

GREATER WACO EMMAUS GROUP NEWSLETTER



De Colores



Greater Waco Monthly Gathering

MAY 1, 2008

Moody UMC

6:30 pm Agape Feast

7:00 pm Worship

The following article appeared in the Fort Worth Star Telegram on April 13, 2008:

A life of crime turned around by a child's note

Written by: JON MARK BEILUE Amarillo Globe-News

AMARILLO - All Michael Kelly wanted was some chocolate chip cookies to take back to his Clements Unit cell. He didn't care about any religion or Jesus or God. That was a sign of weakness, of foolishness. And Kelly was neither weak nor a fool. He was a survivor, calculating and cunning. He was one bad man in one bad world. If he had to, Michael Kelly would kill you. And you. And you. Whatever he had to do, he did. He could kill a man at 11:45 a.m. and wonder what was for lunch 15 minutes later. His life was drained of emotion. Pity, remorse and certainly love were not part of it. "To me, he had a frightening appearance," said Rick Barkley, a Gruver farmer who was part of a Kairos prison ministry team that weekend. "He just sent chills in me. ... He just scared me, so to speak." Kelly, serving three 40-year terms, was sent to Clements in 1990 from another Texas Department of Criminal Justice facility. Active in a prison gang, he needed to be separated. He was among the most feared inmates. In those days, when the Kairos prison ministry came for its weekend retreat, the warden would pick out the roughest prisoners to send. The retreat was in its second of three days. It was March 21, 1994. There were goody bags, and all Kelly wanted was some homemade cookies. And there in his bag was a note. He read it. Then read it again. Read it one more time. He folded it and put it in his pocket. It was from an anonymous 11-year-old girl. She had written, in purple crayon: "I don't care if you're in prison for killing someone like me. I still want you to know I love you and Jesus loves you too." 'I want to change lives' It's early Thursday evening 14 years later, and Michael Kelly is speaking from the heart. Thirty-eight people are in the Faith City Ministries chapel, and Kelly is walking down the aisle, patting one on the shoulder, shaking an outreached hand of another, spreading the Word. A small, worn Bible was in his hands. A few tears slid down his cheek. "I've been in some dark places, man, dark places," he tells them. "Places where there was no hope, no way out. I didn't know what to do until I knew Jesus loved me. ... He picked the most unlikely character like me to tell you he loves you." After 29 minutes, Kelly was finished. He prayed, and the congregation left for a supper of meatloaf and potatoes. Kelly is just more than a month into the first real job he's ever had. He's the chaplain of Faith City Ministries in downtown Amarillo. Denied three times, Kelly was paroled last July to end 17 years at Clements. He was sent to Faith City as a condition of his parole and spent six months in its prison release program. "I want to help change lives," Kelly said. "I want people to know what I know. I want to be successful. And success is being able to lay your head down at night knowing that you did something good for someone else, that God used you that day to change someone else's life." Kelly holds three chapel services a day - early morning, noon and early evening. He also shares and encourages those in the successful Hope for Men program and prison release program. In the afternoon or the evening, he will go to Tyler Street Resource Center, the Salvation Army, the bus station (continued next page)

WELCOME TO NEW PILGRIMS FROM WALK 325. SPONSORS, PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR PILGRIMS TO THEIR FIRST GATHERING AND TO CONNECT THEM WITH A REUNION GROUP!

(continued from previous page) to run errands for the homeless, pray with them, invite them to Faith City for chapel service. "I truly think he is a gifted man and God is going to use him," said Richie Fletcher of Gruver, who mentored Kelly for years before his release. To understand where Kelly, 50, is now is to understand where he's been and what he has endured. When Kelly was 9, his father left him on the streets of Washington, D.C. He slept in a laundromat and survived however he could. At age 13, he was headed for destruction. His first murder conviction was at age 16, and he was by then into full-blown gang activity. Assault, robbery, you name it. He was becoming a virtual criminal robot. "Everyone should have been afraid of me," he said. "Anybody in the world would have been afraid of me. You would have been stupid not to be." A wild scheme brought Kelly to Texas from Florida in 1980. Involved with the Texas mafia, he brought an East Coast crew of six with the idea of knocking off an amusement park. That robbery never happened, but another did. Kelly was arrested many times. He spent most of his adult life in Texas prisons. In 1987, he was charged and convicted of aggravated robbery, aggravated kidnapping, attempted murder and theft. He was sentenced to three 40-year terms. He joined a prison gang that inmates respected and feared. "The crazy thing about a person's life in prison is that if you're not afraid of dying or killing someone, most people will leave you alone," Kelly said. "I didn't care. I had nothing to live for, nobody I loved. "... I was filled with hate. That's just the way it was." Until March 21, 1994, when Kelly read the note. His heart was filled with something beyond hate. At the closing of the Kairos weekend there was an invitation. He was torn. He pulled out the note, read it again. "I knew it was real," Kelly said. "I knew for the first time that someone loved me, that God loved me. I had to make a choice. I could accept it or turn away and go back to my life. I wasn't going back. "I was going to Jesus."

