



Jesus once said to a man, **“You are not far from the kingdom of God”** (Mark 12:34). In a sense, this statement could be applied to the story of a boy who lived in America, *so near, and yet so far* from the kingdom.

From age 3 to his teen years, he lived 2.4 miles from the building where the church of Christ worshiped. He was *so near, and yet so far* from the kingdom! A deacon in this church was his next door neighbor, and their sisters were friends. Yes, he was *so near, and yet so far* from the kingdom. His little league baseball coach was also a member. He was friends with the coach’s son, had a crush on his daughter, and learned how to water-ski with their boat.



To sum it up, this boy grew into his twenties only knowing Baby Jesus and the song silent night! The pictures below tell the story of what happened to this American boy who was *so near, and yet so far* from the kingdom.

Gunman Took Hostage To Get Drugs

Confessed Addict Says Need for Methadone Triggered Abduction of Officer

Family Thankful for Officer’s Safety, A8
By Tony Wharton
Staff Writer

LAKE WORTH — A confessed heroin addict will appear before a judge today on charges that he held a Lake Park police officer at gunpoint during a six-hour, 60-mile ramble yesterday morning that he said began because he was starved for methadone.

The standoff between Ronald G. Crocker, 31, and Palm Beach County sheriff’s deputies ended in an impromptu press conference he summoned to a

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Pulling a gun on two police officers was a suicide-by-cop attempt. He had already spent 15 years suffering in his addictions.

He was searching for relief, but Baby Jesus and silent night offered none.

Instead of following the green light to shoot him, that SWAT team rescued him from himself!

They placed me in the mental ward of the jail for 3 months, then I transferred to a regular cell, where I suffered another 18 months. I read the Bible during this time, but did not understand it. After receiving a 12 year sentence, I ended up in a central Florida prison. I read the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book, which eventually led me to read the Bible. It was half-way through this sentence when I decided to attend a Bible class. This is when I heard, for the first time, what this Baby Jesus grew up to do for me personally. Frank Parker told me how much Jesus loved him, and how I could be delivered from the power of darkness, and receive “...redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13,14). At the age of 34, on June 1, 1986, I was baptized into Christ. I was exhorted to learn more, and then go and make disciples.

Hearing the messages at [Connect Conference 2023](#) provoked these thoughts. Now, I sit here remembering those first 34 years I spent so near the kingdom, yet so far. I ponder about all the pain I could have bypassed, if only I had met a disciple maker earlier.

What about my friends, who are so near, and yet so far from the kingdom. And what about yours?

We must GO and MAKE DISCIPLES (Matthew 28:18-20)!



On July 26 Thru the 29th, I attended Connect Conference 2023 in Nashville.

I had a display booth with pictures of Project Rescue I also distributed brochures and some of our Bible lessons.

The theme of Connect Conference 2023 was Matthew 28:18-20, focusing mainly on Jesus' command to "Go therefore and make disciples..."

The speakers were not pointing to the wrongs of others. The messages were directed to the fingers pointing back at us!!

I heard a wake up call to churches, elders and preachers with whom we agree doctrinally (salvation, worship and organization). I also heard a loving rebuke to those who are not focusing mainly on making disciples! *Phil Sanders provided in depth statistics about the souls we are failing to reach and the number of churches we are losing every month! Ralph Gilmore mentioned that in the last 30 years, we have not written a song about evangelism, nor are we singing as much about seeking and saving the lost. Dan Winkler listed all the many good activities we are doing, but after each one he said, "BUT THIS IS NOT THE MAIN ASSIGNMENT!" Making disciples is our main assignment from Jesus!*

As I was driving home alone with my thoughts, I counted myself blessed to be a part of Project Rescue and the Beltline church of Christ, since both have a main focus of making disciples who make disciples!

Two years ago the Beltline church of Christ launched the Next Step Initiative.

We say "My Church Can Help," to lost souls who need food, a light bill paid, or help with some other financial need.



Of course, making disciples is the overriding objective of this ministry. After morning worship, minister Steve explains how we will try our best to meet physical needs, but we mainly want to help souls take the next spiritual step with Jesus. Disciples are being made through this initiative!

