

“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”

March 2020

COVID-19 CONSEQUENCES

Buck Griffith, Director

As the impact of this deadly virus began to become better known, we notified South Texas facilities where we teach classes on a weekly basis that our volunteers would not return until it was safe to do so. We immediately began receiving notes from authorities thanking us for being proactive and demonstrating concern for the welfare of both officers and offenders. The greater health risk is for prisoners being subjected to volunteers coming in from outside. Of course, officers could bring the virus in but prison staff is a *necessary risk*. Volunteers are an unnecessary risk.



In a matter of days, all TDCJ volunteers were informed of the postponement of classes. Visits by family members were officially halted a few days later.

When these actions became known to the public, we received calls wondering if this meant the prison ministry is “out of business”? Please excuse the laughter.

The truth is . . . we are busier than ever! First, we had the enormous job of having to *finish* all ongoing classes using the U.S. mail system. With over 200 participants, it was time, energy and postage intensive. These are in addition to 34,500+ others already studying through correspondence.

We told you last month of the new restriction in our teaching material that must be converted to black ink on white paper! At the same time, we are updating contact information for our *National Directory of Churches of Christ and Individual Christians Involved in Jail-Prison Ministries*. Plus, we are communicating with all churches of Christ in the USA concerning *Baptistries Around the World*. Then, with time left, we want to catch up on inputting data associated with the “Recidivism Research” project.

Another side-effect of Covid-19 reminds us of we experienced in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey a few years ago . . . there is a tremendous need for special assistance to families and children of offenders and those newly released from jails and prisons. This impacts our “Little Angels” program, too. This segment of our population is most vulnerable when businesses reduce hours and some close their doors for good. Most of this population work for minimum wage at best and are the first to feel the pinch under such dire circumstances. A few compassionate donors have been mindful and sent their regular check and added an “extra” amount. However, another consequence of Covid-19 is that overall donations have slowed to a crawl and diminished.



We cannot predict how long it will be before “live” classes resume behind bars, but you need to know that the prison ministry is NOT “out of business.” And, we do not know how long it will take our economy to rebound but the prison ministry is NOT “out of business.” This is not “our” work anyway. *It belongs to God and God will take care of it!*

“BLACK & WHITE” MATERIALS AVAILABLE

Kings Crossing Prison Ministries and *NewLife Behavior Ministries* (NLBM) are not alone in being “rocked” by the new Texas Department of Criminal Justice rule that took effect March 1. Although *new* to Texas, it has been the rule in other states for years. Each state and individual county jails have different guidelines. Many other ministries use our materials, including the NLB and Unbound Word curriculum. They are now *black and white*. Let us know if we can assist you. The NLB courses on CD will soon contain the *full-color version* plus the black ink on white paper option. A *Bible Correspondence Course* (BCC) version will appear on the same CD with a minimum increase in license fees. All Unbound Word materials, including the popular “There IS a Better Way” course and tracts are available in full-color as well as black and white. Let us know if we can help.

THE "AVERAGE"

Buck Griffith

When the term "average" is used, you understand there are exceptions in both directions. Applied to churches engaged in jail-prison ministry, the *average* congregation is not. The *average* one involved, is minimally involved. This means they take a singing group in periodically, offer Bible studies by mail, minister in a single county jail or one prison monthly with males or females only, etc. Very few do aftercare and/or family outreach.

The *average* Texas prisoner is 37 with less than an 8th-grade education serving a 17.6-year sentence. There are 4,537,100 adult Texans under supervision. Most have abused alcohol or drugs. The *average* offender leaves prison single with few residential choices. It is difficult to make simple decisions. Employment is hard to find and money is not handled well.

The *average* "success" story is 40 years old and has been to prison at least twice. *Success* is getting a job, being self-supporting, and not arrested again. The *spiritual window* is more narrow. This person has developed meaningful relationships within the body of Christ, finds ways to exercise his/her gifts to God's glory and is a "duck on the pond" attracting others and a powerful mentor – a *giver, not a taker*.



THE BIBLE PROJECT

"We have a dream" to design, develop and print our own Bible for our specific use. It will reflect the many faces of this ministry and various avenues of outreach to prisoners, family members, alcoholics/drug addicts, ex-offenders, etc. It will introduce readers to Kings Crossing Prison Ministries, *NewLife Behavior Ministries*, **VetNet**, Quarry Press, Unbound Word, Baptistries Around the World, R&R Seminars, CASA, etc. Wow!



While still working through details, we have a good idea of costs to get serious about launching the fund-raising drive. Similar to "Journey to Recovery Through Christ" (our recovery Bible), our goal is \$25,000. Significant improvements will include it being an entire Bible whereas the other was only the New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs. We have already started because it may take 2 years to complete the project. Several have already sent checks marked for "Bibles." We will hold the funds until we have payments due for services rendered.

The first expense will involve the cover design and beginning pages describing the ministry. We would like notes inserted to indicate helpful recovery verses to compliment the "Journey to Recovery" Bible. This new Bible will be widely distributed (not limited to CASA). If you keep up with our numbers, you know we provide 8,000+ Bibles annually. We plan for these Bibles to last 4-5 years. This means while it will challenge us to raise \$25,000, we will not be buying more Bibles in the foreseeable future.

MEMORIAL & HONOR GIFTS

Memorial Gifts express comfort to those losing loved ones. *Honor Gifts* show gratitude for those held in high esteem. We acknowledge all gifts. This expression of generosity keeps on helping others in a lasting way.

Received from:

Anna Belle Hensch
M/M Buck Griffith
M/M Frank Maxey
M/M Buck Griffith
M/M Frank Maxey
Joyce Maxwell

In Loving Memory of:

Lloyd Bergsma
Monte Shores
Monte Shores
Rose Marie Chavis
Rose Marie Chavis
Rose Marie Chavis



POSTPONEMENTS

A further consequence of the Covid-19 threat is the immediate postponement of numerous planned events we have announced and sought to promote. Some have certain "new" dates in mind but due to constantly changing circumstances, we will leave the public announcement of specific new plans to the sponsor of each event. These include:

- The 3rd Annual "Revive Us Again" workshop of *HomeMission*, March 25-28, in Wichita Falls, Texas.
- The 47th Annual/National Jail & Prison Ministry Workshop, June 10-12 in Louisville, Kentucky.
- The "Bible Study by Mail Seminar" at the Palestine Church of Christ, Palestine, Texas, April 4-5.

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).

Contact Information: The physical office for the prison ministry is located at 3833 South Staples, Suite S-101, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411 (361) 855-3372 or fax (361) 855-7469. Our email is: kcprisonministries@gmail.com. View our website: www.kingscrossingprisonministries.org.