

Since 1984: Reconciling persons
to God, families and society

“PRIDE” VERSUS “CRY”

By Buck Griffith

Charlie got in trouble the first time at the age of eight. He wanted something in a department store, stuffed it in his pants and tried to walk out without paying for it. Many of us did similar stupid stuff, were marched right back in, apologized, paid for it, and never did it again. But for Charlie, it became a *way of life*.

Sure, it was petty junk at first but grew in frequency and in the value of the merchandise stolen. He dropped out of school to sell drugs and fathered two before his 17th birthday. Misdemeanors became felonies. Tried as an adult that same year, Charlie went to a “real” prison for the first time. It started a pattern. He went to prison, got out briefly, was revoked and/or committed new offenses, and went back. The length of sentences grew longer each time. He saw others in prison turn to God and scowled at what he viewed as hypocrisy. Charlie would *never* turn to the Lord after all the terrible things he had done. He had too much “integrity” as he saw it. He had not called on Jesus before and was not about to squeal now. He had “set his course.” He saw himself as a dutiful ship captain of stolen cargo and was determined to *go down with the ship*, cursing all the way into the abyss of the dark sea.

I wish Charlie would at least pick up a Bible and read Psalm 107. Due to repetition, it is an easy read. In fact, this statement is made four times: “Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men” (verses 8, 15, 21, 31)! God is good not because *we* are but because He always is. Look at how the Psalmist described the misery of the human dilemma:



- “They wandered in the wilderness” – “Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them” (verses 4-5).
- They “sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in affliction and irons” (verse 10).
- They were “fools, because of their transgression, and . . . were afflicted” (verse 17).
- “They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end” (verse 27).

All the “Charlies” and “Charlottes” in the universe can identify with these remarks. What made the difference in the lives of those described in Psalm 107? The answer is identical in all the scenarios. How did they respond? “Then they **cried out to the Lord in their trouble**, and He delivered them out of their

distresses” (verses 6, 13, 19, 28)!

Sadly, in rebellion, we only turn to the Lord as a last resort. The “prodigal son” in Luke 15 did not begin to turn his life around until he found himself in a pig pen and “no man gave unto him” (verse 16). C. S. Lewis writes, “God whispers to us in our pleasures...but shouts in our pains.” Luke 15:17 says it was *then* that he “came to his senses” and charted his path home.

My favorite verse declares: “For He has broken the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron in two” (Verse 16).

I beg ALL of us to ditch our pride and cry out to the Lord *in our trouble* (not when we *get our act together*). God specializes in reclamation, redemption, reconciliation, and restoration. It is foolish for one soul to *go down with the ship*. God does not want one lost (Second Peter 3:9). Get on *the right ship* and *stay on it* (Acts 27:31). The cargo – stolen or not – is excess baggage. Hold on in the storms. Jesus is the captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10, KJV). He will deliver us safely to our eternal port.



CHECK OUT OUR NEW LOGO

You likely saw our new logo at the top of Page One. We are grateful for the patience and creativity of Martell Speigner of Grunwald Printing for working with us to develop a combination of **Family Upreach, Inc.** (our official IRS name) and our DBA...*NewLife Behavior Ministries*. Previously, we had a separate logo for each as seen below.

Most folks do not know the following piece of history. We originally incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) under the name of **Family Upreach, Inc.** At



the time, however, *Herald of Truth* regularly published a magazine named "Upreach." Due to this conflict, we chose *NewLife Behavior Ministries* as our "doing business as" name. The NLB curriculum started in Dallas County Jail, moved to the state prisons of TDCJ, and then, it was "off to the races." Over the next eighteen years the curriculum was almost totally associated with jail and prison ministries.

Then, over the next twenty years, we have worked diligently to apply the NLB curriculum to a wider audience to make better life choices regardless of the physical residence of students. Our attention is broadened to churches, schools, camps, etc., with the **Family Upreach, Inc.** label and not tied so tightly to those incarcerated. "Blue" has been



our favorite color and the orange of **Family Upreach, Inc.** stretches all the way over to the Monarch butterfly impressively. We hope you like it as much as we do!

You may have also observed a black and white logo that Martell designed for us earlier. This one requires less space and is used on certificates of completions that are awarded to offenders. It can be reduced or enlarged as needed. Numerous penal systems restrict all ink colors other than black. This oval logo conserves space and is attractive on coffee cups, napkins, etc.



IN LOVING MEMORY • IN HONOR OF

Family Upreach, Inc. expresses gratitude to those that choose to remember loved ones and honor those they respect by donating generously to this good work. In this way, others – even strangers – receive God's message of hope and redemption.

Received from:

Don & Linda Crofton
Buck & Janet Griffith
Dave & Ann Malone
John Henry Pruitt
Buck & Janet Griffith
Don & Linda Crofton
Jim & Margaret Smith

In loving memory of:

Beverly Holden
Beverly Holden
John Mark Malone
C. W. Lowrimore
C. W. Lowrimore
C. W. Lowrimore
Junior Lambert

Received from:

Jeff & Dianna Gross
Buck & Janet Griffith

In Loving Memory of:

C. W. Lowrimore
David & Lillian Smith



OXFORD HOUSES

Hopefully, you know about Oxford Houses. Historians of Alcohol Anonymous will connect the term "Oxford" to early recovery efforts (before "Bill W. & Dr. Bob." An Oxford House is an excellent option for anyone taking recovery seriously. The *home* setting in the community is conducive to healing. An *Oxford House* does not take the place of a halfway house for parole placement but once released, it may be an encouragement to ongoing recovery. The average Oxford House accommodates 6-8 (some have 10-12). Go to www.oxfordhouse.org to locate the options in your state and city. Approved residents get jobs, pay rent, attend 12-Step meetings, buy food, share household responsibilities, save funds, are randomly tested for chemicals, and prepare to transition out.

Trustees serving Family Upreach, Inc.: James L. Burrus, Don & Linda Crofton, James Curry, Lyndah Drum, Buck Griffith, Eric Jackson, Dave Olson, Gaylord Sturgess, Barbara Tubbs, Craig Tucker, Gary Wyder