Through financial support of Project Rescue, the Beltline church plays a part in our efforts to make disciples! Since we arrived in North Alabama 12 years ago, Beltline has been our biggest financial supporter! All of our managing staff, the executive committee and 20 to 30 of our members worship at Beltline.

We are privileged to hear the Gospel preached by Beltline minister Steve Smith. In each and every one of his sermons, he exhorts souls to become disciples, be disciples in deed, and go to make disciples!

We are grateful for the following churches of Christ in Alabama that send us monthly financial support: Ft Payne, Alder Springs, Madison, Decatur, Grandiflora, Priceville, Arab, and Smith Grove. Also appreciated are Arnold, MO, Blyth Road, TX, Lapeer, MI, and Hebron, TN, and Century, FL.

So, the messages of Connect Conference 2023 were a wake-up call for all of us who are blessed to live in America. My father-in-law, Billy Nicks once said, "America is the hardest place in the world from which to enter heaven." 1 John 2:15-17 is a wake-up call: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." MAKING DISCIPLES is God's will.

GOLF THERAPY



Experienced golfers know how important practice is to growing your various golf skills. Likewise, experienced Christians know how important practice is to growing your various fruit of the Spirit!

This is why, at Project Rescue, we have built a golf green and launched a Golf Therapy class!

Nine of our members whose relapse prevention skills are the weakest, are the first to participate in the Golf Therapy class.



Project Rescue Golf Green

Putting area: 37 feet long by 15 feet wide
180 yards from tee to flag

Brain scientists (neuroscientists) have discovered how our brains grow through learning and practice: For our survival, God designed the human brain to learn new skills, and through practice, turn those skills into instincts. This brain blessing becomes a curse when we practice sin until it becomes an instinct (addiction).

Every professional sport organization uses neuroplasticity to increase the skills of their players.

Neuroplasticity, is explained in this less than 3 minute basketball video.

Please click on this link: [Neuroplasticity \(the brain's ability to grow\) https://vimeo.com/533324588](https://vimeo.com/533324588)

We are applying this video to learn how a neural pathway is created in the brain from shooting the same golf shot over and over. In this class we are also studying Scriptures about how we create a spiritual neural pathway when we practice growing fruit of the Spirit. Golf Therapy is a part of our NeuroSpiritual (neuroscience illustrating Scriptures about the mind) curriculum. While we are practicing golf three times a week, we meet on Thursday nights to discuss neuroplasticity. Then a test on these subjects is given on Sunday nights after church.

Members will pair up according to their skill level. It does not matter if the member never played golf or if they are a professional. In golf, like Christianity, there is always room for improvement! Members will choose a shot that is a little beyond their capability. Then, like the figure in the video shooting the basketball, members will practice hitting the same golf shot over and over. Members will have a golf diary, which will consist of pages with a diagram of the golf green and surrounding area. While one member is hitting their 25 balls, the partner is writing down a number where each ball lands. Then they switch roles and the other member hits 25 balls. A session consists of two periods where each player hits 25 balls in each period. Each member must do a minimum of 3 sessions a week with his partner. Members can practice as much as they want on their own time. Improvement will be measured.



A few brethren have spent thousands of dollars and labor, building the golf green. We appreciate all contributions to the Golf Therapy Class.

Please send funds, golf clubs and golf balls to Project Resuee, 179 Cave Spring Road, Decatur, Alabama.



Project Rescue Stats So Far This Year!

40 members have participated in the PR program this year.
37 of these 40 members are continuing. This is a 92.5% success rate.



Jason Cagle has the hardest job of all, managing the members!

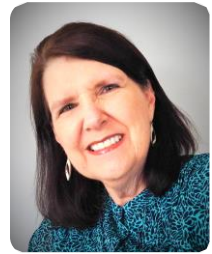


Rick Talley has the most important job, teaching the Bible!

Six baptisms were a result of Project Rescue's disciple making efforts: Zach and his wife Jamie; John, Cory, and David. Plus, outpatient member Coty baptized his son Levi. We are continuing to study with all these souls!

28 churches of Christ sent these men to us.

7 of our members are married with children, and are working toward reconciliation.



Jeanie Crocker serves as our secretary and bookkeeper.