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Treasurer's Report Balance on hand 3/31/2008: Unavailable

Central Texas Conference Upcoming Walk to Emmaus Schedule

326: Jul 16 – 19 Women Polytechnic United Methodist Church, Fort Worth
 327: Aug 13 – 16 Men Polytechnic United Methodist Church, Fort Worth

Reunion Groups:

Lorena Women 3rd Tuesday of each month 6:00 p.m. Lorena UMC
Hewitt Women Saturday mornings, 8 a.m. at Whattaburger on Hewitt Dr.
Waco Women Each Tuesday, 1:00 p.m., Cotton Patch Restaurant, contact Kathy McElreath, 202-7156
Waco Women Each Thursday, 5:45 p.m., Compass Bookstore
Waco Women Each Tuesday, 6:45 a.m., Kettle Restaurant
Waco Men Each Tuesday, 7:00 a.m., at Lolita's Restaurant
Waco Men Each Friday, 6:30 a.m., at Providence Hosp. Cafeteria, contact Jon Spelman, 772-0119 or 776-2592
Waco Men. Each Monday, 5:30 p.m., at Starbuck's on Hewitt Drive.
 If you would like your Reunion Group added, please send information to the Newsletter Editor!

WHAT HAPPENS IN HEAVEN

This is one of the nicest e-mails I have seen and is so true:

I dreamt that I went to Heaven and an angel was showing me around. We walked side-by-side inside a large workroom filled with angels. My angel guide stopped in front of the first section and said, 'This is the Receiving Section. Here, all petitions to God said in prayer are received.'

I looked around in this area, and it was terribly busy with so many angels sorting out petitions written on voluminous paper sheets and scraps from people all over the world.

Then we moved on down a long corridor until we reached the second section.

The angel then said to me, 'This is the Packaging and Delivery Section. Here, the graces and blessings the people asked for are processed and delivered to the living persons who asked for them. I noticed again how busy it was there. There were many angels working hard at that station, since so many blessings had been requested and were being packaged for delivery to Earth.

Finally at the farthest end of the long corridor we stopped at the door of a very small station. To my great surprise, only one angel was seated there, idly doing nothing. 'This is the Acknowledgment Section,' my angel friend quietly admitted to me. He seemed embarrassed 'How is it that there is no work going on here?' I asked.

'So sad,' the angel sighed. 'After people receive the blessings that they asked for, very few send back acknowledgments.'

'How does one acknowledge God's blessings?' I asked.

'Simple,' the angel answered. Just say, 'Thank you, Lord.'

'What blessings should they acknowledge?' I asked.

'If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.'

'And if you get this on your own computer, you are part of the 1% in the world who has that opportunity.'

'If you woke up this morning with more health than illness ... you are more blessed than the many who will not even survive this day.'

'If you have never experienced the fear in battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation ... you are ahead of 700 million people in the world.'

'If you can attend a church without the fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death you are envied by, and more blessed than, three billion people in the world!'

'If your parents are still alive and still married ...you are very rare.'

'If you can hold your head up and smile, you are not the norm, you're unique to all those in doubt and despair.'

Ok, what now? How can I start?

If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you as very special and you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

Have a good day, count your blessings, and if you want, pass this along to remind everyone else how blessed we all are.

ATTN: Acknowledge Dept.: 'Thank you Lord, for giving me the ability to share this message and for giving me so many wonderful people to share it with.'

If you have read this far, and are thankful for all that you have been blessed with, how can you not send it on???? I thank God for everything, especially all my family and friends!!

Blessings with love

**Please send change of address to: Waco Emmaus, PO Box 23016, Waco TX 76702 or e-mail
pmears@hotmail.com**

The Greater Waco Emmaus Web Site (www.wacoemmaus.org) is a great source of information about upcoming events and the place to go to get an application to serve on a walk or sponsor a pilgrim.

UPCOMING Gatherings

May 1, 2008	Moody UMC
June 5, 2008	Robinson Drive UMC
July 10, 2008	1st Waco UMC