

Since 1984: *Reconciling persons to God, families and society*

READING NLB CURRICULUM

First, consider that the average adult in this country reads below the 7-8 grade level and 54% read below the 6th grade level. Several states have even lower reading levels (Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, and Arkansas). *Seventy percent of prisoners read below the 4th grade level (with 8th grade being the average formal education attained).* Slightly under 50% of prisoners suffer from some degree of dyslexia. Half (50%) of those incarcerated have an IQ under 90. Under DSM-IV, an IQ between 71-84 was considered “borderline intellectual functioning.” DSM-V does not designate an IQ range, leaving it less clearly defined. Are there clear implications for the curriculum selected for use in jails and prisons?



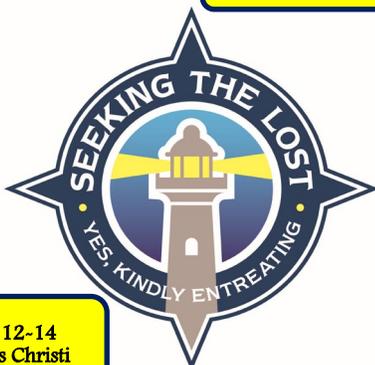
Written teaching material aimed at this population must “make the message plain.” Habakkuk 2:2 instructs, “Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner may carry the correct message to others” (NLT). In 1910, Mrs. Addie McGranahan penned the song—“Christ Receiveth Sinful Men.” This phrase is repeated after all four verses in the refrain: “Christ receiveth sinful men—make the message clear and plain.” When I began preaching, my wise mother told me that the best compliment after a sermon would be if a 4th or 5th grader said he or she “got the message.” Mom said if a child that age “got it—everyone else got it, too!” After I authored the NLB course—“Christians Against Substance Abuse”—some smart fellow said he had it *tested* and it *graded out* to be on the 5-6 grade level. He lavished praise on me. At first, it “hurt my feelings” because I wasn’t “trying” to write on that level. It was “natural” for me. Looking back through my years of local preaching, I probably embarrassed a few church members with my grammar and word choices but I take some comfort in knowing that “everybody got the message—clear and plain.”

Depending on the research cited, the average reading level of prisoners is slightly below the six grade. It is a bit higher in federal institutions. I have been told that the Texas Department of Corrections likes our NLB curriculum for two primary reasons: (1) It improves the reading ability of inmates and (2), it increases their vocabulary. If it hits these targets, they are not concerned about what we say about Jesus. Roughly 75% lack high school diplomas or GED and those who do—cannot read on a 12th grade level. Correctional authorities appreciate cognitively oriented curriculum that offenders can grasp without overly “dumbing it down.” NLB instructors help students increase reading ability and vocabulary by asking them to read sections of a lesson aloud in class. Those that cannot read well learn by listening to others. If a reader struggles with a word, it means he is not familiar with it and the teacher asks the class for its definition. Someone knows the meaning and how to use it in a sentence. This accomplishes two things: (1) vocabularies improve and (2), so does their reading level. Admittedly, those studying by mail only fail to fully enjoy these benefits.

—Buck Griffith

“Make the Message Plain”

50th National PM Workshop



June 12-14
Corpus Christi

IN LOVING MEMORY ~ IN HONOR OF

Family Upreach expresses gratitude for remembering loved ones and honoring those cherished with gifts. With these remembrances, souls are being taught to transform their lives and discard destructive behaviors through the awesome power of Jesus.

Received from:

- M/M Frank Maxey
- M/M Bob Wachtel
- M/M Buck Griffith
- M/M Dale Underwood
- M/M Frank Maxey
- M/M Bob Wachtel

In loving memory of:

- Christine McKinney
- Christine McKinney
- Christine McKinney
- Diane Owen
- George McFarlin
- George McFarlin

SLOW BUT STEADY PROGRESS ON SEVERAL FRONTS



We are grateful for strong prayer warriors and faithful donors who are patiently wait as we seek to reach numerous meaningful yet long-term goals. It is not easy to keep you fully informed of “next steps” being taken on the spiral staircase toward the day when we can joyfully announce—*Goal Reached!* In this issue we will hit a few *high spots* as we try to share a few some of these steps in various directions.

- Walker Hill (our first “Gideon Project” intern) succeeded in finding a great job in his field. We are proud of him.
- We have been invited to facilitate two *Winners Circle* meetings monthly at our District Parole Office.
- Progress is being made to become a *community service* provider to clients through the Municipal Court.
- Our county jail wants to publicize the number we have baptized there over the past 12 months (512).
- Approval has been granted for us to use the NASV (at no cost) to produce a future “Prison” Bible.
- Dr. Underwood is taking steps toward producing an NLB course to successful reentry efforts.
- Dr. Umphrey is lending his expertise in producing “12 Steps to a Closer Walk with God” as an NLB course.

“Opening Doors”

We have moaned for years of the need to open more doors in major areas of heavy population where the larger numbers of offenders come from and where they are most likely to return following their release. To meet the growing challenge, congregations in the Houston area are being contacted. Dr. H.M. Motsinger is



reaching out to them while Dale and Recardo are setting up meetings and training sessions. Similar steps are being taken in Bexar County (San Antonio). These efforts are well received and we are seeing significant progress. Due to this, others are contacting us independently to become a part of these teams in heavily populated areas.



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FAMILY UPREACH – PUBLISHER

Many of our readers continue to deal with NLB-published studies (and others) not going directly to those subscribed in jails or prisons where incarcerated. NLBM is the “dba” of Family Upreach, Inc. In a one sentence definition, NLBM is described as a non-profit organization that “researches, authors, **publishes, and distributes curriculum designed to help transform negative behaviors to positive.**”

TDCJ guidelines state: “Legal mail; media mail; and books, magazines, packages and other subscriptions from *verified publishers* should be sent to the unit.” We are trying to define the term of—*verified publisher*. Stay tuned . . .

Other Questions about Correspondence Guidelines

An anticipated question on the TDCJ website is: “Where should legal, media, or **special correspondence be sent?**” The answer given: “To the unit of assignment.” But when we send lessons to their *unit of assignment*, they are returned (at our expense) and instructed to send it elsewhere for scanning. Either we need a clearer definition of what constitutes **special correspondence** or prison mailrooms need it. It is understandable for prison systems to scan **general** correspondence to reduce contraband. However, the very “mission” of TDCJ includes in the third part of their four-pronged mission that TDCJ volunteers accept: “promote positive change in offender behavior.” This is a prominent goal of the NLB curriculum published and distributed: “transform negative behaviors to positive.” But it is significantly hindered by having our its curriculum rerouted to be scanned and we cannot supply subscribers with a preaddressed envelope to return tests to be graded.

Another anticipated question on the TDCJ website is: “What if I have additional questions?” Response? “You can get 24-hour, 7 days a week, and 365-day support by calling Securus® Customer Service at (800) 844-6591.” The problem is that this number is to *the company doing the scanning/tablet provision* – not TDCJ.

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