

Since 1984: Reconciling persons to God, families and society

HOSTAGE RELEASE

This headline instantly draws attention internationally but especially by family members of each hostage. Prison ministry volunteers receive basic training to survive in the event of a potential hostage-taking situation. Yet, minimal preparation precedes a person who is arrested and held for an indeterminate period of time behind bars. Each inmate is *on his own*. It is easy for outsiders to repeat platitudes like, “You do the crime—you do the time” or quote a Bible verse like my favorite in the King James, “count it all joy when ye fall into **divers** temptations” (James 1:2). A poor swimmer, I avoid diving boards. Ill-equipped, most ministry workers do a lousy to fair job as inmate life coaches teaching effective survival skills without having personally walked a single step in their moccasins.

On a less severe level, a drafted soldier is similar in that his life is predetermined by the military with few to zero options. Going AWOL means the brig and dishonorable discharge with lifetime consequences. It is somewhat like living with a felony conviction on your permanent record. In combat, the soldier faces death daily, serious injury, or being captured and taken as a POW. It has been said that “War is Hell.” It is not surprising to hear prisoners describe life in a penitentiary as “Hell.” When released—under the best conditions—escapees battle ongoing depression, nightmares, suicidal thoughts and other by-products of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Active county jail ministries are few and limited time is allowed to prepare inmates for the present, let alone future. A ministry is like a Volunteer Fire Department. Willing firemen rush into the flames to pull out those Satan has taken “captive to do his will” (Jude 22-23; Second Timothy 2:26). Trauma is inescapable even if held captive briefly and then, rescued. A few will remain in a county jail longer than many are in prison. In prison, little is done effectively to prepare offenders to serve 2, 5, 10 or 50 years. The death sentence is rarely carried out but that is a different topic.



Dr. Dale Underwood, NLBM President, is in the process today of producing a much-needed **Re-Entry** course. There will be more details and samples available at the **51st National Jail-Prison Ministry Workshop**, June 11-13, at Midwest Church of Christ in Louisville, Kentucky. Please feed Dale your ideas during this developmental period. One way that you may help is by sending Dale a one-page testimony pinpointing what was the most helpful for *you* when you were released. By sending us your “story”—you give NLBM the right to potentially include it in the final publication of **Re-Entry** curriculum.

Though space is limited to one-page per topic, you may submit more than one topic that played a strategic role in your successful re-entry. You may hunt for more ideas below . . .

- Warmly received into a loving home (spouse, parents, children, siblings).
- Resuming stable employment in your chosen career.
- Coming out to a receptive church family that loves, encourages and unconditionally forgives.
- Becoming an integral participant in a strong support group.
- Having supportive relationships (friends/mentors) who hold up your hands and hold *you* accountable.
- Expectation of you to accept personal responsibility for accomplishing meaningful tasks.

FREE



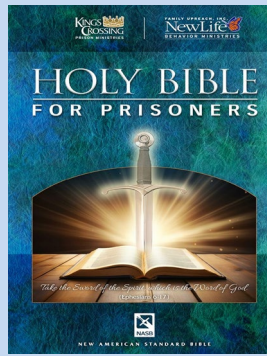
Pray for the **Re-Entry** course to prove extremely beneficial in thousands of lives of hostages released daily throughout the United States. Express thanks to the Lord for Dr. Underwood’s wisdom, rich background, experience, dependency on God, and God-given writing talent to put these 13 lessons together in ways that bless each hostage exposed to their content. In hindsight, may the “why” behind first being arrested or “apprehended” (like Saul of Tarsus in Philippians 3:12) be clearly viewed as the “providence” of God. It is empowering when we can see that our Father’s hand has always been outstretched to us.

PRISON BIBLES SHIPPED

The *Prison Bibles* paid for in advance at the pre-publication price should be received by the time this newsletter arrives. If not, please contact us to track the shipping.

Bibles are \$10 each today plus, UPS shipping. A case contains 12. We like orders by the case. One case weighs 30 pounds. Shipping is about \$30 per case. Or you can pick them up at our office. We are willing to hold them for you for 30 days.

