



Since 1984: Reconciling persons to God, families and society



February 2021

WHAT DO THE GUARDS SAY?

Buck Griffith

The volunteer's role means *everything* to the success or failure of any jail/prison ministry. It is important to have the support of the Warden and Chaplain. They hold the keys we need to enter. They can "order" officers to make space for classes and see that they happen. What we say as teachers is vital and of course, what our *students* think and say about us is critical.

But *what do the guards say about us behind our backs?* Correction officers watch closely. Do not take it personally. Do not be upset. It is their job. A major source of smuggled contraband comes from volunteers. Watching us like a hawk is what the officer is paid to do. Think of it as another opportunity to let your light shine. Count it a blessing if an officer stands in the hallway outside the room, observes through a window, or takes a seat inside the room. Like inmates, they are listening even if it looks like they have zero interest.

I noticed a female officer listening intently while teaching a *Christian Marriage Skills* class. After escorting the last inmate out of the building, she returned to thank me saying, "I needed to hear what you said. My husband and I are having problems." She asked us to pray for her. On another occasion, a chaplain confided that she and her husband had stopped going to church. We talked and prayed. Then, she called her husband and said, "We are starting back to church this Sunday!" The next week she confirmed they did it.

Look at the example of Jesus in John 7:46. The text states: "The guards said, 'No one ever spoke the way this man does.'" This helps explain why they did not arrest Him as His enemies hoped. In similar fashion today, correction officials watch, listen, and will decide for themselves IF we are different . . . *in a good way*. So, do your own inventory *first*.

Your checklist should include the presence of the following in ever-increasing measure:

- 1) **Humility.** At church, you may a preacher or elder. In prison, you are one who has volunteered to serve.
- 2) **Words.** Your tongue is your "table of contents." Words have the power of life or death. Speak wisely.
- 3) **Understanding.** Do not lose sight of the BIGGER prison picture to open more eyes, minds and hearts.
- 4) **Patience.** Rome was not built or demolished in one day. Use today's opportunities well with gratitude.
- 5) **Consideration.** Demonstrate that you have worn more than your own moccasins. Live out the Golden Rule.
- 6) **Honesty.** Be transparent and quick to give an honest answer to all questions. Truth has nothing to hide.
- 7) **Trustworthiness.** You have been entrusted to fulfill an awesome responsibility. Do it well and with integrity.
- 8) **Faithfulness.** Be faithful over a little and receive more. We always reap the fruit of the seeds we plant.



Good volunteers are hard to find. *Always* show up on time. As one officer said, "You can set your watch by these people. They always notify us if they will be late or unable to come. We know something serious has happened if they are not here on time and have not heard from them."

If the officers "want" you on the unit, things go smoother. At the end of the day, the staff is interested in what *works!* They may not agree with what you teach but if they see behavior changes in the students after you leave the facility, they are eager to see you return. Even when obstacles arise, they will find a way to make your class happen. Otherwise, they could care less.



NLB's ONLINE STUDY PROGRAM

Thank you for your past, present and continuing support for our efforts to restore hope and transform lives. We are excited to announce an opportunity to expand our outreach immeasurably. Dr. H. M. Motsinger, Founder of NLBM and NLBI, has dreamed for years of being able to offer NLB courses *free* to any interested student worldwide! With today's technology, diligent effort, and a few dollars this is possible!



Since 1984, over 1,000,00 men and women in U.S. prisons have studied one or more of our fifteen courses (with 26,000+ baptisms). Since 2008, 74,000 men and women *outside* the U.S. have studied one or more courses with 2,400 baptisms and 212 congregations planted.

Over the last 8 years, African Christian College (ACC) has offered a counseling course entitled "Behavior Change Psychology." It utilizes two NLB series: "A Sense of Self" and "True Freedom." Either Dr. Lynn Rhodes or Dr. Motsinger teach the three-semester course. On November 13, 2020, H. M. concluded three weeks of online teaching. With the foundation laid through this

experience at ACC, Dr. Motsinger is now pursuing ways to eventually expand and offer the entire NLB curriculum. Regardless of "where" the work is done, everyone with internet access can study the courses at no cost.

While this has *worldwide* ramifications (NLBI), it will also benefit NLBM and local congregations. The majority of those incarcerated do not have internet access but their family members and friends on the "outside" do. Plus, the probationer and parolee can study online (unless specifically restricted). The NLBM Board of Trustees has agreed to help with \$5,000 initial funding and we welcome the support and encouragement of all. God is doing amazing things!

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.

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"THE TWISTED TWIG"

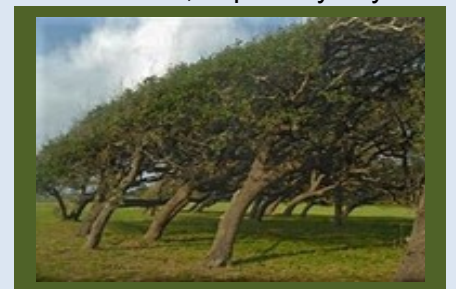
The above title is assigned to one of our newest tracts. A copy is enclosed with this newsletter. Perhaps it is a tool you can use personally or in local ministry. The visual illustration is that of oak trees and a carbon black plant that was a South Texas Gulf Coast feature for many years. You see a black and white reproduction of the plant to the left.

The goal of the tract is to recognize the strong influence of circumstances to which one is repeatedly exposed through no desire of their own, especially in youth. We frequently assist individuals suffering with symptoms consistent with Post-Traumatic Stress



Disorder, much like the grove of oak trees on the right.

Unprepared to process these damaging effects, it is natural to do anything to relieve the pain even if only temporary. Sadly, these choices become habitual with long-term negative consequences. The same person's life now becomes consumed with trying to break free from the same behavior turned to in the beginning to numb and escape the anguish.



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