

Since 1984: Reconciling persons to God, families and society

THE NEED FOR YOUNGER WORKERS IN PRISON MINISTRY

Welcome to life on Planet Earth! We hear the above concern from everywhere. Those ministering in our jails and prisons are getting older with accompanying health concerns that force reduced activity. Many have passed away or are in the process. Sand in the hourglass is running out. This is a serious problem. But before over-reacting or panicking – stop, breathe deeply, and think. The human life cycle ultimately leads to being “long in the tooth” (if you have a tooth left). Don’t make the dilemma worse than it is. The same reality exists in all areas of the Lord’s work. Our elders, preachers, deacons, song leaders, Bible School teachers, and youth workers suffer with this malady. No one is exempt from *aging*.

Wise and caring Christian servants brace for it and replace themselves. Otherwise, we plod on until we drop, and the work dies at the time of our funeral. It is not easy. If it was, everyone would do it and this discussion would not take place.

The replacement process increases in difficulty with age. It is customary for volunteers with youth to be young. Parents of youth get involved when they have a vested interest but their participation wanes as their children get older and leave the *youth* group. It is *natural*.

Prison ministry is a “dirty” business. It is unattractive to most. After more life is spent or we transition into our more *mature* years, we readily admit to human imperfection and a need for second chances. We discover greater grace. If not through other means, our children and *grandchildren* teach us this.

An added hindrance to successful recruitment of *young* workers to prison ministry also relates to time. Most prison authorities prefer a daytime presence that conflicts with employment and careers. Night-time prison assignments require an absence from spouses and children. Saturday and Sunday is “gold” to a young family. So, the majority of prison workers are empty-nesters or retired. To expect anything different is unrealistic. As soon as an older Christian gets involved, it is past time to start replacing himself. It is the responsible thing to do. Such is life.

Thank God for laborers in His field – of *any* age or degree of health. *Seize the day!* Allocate time to pray to the Lord of the harvest who is The One that sends workers. Then, get busy and train them, regardless of age. Stop fussing. Get to work while the sun still shines.



IN LOVING MEMORY ~ IN HONOR OF

Family Upreach expresses gratitude to those that remember loved ones and honor those they cherish with gifts. These remembrances allow men and women to be taught how to transform destructive behaviors into positive behaviors.

Received from:

M/M Donald Crofton
M/M Bob Wachtel
M/M Bob Slocum
M/M Frank Maxey
M/M Buck Griffith
M/M Bob Wachtel

In loving memory of:

Nancy Motsinger
Nancy Motsinger
Nancy Motsinger
Tom Speaker
Tom Speaker
Tom Speaker

Received from:

M/M Buck Griffith
M/M Dale Underwood
M/M Frank Maxey
M/M Buck Griffith
M/M Bob Wachtel
M/M Charles Ogden

In Honor of:

HM Motsinger
HM Motsinger
HM Motsinger
Helen Horne
Helen Horne
Bob Hughes, Sr.

A NEW COURSE FOCUSED ON RE-ENTRY

Among several other important priorities, Dr. Dale Underwood is working to bring his training and experience in the field of education to create a much-needed NLB course that will target critical aspects of the offender's re-entry process. Dale solicits insights from fellow workers and leans on lessons you have learned and are willing to pass on to him. Several helpful thoughts were shared following Dale's presentation on this topic at the recent workshop in Wichita Falls.

Ideally, inmates begin preparing to step out of prison the moment they step inside one, but it must be far more than a *wish* list. The final two units of the ***Prisoners of Christ*** course involve specific plans to *use* time as opposed to *doing* time in prison. Time cannot be squandered.



Planning and practicing wise steps while incarcerated saves time later resulting in greater productivity. What are some important steps that need to be taken during this otherwise "dead" time? Clues can clarify the confusing maze that hits a releasee full force in the face when that moment arrives. Concrete steps taken today clear tomorrow's otherwise cluttered path. Yes, it is not possible to do *everything* in advance, but there is no excuse for failing to do all that can be done.

There is a lot of work to be done by the local congregation or ministry to be ready to receive the offender when released. What steps should

be taken before arrival? We must "get ready" and "stay" ready in order to **BE** ready when that day comes. A "curve ball" may come at us at the last minute but most of the process is pretty *cut* and *dried*.

Keep the "main thing" the ***main thing***. Nothing is of greater significance than one's relationship with God! Refuse to allow transportation, employment, food, housing, pots, pans or utilities to crowd the Lord out of the photo. Those we seek to help can easily read us and pick up on what we consider to be Priority #1. Of course, we want each to satisfactorily fulfill his or her obligations to probation or parole and stay on this side of the bars, but there is a Higher Authority to which we all answer. So, keep the "main thing" the ***main thing!***



NATIONAL WORKSHOP REPORT

We thank Brother Stephen Wolf and the Edgemere Church of Christ in Wichita Falls (Texas) for hosting the 48th National Workshop last month. Attendance reached 200 at its highest point (larger than last year in Louisville). Though farther out of the pandemic this year, several had first-hand experience with the virus. Many were in attendance for their first time. Folks are still discussing lessons learned from being present. Thanks, again!

This annual event appears healthy as we move forward with New Orleans as the 2023 host with David Green at the helm. He is already promising tasty seafood! Dale Underwood takes the reins in 2024 for a 50th Anniversary celebration of the workshop's existence (to be held in Corpus Christi). Dale is the new Director for Kings Crossing Prison Ministries. Others are seriously looking into being hosts in 2025 and 2026.

Transitioning to Flash Drives

We announced this *transition* last month and were deluged with requests! The key phrase was "be **patient with us** as we ***transition*** from CDs to flash drives."

This is not like flipping a light switch. It means purchasing hundreds of flash drives and then loading them with each course's 13 lessons, certificate, grading key, instruction guide, proposal, and product brochure (190 pages each for a total of 2850 pages)!

We are pleased to meet your needs and assist your efforts to reach more souls in a timely manner before our Lord returns. Time is important!

FAMILY UPREACH, INC.

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