We thank donors who helped make this happen, the Lockman Foundation (for granting copyright permission), Grunwald Printing Company (John Grunwald, owner) and Martell Speigner (Graphic Designer).



51ST NATIONAL JAIL-PRISON MINISTRY WORKSHOP

June 11-13, 2025

Midwest Church of Christ
2115 Garland Avenue, Louisville,
Kentucky 40211

Theme: "Redemption Meets Recovery"

Best Western Premier Airport Expo Center

Speakers: *Pooh Malone* (256) 874-5457

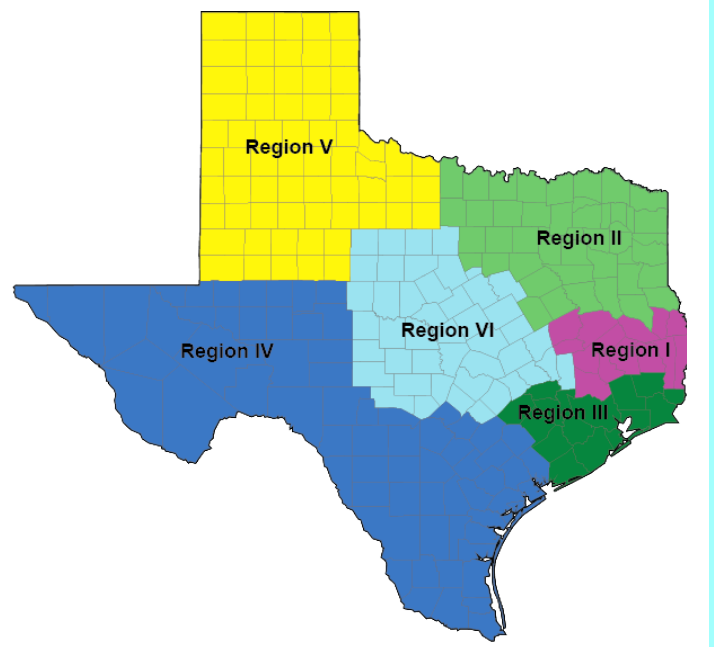
Booths: *Debora McGill-Registration*
(502) 930-2005

TEXAS PANHANDLE INITIATIVE FURTHER DETAILS

You need to know that the *target area* is broader than one label can communicate. For instance, if living in the Abilene area, you would say you are in **West Texas**. But if we referred to this initiative as *West Texas*, those in Dalhart would think it does not apply to them. Texas Department of Corrections, however, operates according to "regions" which places prisons in Dalhart, Amarillo, Tulia, Borger, Colorado City, Childress, Iowa Park, Lamesa, Pampa, Plainview, Snyder, and Lubbock in **Region V**. But if we called this the **Region 5 Initiative**, volunteers in **Region 6** (Abilene, Sweetwater, Hamlin, Merkel and Rotan) would conclude that this initiative is not a concern to them. But these five cities are within 35 to 80 miles from some "Region 5" prisons. Texas is a BIG state, so miles do not have the same meaning as in smaller states. For instance, our volunteers in Corpus Christi drive to a nearby prison 30 miles away, another is 50 miles, one is 70 miles, and still another is 130 miles away.

Dr. Dale Underwood has been privileged to attend the TDCJ chaplains' annual Spring gathering the last two years in Huntsville. He will also be making a presentation at this year's event and take our display of materials. The Region 5 chaplains are eager to have the *NewLife Behavior* curriculum taught in their prisons.

Our task now is to involve as many congregations as possible as partners in this venture, find individual workers and train them, if needed. Some may already be certified NLB instructors. Ashley Melendez is playing a crucial role by connecting with church leaders in this geographical area and gathering important data in advance of April 5. On April 5, there will be an **Engagement Session and Luncheon** (10 a.m. until 1 p.m.). This will take place in the Family Life Center of Sunset Church of Christ, 3625 34th Street, in Lubbock, Texas—across the parking lot from Sunset's main building. Dr. Dale Underwood will be providing details about these exciting open doors. We need to get an advance number expected to attend on this day to make adequate preparations. You may contact Ashley at ashley4daniel@gmail.com to let her know or contact us (361-855-3372 or nlbcasa@yahoo.com).



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