



Gary Wyder
Prison Evangelist

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The Florida Prison Evangelist

“...He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...” Luke 4:18

(352) 377-0058

LAKE BUTLER CHURCH OF CHRIST

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3rd Annual New Life Behavior Conference is a Smash!

I stole these headlines from *The Network*, the newsletter published by Alabama New Life workers. See: <http://alabamanlbnetwork.homestead.com/index.html>

Prisons love New Life Behavior. A Bible based Life Skills program offers many more open doors for teaching than “another Bible class” (quote from a Chaplain). And those we work with need these programs. NLB uses a responsive teaching model that has four key concepts.

- 1) All of us are born in the image of God and are called back to that relationship with Him. *Gen. 1:26, 2 Tim. 1:7*
- 2) We have social and personal factors that influence our behavior but our minds are in charge. *Phil. 2:5, Gal. 2:20*
- 3) At birth we are self-actualized but our life goal needs to be Christ centered. *Matt. 19:13,14, Phil. 2:13*
- 4) Love is the opposite of fear. *2 Tim 1:7, I John 4:7-21*

The most popular course is CASA (Christians Against Substance Abuse). Addictions are a BIG problem for prisoners. All prisons offer 12 Step programs and most are open to faith based 12 Step programs like CASA.



Chuck Spitzley (on left) is a deacon at Roebuck Parkway and has been leading CASA for 17 years. On the right is Buck Griffith, “Mr. Prison Ministry” and President of NLB. They

did a session on how to teach CASA. Chuck did a similar session for us at Faulkner University.

Check out their newsletter for the full article, but one important study done by Jeff Johnson of the Falkville congregation showed these 6 important points.

1. We need to plainly teach Christian inmates that they need to worship and participate in the local congregation of the Lord’s church.

2. We need to teach Christian inmates the importance of growing in the faith while incarcerated and to remain faithful upon release.
3. We need to teach Christian inmates to beware of and avoid denominationalism.
4. We need to make an extra effort to help inmates connect with a local congregation in his/her area upon release. This involves learning where an inmate plans to go upon release. Obviously, this is not always possible.
5. We need to be even more alert to an inmates’ release date. This should help us communicate more effectively with an inmate, who is soon to be released, about involvement in the local congregation and to even help make contact with a local congregation.
6. Try to maintain communication with an inmate upon his or her release.



John Gallagher, an elder at our host congregation Roebuck Parkway, gave the commencement lesson. The theme was, *Get Ready, Get Set, Go!* John brought a passionate lesson and definitely got us ready to Go and do the work of our Lord.

John was our kickoff speaker for the Faulkner University prison series and spoke from I John 1:1-7. He spoke about the **process** of Christianity and that in our prison programs we often have many “professional class takers”. John and others spoke of how we in the church bring distinct messages in a distinct way. We should not “blend in”.

Tom Dugan of Airport Road brought excellent messages on *Materials to Use* and *Preparing your Congregation for the Ex-offender*. Other great lessons were presented by Chaplain Charles Baggett, Bill Draper, Ronnie Crocker, Grant Azbell, Martel Pace, Bill Hale and Matt Conley.

All lessons are available from Faulkner (faulkner.edu)

Jesus Has Overcome The World (*John 16:33*)

is the theme for the Annual Florida Jail/Prison Workshop. University City Church of Christ in Gainesville is hosting the workshop on Saturday, April 4th.

Chaplain James Williams of Limestone Correctional, Al Jackson, evangelist of 10th Ave., and Ronnie Crocker of Project Rescue will be some of the key speakers.

Registration and a light breakfast will begin at 8:00 a.m. The program begins at 9:00 a.m. and will close at 4:00 p.m. Lunch is provided, please RSVP if you plan to eat lunch.

Local Housing will be provided on a first come, first serve basis. Contact me at 352 377-0058 garywyder@cox.net for housing or for a complete workshop schedule. The schedule will also be posted on our website.

Motels

Gainesville has many of the major chain motels.

Three are listed below.

Fairfield Inn by Marriot, 6901 NW 4th Blvd. Gainesville, FL 32607 352 332-8292 \$76 per night.

Red Roof Inn 3500 S.W. 42nd St. Gainesville, FL 32608 (352) 336-3311 \$68.50 per night

Days Inn 1901 SW 13th St. Gainesville, FL 32608 (352) 376-2222 \$60 per night

Directions

From I-75, take exit 387 for State Hwy 26 toward Gainesville/Newberry. Go East on Hwy 26 for 1.1 miles. Turn left at SR 338 (NW 8th Ave.). Church will be on left in .5 mile.

Loose Him & Let Him Go (*John 11:44*)

is the theme of the 36th National Prison Ministry Workshop to be held June 10-12 in Corpus Christi, Texas. These national workshops offer beginner's classes and yet offer veteran workers a lot of meat. I will be sharing a class on "Getting Started" with Ron Tomme. A full schedule will be posted on our website.

It must seem that all I do is go to workshops. There have been a lot more than the usual amount lately. Fortunately, I have workers who can fill in when I'm gone. Thanks to Rob Smith, Joe Galasso and Joe Mikesell for all their help!!

Bill Draper of the Mobile Inner City Ministry and Ken Kilpatrick of Compassion 21 (inner city Montgomery) impressed me with the work the church is doing in the areas where many of our inmates are coming from and going back to. Unless family dynamics are changed, our work with the incarcerated individual is often of limited impact.

While I am employed by Lake Butler, I attend at University City in Gainesville and serve as a deacon with the jail and prison ministry. They just hired Bruce Simer to coordinate a ministry to those in recovery. This is a BIG help to our work, as most inmates and their families struggle with addic-



tion. When we are able to work with the family unit, "success" rates drastically increase. The model for this work is taken from North Atlanta and the work of Bill and Carole Hale. Bruce has had vast experience in working with those in recovery and has often come with me to prison.

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