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The Florida Prison Evangelist

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Fall back on the Lord!

The Ecclesiastic writer tells us that there is a season for everything, a time and purpose under heaven. As we approach this time of year, when we reap the harvest of our labor, let us not grow weary. Last quarter, we highlighted our fellow field worker, Austin Trout. At the time of our writing, we were unaware of his preparations for what was next. Austin is now a student at the Florida School of Preaching (FSCOP), where he is building upon his spirituality. Austin maintains a mindset that he is willing to learn, do, and teach in whatever capacity the Lord decides. The workload at preaching school is demanding, and the amount of information to consume is vast. Even with such a workload, Austin is still preaching at Union Correctional when we call on him.



Austin tells us, *"The first month of school has been great. My classes include Revelation, Logic, The Life of Christ, The Preacher and His Work, sermon preparation and delivery, Genesis, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, The Holy Spirit, and Church History. So far, I have taken about 24 memory verse tests, one quiz, and have multiple homework assignments. The assignments consist of reading multiple pages of books, writing outlines for Bible chapters and book chapters, sermon outlines, and journaling. I want to thank everyone who has made it possible for me to learn more about God's word and to develop my skills in preaching it effectively."*

Jail Doves (University City church of Christ)

At Lowell, ladies are working through the New Life Behavior course titled "Managing My Anger." Nearly 40 women consistently attend and actively engage with the material. The main challenge is for them to reflect on their lives, identify how the material relates to their personal experiences, and determine how to apply what they've learned. We are also working on a 12-lesson series on "The Life of Jesus in Chronological Order."

We visit bars frequently...

On August 22, Christopher visited his hometown in Paris, TN, and was welcomed into the county jail to share God's Word with men behind bars—special thanks to Sheriff Josh Frey (pictured) and Deputy Sheriff Scott Wyrick.



In Memory

It is sad for us when our dear brothers and sisters depart for their eternal reward. While we rejoice in their faithfulness, we certainly do miss them and want to honor their memory. While seasons may change, let us keep in memory those of the past.

T Joe Walker, Patricia Rushing, Herman Hendricks, Earnest Stewart, Dennis Raichart, David Hendricks, and Bryan & Jeanette Hendricks.

Prison Ministry Fellowship & Appreciation Dinner

We are excited to see you on **Thursday, September 18**, and share some recent successes! In addition, we will be hearing from Paul Gregory, a former inmate who has walked in the newness of life and been back in society for over a decade. This year promises to be a wonderful time of fellowship for all who share our vision and values in this mission. Contributions are always welcome, but not required. Please decide to come and let us have a night of faith-filled fun...with good food!

RSVP
ASAP!



Seasons will change...

The earth's seasons change, as do the seasons of our lives and of our work. For four years, we have participated in prison dorm-style teaching for the Principal and Applications for Life (PAL) program at Reception and Medical West Unit (RMC). This program is administered by the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) and is a "Christian faith-based" initiative with denominational teaching in its curriculum. Christopher has navigated this task carefully, as those who teach the Bible correctly are sometimes persecuted for it by denominational groups. Christopher participated in this program to identify those who were genuinely seeking the truth and has had success mentoring some of the men in the program.

Due to a reorganization of the chaplain leadership, we are no longer participating in PAL on Tuesday mornings. Additionally, we have lost a Tuesday night class where Christopher taught about the new birth, new life, and the church. Why does a chaplain reorganization matter? As with any reorganization, change is inevitable, and our relationships with chaplains are imperative to our success. The vast majority of chaplains in FDC belong to a denomination. While many maintain a level of professionalism, some have a mindset that the prison chapel is their church.

Last year at this time, a chaplain attempted to push Christopher out based on differences in "theological perspective." The chaplain was new to FDC and did not realize that he was not authorized to do that. Christopher took the matter to the then-senior chaplain and assistant warden. Christopher found favor and was able to maintain his work at this facility. Since then, a new senior chaplain has been appointed and holds the same denominational view. This senior chaplain is seasoned and shrewd. Needless to say, Christopher has lost his dorm-style class in PAL and a class on Tuesday nights at RMC West. He continues to share the foundational truth, unfiltered, with those mostly outside of the church on Thursday nights at RMC West..

Even though this particular season has come to its end on Tuesdays at RMC West, a new season is on the horizon, and we believe the Lord has made a straight path. We have established a new class on Tuesday nights at Marion Correctional, designed to build upon foundational teaching for members of the church. Additionally, Christopher was asked and accepted a similar role for the dorm-style teaching program at Mayo Correctional. Seasons will change, but let us always remember that the closing of one is an opening to another!



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