Russell Gray, the newly

elected President of the Greater Gwinnett Reentry Alliance. (GGRA)

Russell has been working with BGTM in this aspect of reentry since 2011. Long before that he was the “go-to guy” at the jail for helping homeless inmates who have nowhere to go when

they get out. (Gifts to BGTM can be designated for the reentry benevolence account.)

The networking between the jail administration and GGRA demonstrates the cooperative relationships we and other reentry ministries have developed with the county.

## 1st Service Broadcast by Closed Circuit

Today Gwinnett jails house 1,923 persons, far fewer than they did ten years ago. But our only contact with inmates has been by one on one visitation, small group Bible studies, and by forwarded literature. Until now that has made full coverage difficult at best.

But February saw the first GGRA sponsored service to be viewed live by closed circuit video to all the viewing inmates in each section of the jail.

Jonathan Marion—a

returning citizen from First Baptist Church of Lilburn—had the opportunity to share his testimony at this event.

Jonathan’s battle with drugs and their destructive effects on his family stands in sharp contrast to the transformed life he now lives. God worked in Jonathan to make wasted suffering into useful suffering for the Kingdom of God, and he shared that with the watching inmates. Then he challenged them all, saying that they too can be rescued through



Jonathan shares his testimony.

Christ, our only HOPE.

Please pray God will use this closed circuit video to permeate all the jail pods (sections) and soften hearts throughout the building on a regular basis.

Thanks to GGRA for their leadership.

## “Useful Suffering” Letters

We are at a point where we cannot keep up with all the cards and letters coming in describing what God has been doing in our Detention Center. They are full of needs and miracles, and we can only share bits and pieces from a few of these moving accounts.

We need more volunteers to manage and respond to the current volume of inmate responses.

Please pray for us, and let us know if you would like to help.

*I just want to start off by saying thank you David for encouraging me. The Lord used you and answered my prayers to show his hand in my situation. The Lord made me a promise I AM COMING HOME IN THE NAME OF JESUS and He used you to encourage me.... I'm walking in His will and I feel so full of the Spirit and so blessed. Thank you for what you do sir you help change people's lives. God has blessed you and you're storing up your treasures in heaven. Please continue to pray for me and my situation as I pray for you. -Cornelius*

*I will continue to talk with people about church. The promise book that you sent to me has been a great blessing. I can't thank you enough for this gift. I thought you would come by last week to share the Word. As you requested I found two other people who need ministry service to them uplifted. Lee \_\_\_ don't have a place to stay when he gets out. Does your organization help people in need like this? Please visit him because he needs God. Ivan \_\_\_ is a Mexican guy but speaks good English. He is hungry for God but needs prayer. Please keep us all here in your prayers. - Dennis*

*May peace be with you in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray all is well outside in the free world. As for me I am still in God's class room training, praying, fasting and applying His Word to my life on a day to day walk. It was almost 2 ½ years ago the last time I saw you face to face in \_\_\_ pod where I claimed the pod for Jesus and for 19 months God's hand moved in \_\_\_ pod. I was moved to \_\_\_ and have been here for 4 months and the fishing is GOOD... I sing the songs that God has given me and do my best to put melody of praise waiting on God to move my case. I know that God will be there in the name of Jesus. Until then on His promise in Jesus name, your brother. - Vernon*



*“I pray all is well outside in the free world. As for me I am still in God's class room training, praying, fasting and applying His Word to my life on a day to day walk.”*

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I will draw all men unto me.  
John 3:14



**We're on the Web! Look for our new, improved site.**

[www.bridgethegapministries.org](http://www.bridgethegapministries.org)

OUR VISION is to Bridge the Gap between the justice system and the mercy of God to effect lasting change in the individual lives and families of incarcerated persons with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so that they rejoin our community as (law-abiding, good, or honorable) citizens. Justice and mercy meet at the cross. The name is taken from Ezekiel 22:30, where God says, "I searched for someone to stand in the gap . . . but I found no one."

For more information please contact: Chaplain David Burgher, President, BTGM at (770) 601-0265

## God's Redemptive Grace in February

*"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate." Luke 15:24*

**Celebrate with us all those who prayed for forgiveness and salvation.**

Sherry, Carlos, Kevin, Jasmine, Jamaine, Colby, Harriett, Quine, Javon, Willie, Jeffrey, Demond, Tracy, Alcuero, Diego, Diego, Jr., Tan, Lu, Alex, Cassidy, Juan, Katherine, Howard, Lakesha, Alecsa, Giorgio, James, Hunter, Santiago, Flor, Tavonce, Luis, Maria, Daniel, Destiny, Verne, Ashley, Alfredo, Regina, James, Justin, Chris, William, Thomas.

## Support the BTGM Book Drive

"If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." John 3:14

The team of Bridge the Gap Ministries has expanded in ways we could only dream 12 years ago. With expansion, though, we are in even greater need of resources for the men and women at the Detention Center. They are eager to learn the Word of God and to receive mentoring in their new faith in Christ!

Your used Christian books can be priceless treasures in the hands of hundreds or one day thousands of inmates, and they can be used again and again. Just call me for a pick-up (in Gwinnett County or the greater Atlanta area) or arrange delivery to First Baptist Church of Lilburn.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Chaplain David Burgher, President, BTGM – (770) 601-0265

Thank you for your faithful financial and Prayer Support! It keeps us on the front lines where we can see wasted suffering changed into useful suffering by the grace and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.