

Bud Tibbles, A Profile in Humble Service

Bud, a 1958 graduate of Harding University, preached every Sunday at small rural congregations. Bud and his wife, Darlene, of Hominy, Oklahoma, just north of Tulsa, started working in prisons in 1983.

At that time Bud was busy working as a fulltime preacher and a part time volunteer in the prisons. Seeing the need for more of his time and talents in the prison ministry, he left pulpit work in 1988 and became a fulltime disciple for Christ in the Oklahoma prisons. Darlene told me Bud really loved this ministry. Not only did he help the men and women inmates, he reached out to officers.



In 1989, Bud was introduced to me via Bernie Glass, another prison ministry volunteer. In fact, Bernie was the second person to teach NLB lessons. Bill Brewer was the first. We supplied Bernie with a master copy of our curriculum, for which he was grateful.

Bud and his wife, Darlene, being very compatible, worked together as a great team. They were equally yoked. (Second Corinthians 6:14). The entire family supported their work from his three sons and their wives, his two daughters and their husbands and 22 grandchildren and 37 greatgrandchildren and more on the way. Wow! What a support base.

Bud was dedicated to this cause for 30 years. He touched the lives of thousands. Prisoners were not the only people who learned from Bud and his co-workers how to cope with the unchangeable results of their crimes. Family members, through seeing how Bud and his co-teachers affected their family member, also learned how to handle their emotional, spiritual, financial, and physical stress and strain. They were grateful for Bud and his fellow NLB instructors.

The work of Bud and his fellow teachers attracted the attention of state and local governmental leaders. One case serves as a sample of how the District Court of Tulsa felt about Bud and his teachers. In 1998, the courts found a man guilty of “unlawful possession of marijuana w/intent to distribute...” The man was sentenced to 8 years plus he was “...ordered, adjudged and decreed by the court...sentenced to be placed in the NEW LIFE BEHAVIOR in Hominy...” Bud wrote us about this great happening. He stated, “WOW! I don’t know about Texas, but this is a first for us in Oklahoma. If emails could shout, you could hear me.” Bud always wanted more and more students.

Another case reflects this appreciation for Bud’s work, his team of teachers and the NLB curriculum. Bud wrote stating, “Also, an inmate arrived recently with instructions from the Department of Health Services (DHS) to take the NLB Parenting course or face the possibility of losing his children. God works in marvelous ways. HM, you have no idea of the magnitude of this program.” I received this letter at my home while teaching a prison class in Texas. At the next session, I shared Bud’s letter. My students gave a round of applause to Bud.

The inmates also held Bud in high regard. Bud passed on to me one of the several letters he received from time to time. It read, "I would like more information on the NLB courses for college credit. I have been in NewLife Behavior here at Conner Unit for about four years. And I seem to be learning something new every time I go through this course. I want to thank you for all your help."

Bud reported that the inmates found two courses that very much fit their needs. Christians Against Substance Abuse (CASA) and Sense of Self.

Another sign that Bud and his team were making great progress was seen in 1999. The Director of Chaplaincy and Religious Programming for the State of Oklahoma retired and became one of Bud's NLB teachers.

The prisoners' families loved Bud and his team for helped them. In September, 1999, a mother and a wife of an inmate wrote Bud. The mother said, "You have no idea how much you have helped my son." The wife wrote, "My husband has enrolled in the New Life Behavior class again. I already see improvements. I tell everyone how much the New Life Behavior classes helps even when the inmate may not want it to!"

Bud reported on June 8, 2005 that no other faith-based group does any teaching on doctrinal issues such as baptism and communion. Bud wrote, "...the last four week, we have had some rich and meaningful studies on the subjects of baptism and the Lord's Supper."

His student enrollments usually ran around 140 students in four classes. Bud always reported the number of baptisms in monthly reports. His number averaged around 15 per month. On May 14, 2008, Bud reported that in 20 years of prison ministry, he had baptized 520 men.

Bud was humble and shy, so his work spoke for him. On October 18, 2002, at the annual NLB National conference, Bud was named the National NLB Man of the Year. His warden at Dick Conner Correctional Center in Hominy, OK wrote Bud on October 22 stating, "This award only confirms what our facility has known for quite some time. ...You epitomize the heart of a correctional Volunteer."

Bud not only carried out the "Great Commission," of Matthew 28:18-20, he actualized Paul's instructions to Timothy in Second Timothy 2:2, which reads, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." Bud set up training seminars in different cities and invited experienced and quality instructors to share insights and expertise for those desiring to work in this field. He also invited anyone, including family members of inmates, youth, and church leaders to learn more about the incarcerated. Bud came on the scene at a time when many Christian families were beginning to experience social trouble. The title of his October 16, 1999 workshop in Norman, Oklahoma was entitled, "Reaching the Inmate and the Family."

Those working with Bud in using the NLB curriculum included John and Donna Dickman and Jim Pinkston. John was a schoolteacher by profession. He was one of Bud's teachers in the Tulsa area. I enjoyed listening to John share his ideas about teaching

and learning. September 5-9, 2011, I was not able to go to the Ukraine and conduct my seminar. Knowing that John was capable, I asked him to go for me. From the student evaluations, he did a superb job. For more about Jim Pinkston, read his separate profile.

Bud passed away on July 19, 2018. I appreciate Bud and Darlene more than words can express for being committed to Christ and those often forgotten souls in prison.

H. M. Motsinger, Founder