

How Can they Believe in Him if They Have Never Heard?

May 7, 2018

“How can they believe in Him if they have never heard...how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them?” (Romans 10:14).

During a recent conversation a volunteer candidate asked me, “is all of this really needed.” The young man was innocently referring to Life Abundant facilitating Bible studies and offering individual mentoring to inmates at the Bucks County Facilities. In response, I reminded him how important it is to share the Gospel message, in general, and how critical it is to introduce people to the Gospel when they are feeling remorse. The truth is, we are all more likely to take the step into repentance from the place of remorse. Life Abundant staff and volunteers are keenly aware of this and have become an integral part of the process of guiding men and women from point A to point B; that is from remorse to repentance.

As the volunteer and I continued on our tour of the Bucks County Jail, we discussed the importance of introducing all people to Jesus – after the order of the Great Commission of course. Another person present added that it is easy for us to forget that many of the imprisoned men and women don’t know the Gospel message. Sure, they may have heard of the “Christian thing” and may have even heard of the name Jesus, but most have never been presented with a clear message of God’s love and how his son died for all mankind. I agreed.

As we were turning into the next corridor, we noticed a room full of men in an Islamic service. It was a fitting scene in that moment, as I was still making the point as to why we, Christians, need to be present. The volunteer did not know that the jail has an assigned Iman (muslim holy man) but does not employ a Chaplain or Pastor.

I guess the short answer to the volunteer’s question is – YES! Bible studies, mentoring, chapel services, etc. are all desperately needed at the Bucks County Jail and at prisons and jails everywhere.

At our past banquet, it was mentioned that roughly 80 million people now have a criminal record. And although the descriptor “criminal record” is somewhat difficult to adequately define, it nevertheless illustrates the number of chances WE have to present the Gospel message to people who don’t know Jesus. The harvest is indeed plentiful.

Those in attendance also heard, firsthand, what happens when Christians are active at the local facilities. I suppose, then, the more appropriate question is: How would Bridgett or Dennis – or any other offender – come to know Jesus if someone were not there to present the Gospel message?

The discussion with the volunteer caused me to consider if Life Abundant, as an organization, is effectively communicating the statistical data and issues that surround incarcerated persons. Also

- Are we communicating too much or too little?
- Should there be other vehicles by which we share information, i.e. blog, recorded interviews, etc.?
- Would readers care to hear the volunteer or donor perspective, as it relates to aiding prison ministry efforts, from time to time?

I was left with more questions than answers. So, I have included a brief survey with this newsletter in order to hear directly from YOU, the reader.

We would like to know what your reader preferences are, preferred mailing frequency and what you would like to see us maintain or introduce at some of our annual events, like the banquet and the volunteer appreciation breakfast.

Please take a moment and complete the feedback questionnaire and return it in the provided envelope. The Board of Directors, Regina and I are looking forward to hearing from you!

In His Service, Jonathan H. Lewis, Executive Director
Regina Bready, Administrative Assistant