Within Prison Walls

America has the largest prison population in the world! Its 5,925 federal, state, local and juvenile prisons house more than 2.3 million people and cost $80 billion dollars a year to run. Surprisingly, many have not been convicted of a crime, but are unable to make bail and are awaiting trial. Of those who have served their time and been released, 77% will be rearrested and sent back to prison within five years.

While prison can harden a person’s heart, it can also soften hearts so inmates are ready to listen to the gospel. Mike Brown, Mike Bardon, Hal Miller and Mike Keller are a few of the Baptist Mid-Missions missionaries laboring in prisons from Virginia to Utah. They have opportunities to witness to prisoners and jail personnel alike. They can distribute Bibles, tracts and correspondence courses, conduct evangelistic and discipleship studies and offer counseling.

While there are false professions of faith and some “jail house religion,” many men and women are coming to Christ as Savior inside prison walls.

Most Beautiful Campus

Nestled in the foothills of the majestic Rocky Mountains, the University of Colorado at Boulder is one of the most beautiful college campuses on the face of the earth. Its 33,000 students come from around the world to study engineering, business and law or another of its 150 programs. Many claim to be atheists.

Tom and Nancy Miller feel right at home auditing classes, popping into discussion groups or manning a literature table on campus. They are Campus Bible Fellowship International (CBFI) missionaries with Baptist Mid-Missions. They ask probing questions like, “How do you know there’s not a God?”

They offer English classes and invite students to their home for meals to build relationships, hold Bible studies and take students to church with them. More workers are needed to reach growing campuses like UC at Boulder.

Urban Indians

If you wanted to find a person of Native American descent, where would you look? An Indian reservation? Yes, you would find some of them on the 326 reservations scattered across the country. In all, there are 567 Indian tribes in the United States. They live on 56.2 million acres of land set aside for them by government treaties. This is an area about the size of Idaho.

But most Native Americans do not live on reservations. Seven in ten live in urban centers of 100,000 or more. There are over 110,000 living in New York City, 54,000 in Los Angeles and 44,000 in Phoenix. Nearly ten percent of the people living in Anchorage, Alaska are of Native American descent.

The adjustment to urban living has been difficult for this ethnic group. They have higher unemployment rates, high rates of diabetes, liver disease and cirrhosis. They are three times more likely to be homeless than non-Indians. Baptist Mid-Missions is looking for additional missionaries to take the gospel to these First Nation people both on the reservation and in the urban centers of our country.

Children of Abraham

Cleveland, Ohio is coming back to life in the heart of the Rust Belt. Among its 390,000 residents are 81,000 Jewish people - the children of Abraham. Nearly one-fifth of them are older adults past sixty-five. A growing number of these people are lonely, depressed and in failing health. Many reside in nursing homes or in assisted living complexes.

A bright spot in their lives is when Carolyn Renner, a member of the Jewish Outreach Team of Baptist Mid-Missions, knocks on the door, dials up a number or pops in for a friendly visit. She meets regularly with some of them to study “conversational Hebrew,” but it is really a form of friendship evangelism that sometimes results in a Bible study when she can share about her Messiah. BMM is looking to expand its outreach to Jewish people across the country and is seeking more workers to God’s chosen people.

Cowboy Connections

Utah is a beautiful and rugged land with majestic mountains, breathtaking views and lots of horses! Camp Utibaca (Utah Independent Baptist Camp) is situated among the Spruce and Aspen trees on 16 acres high above the town of Ephraim. Founded by Baptist pastors and BMM missionaries, the camp reaches out to hundreds of kids every year.

Horses and teaching young people how to handle these magnificent animals are a huge attraction to kids from across the region. The camp offers several weeks of programming including a week of Hispanic Camp which draws as many as 160 campers.

Retired missionary Mike Bardon oversees the camp ministry, but he is looking for a full-time director as well as for high school and college students to serve as camp counselors for the upcoming 2017 camping year.