

“WALKING IN THE LIGHT”

Kings Crossing Prison Ministries

A NEWS REVIEW & EDUCATIONAL TOOL OF JAIL-PRISON MINISTRIES IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST
Buck Griffith, Editor

“Helping make the world better and safer by teaching Christ to those in prison”

January 2020

PRISON MINISTRIES & ACTIVE SHOOTER THREATS

Buck Griffith

The subject of “active shooters” in houses of worship struck much closer to home recently with the incident at *West Freeway Church of Christ* near Fort Worth. Reoccurring and identifying earmarks of shooters highlight a history of arrests combined with mental health issues coupled with mind and/or mood-altering chemicals (abusing them, not having them to take, or not taking them correctly).

One truth is clear: This could happen anywhere – at any time. Congregations have adopted precautions such as hosting seminars to equip members, installing cameras, updating door-lock mechanisms, appointing certain persons with concealed weapons, and hiring off-duty law-enforcement officers – outside *and* inside church buildings.

I suggest that congregations with active prison and substance abuse recovery programs are highly blessed although less informed members think the opposite. Those of us involved in these ministries bear an added responsibility to our home congregation.

First, we normally know addicts or ex-offenders in attendance and maintain a personal relationship with them. Second, we quickly recognize a “new” attendee potentially posing a threat. Third, church members tap our shoulder if a suspicious person shows up. We should immediately respond.

It is in the best interest of the ministry and the congregation to be proactive in these matters. Can you imagine how quickly one incident would destroy this ministry for the life of that church? I prayerfully offer the following recommendations:

- Do your due diligence. Obtain a background check. Self-disclosure requires time and trust, a luxury we cannot afford. This official data will help you minister to the individual most effectively.
- If one is “on paper” (probation or parole), you do not want to ignorantly lead him or her into a scenario that leads to revocation due to technical violations. Confidentiality is important but knowledge is critical.
- As much as possible, be aware of what is going on in the lives of those seeking addiction recovery (relapse may be moments away). Ex-offenders, especially recent and lesser known ones may be in *crisis* mode.
- Stay close to them in Bible classes and worship. Encourage them to sit with you. You are a “mentor” of sorts, answering questions, and providing quiet Christian supervision.
- Guide them creatively. You can help them avoid roadblocks and potentially discouraging situations. Inform them that regular Bible classes and settings are not CASA (“Christians Against Substance Abuse”) meetings.
- *Protect them from themselves*. The average church member will be *fear-struck* by openly revealed criminal and psychiatric treatment histories, etc.

This article began by stating congregations are “blessed” by having an active substance abuse or prison ministry. I have experienced this first-hand on numerous occasions. The greatest threat is not normally from one we know and are working with in our ministry. It is the “stranger” walking in off the street. When observed by our workers, we don’t wait to be “tapped on the shoulder.” We seek the *stranger* out and assess danger. Some are so “out of it” that they don’t know they are in a church building. Others are simply hungry. It’s amazing what \$5 at McDonald’s will do. We are not trying to “run anyone off” or *kick the can down the street*. We are trying to meet needs as they arise. They did not show up today to be *saved* or partake of the *free spiritual meal* offered in communion or from the pulpit. A few do contact us later (outside the church building) to look into the deeper needs of the soul.

May we always be ready to do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith. It may be that you are saving the lives of fellow church members and at the same time – entertaining angels unaware – *with fear and trembling!*



MEMORIAL & HONOR GIFTS

Memorial Gifts express love to those having lost loved ones. *Living Honor Gifts* show gratitude for those held in high esteem. We acknowledge gifts to individuals or families when contact information is provided. These gifts keep on helping others through **Kings Crossing Prison Ministries**. This is a lasting way to remember and appreciate the special people in our lives.



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2020-21 BIBLE DRIVE

We have kicked off our Annual Bible Drive that starts us off on each new year. Most of you have seen and heard of our December 12th fire that destroyed “Building C” at the Climate-Controlled U-Haul Storage at Kostoryz & SPID. We lost over \$5,000 worth of our “Journey to Recovery Through Christ” Bibles but were blessed to salvage more than expected.



However, the fire forced us to take another look at our need for “everyday” Bibles. In the past we have raised money to buy WBS Bibles but our new plan is to print our own Bibles as soon as we can raise sufficient funds. How much will it cost us? We anticipate at least \$25,000. This is what was required to print the “Recovery” Bible. This may end up being a two-year project but, in the end, we will have a Bible with “our” cover on it and a few inside pages to tell “our” story! If and when you make a donation toward this goal, mark “Bibles” on the *memo* section of your check. We will you posted on the project status from month to month.

Kings Crossing Prison Ministries is under the oversight of the shepherds, Kings Crossing Church of Christ, 5901 Yorktown Boulevard, Corpus Christi, Texas 78414 (Steve Brashear, Ron Cardwell, Robert Illgen, Rick Legvold, and Jack North).

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