We presently have 28 men in our care.

Dan Truitt, Ben Macklin, Brenden Huisman, David Hargett, continue to serve as Bible teachers.



Kim Johnson volunteers as our Nurse Practitioner.

Lord willing, on October 29th, we are hoping and preparing for 6 souls to graduate the 1-year program!



Jeremy Gillentine counsels several members each week.



Ronnie Crocker
Program Director



Tom Irwin
Board Chairman



Jeanie Crocker
Bookkeeper



Kim Johnson
Nurse Practitioner



Jason Cagle
Member Manager



Rick Talley
Bible Teacher



Gospel Preacher and professional Counselor Jeremy Gillentine visits PR on Fridays and Saturdays to counsel 14 of our members!

Brother Gillentine does not charge us a fee for this service. @ www.projectrescue.org you can contribute through PayPal to support him in this effort. Or mark your check for Jeremy Gillentine's counseling at PR.



AUGUST/2023 BROCHURE



Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1,2



Addiction Recovery Program

A work of the churches of Christ

Residential Drug Program

Bible Based

Church Focused

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. James 5:19,



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History

Project Rescue was established in 1989. The residential program began in 2007 in South Georgia. In that same year Project Rescue became a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. In 2011, the program moved to Decatur, AL.

Board of Directors

The board of directors currently has 9 members. All are members of the Lord's church and come from congregations in the surrounding area. They come from different professional backgrounds and offer valuable guidance and assistance.

Executive Committee

Our four Executive Committee members are hands-on and understand the particular issues that arise on a daily basis. They are a valuable asset to the day-to-day operation of the program.

Church Focused

Since Project Rescue is a non-profit corporation, it is not directly overseen by an eldership. However, we are blessed to be members of the Beltline church of Christ and enjoy the fellowship with sound elders and excellent preaching.

Where They Come From

From Alaska, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington – 22 states so far. In 2022, 35 churches of Christ sent members to us.

An American Mission Field

Addiction is an American Mission Field - a problem in our country, but an opportunity for the church. It is a sin problem which places it in our territory. We are instructed to especially do good to those of the household of faith.

About our Members

Most of them grew up in the church and became caught in the snare of addiction. Among our members, we have had 4 preachers, 5 sons of elders, and 10 sons of preachers.

Financial Support

We believe addiction and alcoholism are sinful, and sin problems are the territory of the church! This is why we try to get churches involved in supporting a man for his first 3-months in the program. On month 4 he begins to support himself.

Our Financial Burden

In addition to the program fees, we receive help from congregations and individuals. This helps us meet the growing costs of property lease, utilities, insurance, food, transportation and staff support, as well as the needs of the men.

Program Stats

We have 29 men in our care. So far in 2023, 40 members have participated. Thirty-seven of these 40 members are continuing! This is a 92.5% success rate. Twenty-eight churches of Christ sent these men to us.

Bible Based

The Bible has all the answers for man's problems. To simplify the approach we use at Project Rescue, it would be "Pray, Read, Study, Do and Teach." They learn how to use the Bible and apply it to their particular addiction problems.

Daily Schedule

The day begins with a devotional followed by a practical Bible class. The day is sprinkled with one-on-one Bible studies and ends with a one-hour Bible study in the evening taught by various preachers and teachers.

Hope in this Life

After the first 30-90 days, the program member is required to find a job in the community. This serves to give them hope for the future. It helps them learn a trade they can use to earn a living. Financial independence is the goal.

How to Enroll

The web page is designed for preachers, elders, family members and suffering addicts who are searching for help. At www.projectrescue.org you will also find an application that can be submitted from the site.

Hope, Hero & Help House

The Hope House is designed for advanced members. Hero House is for members who quit smoking. Help House is for members who have returned to PR.

AUGUST/2023 BROCHURE



In addition to the onsite staff, we would like to thank the Board of Directors, The Executive Committee and all the volunteers!

We appreciate your prayers. Your encouragement means so much to us.

Heaven is the goal, and we hope to see many of these men there. Project Rescue is a means to that end.

We couldn't do all that we do without you.

We pray you have a prosperous rest of the year (3 John 1:2)!

In His service,

Ronnie & Jeanie Crocker