



THE VOICE OF THE YOKE AND THE CROSS

The Voice of the Yokefellow Prison Ministry
in the Lehigh Valley

Yokefellow Prison Ministry
4931 Cypress Street
Allentown, PA 18106

August-October 2010

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IN YOUTH MINISTRY, HAVING A GOOD HEART ISN'T ENOUGH

THE YOKE AND THE CROSS

Purpose: To bring the latest news and events of the Lehigh Valley Council of Yokefellow Prison Ministry to the volunteers, friends, and inmates involved with Yokefellow.

Council Director
Wayne Benjamin
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Council Chairperson
Nick Lovette

Treasurer
William Truckenmiller

www.yokefellowpa.org

Yokefellowship State Conference

October 15-16, 2010
Best Western Country
Cupboard Inn &
Restaurant
Route 15
Lewisburg, PA

Attention Volunteers DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY

The Lehigh Valley Council has a limited amount of funds to offer free attendance. Contact Wayne Benjamin now as this is a first come, first served offer.

Complete program schedule will be mailed at confirmation of your reservation.

In three decades of working professionally with delinquent youth, I have seen many well intentioned people fail. There is often "God talk" and emotion but working with minors requires a higher vigilance and degree of professionalism. One incident of physical abuse, sexual misconduct, or neglect is enough to shatter a ministry permanently, not to mention criminal charges and a civil law suit. Many "wilderness" programs have "hit the Press" in the past ten years. The papers are in the business of selling papers and will rarely back off from an opportunity to expose a ministry that has been irresponsible.

Having a kind heart is not enough when creating a ministry for youth with a history of mental illness, emotional problems, neglect, abuse, and learning disabilities. The creators of Scared Straight, Youth Boot Camps, and Behavior Modification programs were well intentioned, but those methods failed to impact recidivism. We view them in hindsight as failures. Often, youth program leaders design programs not based on proven (statistically) results and good science but on "pet" theories and shallow homespun beliefs. They would include "Getting tough" with youth, yelling at them, scaring them with "horror" stories, and preaching at them.

Most of the youth I work with have little impulse control, a high degree of peer esteem, and a general distrust of author-

ity figures. Can they be reached? The answer is; absolutely. But a deep understanding of Psychology (in particular Adolescent Developmental Psychology) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is an important first step. More is required to work with troubled youth such as a background in Sociology (Statistics) and an internship with an evidence based treatment program.

Of course, ministry leaders need Christian maturity. A leader with a smoking and drinking behavior is a poor role model. A leader without a long track record of service in a local church and an understanding of Church small group dynamics, accountability, and devotion to Worship can hardly point youth to the fundamental need for Church. A spiritual leader needs a consistent pattern of daily Bible reading and study. When absent, the fruits of the Spirits are usually absent, too. A person who aspires to leadership of a youth ministry living with serious sin, clearly identified by the Bible, is not a fit model. God cannot bless such a ministry.

I am often amazed by good people who want to help troubled youth but are anti-intellectual. Their lack of credentials usually causes them to feel threatened by advance degrees and insecure, so they lash out at science, studies, and research. Do not misunderstand, the Holy Spirit is essential in youth ministry but

education and religious fervor are not mutually exclusive. For example, Dr. Jensen (neuroscientist) and Dr. Urion (neurologist) did clinical research on the adolescent brain at Harvard University. Results were released in 2008. In part, their studies confirmed what parents and teachers have long observed. As an example, "the frontal lobe of the brain that affects impulse control is not fully connected until age twenty", excess drinking blocks synapses, smoking affects brain connections that affect sleep, and learning, and most teens can multi-task but are often getting sensory overload with stimulus from computers, television, texting, and video games that affect learning and personality. We need to build on sound research when we develop curriculum.

An aspiring youth ministry leader told me empathically that such research had "no value". I have not met a reputable sociologist or psychologist that did not find that research valid. My point, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing". A person who took one psychology class should not pass as a counselor or psychoanalyze others. Residential programs present the greatest risks. Youth on medications or with mental health problems require staff with clinical experience that was evaluated and advance psychology de-

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YOUTH MINISTRY CONT'D

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grees and state certification. Likewise, a residential youth program with any form of drug treatment needs to abide by state regulations. Taking short cuts with "dedicated volunteers" can be a formula for disaster. Volunteers play an important role but never as a replacement for professional staff. A wrong motive is usually trying to save the money of professional salaries. It is an old but true axiom: "You get what you pay for". An all volunteer residential youth program is like a military with no West Point, Air Force Academy, or Annapolis leaders.

I applaud sincere people with big hearts that want to help youth. There are many opportunities for them to serve as mentors and Bible Study coordinators, but troubled youth require experienced teach-

ers, certified drug counselors, psychologists, and leaders with academic credentials.

Taking youth camping, hiking, on a ropes course, or working with animals can be positive experiences, but they will not change an adolescent's faulty thinking or criminal behavior. These "experiences" are merely a lab for the genuine counseling and group work needed for re-socialization. "Home spun" philosophy is dangerous when working with minors, children entrusted to your care.

Finally, reputable youth programs will want to validate their methods by a team of sociologists. It often takes five years of tracking to know if a method is effective.

Programs that don't track grads usually don't want to know the truth. It is sad, but many aspiring youth program leaders shun research. They will proclaim their methods are successful because youth are "happier" or "enjoyed the program", or "feel better about themselves". These are not reliable standards. Emotions are relative. Only measurable behaviors count like "improved grades", "no arrests", "no truancy", and "church involvement and attendance". This takes more work to observe and track, of course, but if it is worth doing, it should be done right and professionally.

Don Smarto,
President Youth Direct, Inc.
Dallas, Texas

YOKEFELLOW CONCERT HAS MORE FEATURES

It's time to plan for the 27th, Annual Fund Raising Concert for Yokefellow Prison Ministry. As announced in the last newsletter the date is Saturday, September 25, 7:30PM at Bethany Church, Wescosville.

You need to make your ticket reservations by filling out the form at the bottom of the flyer in this newsletter then mail now.

In addition to Bob Varricchio as the featured guest, singing, playing the piano and sharing his life changing testimony, the concert features two other testimonies. Rich Savaki, Yokefellow coordinator for the Monday housing unit meetings

at Lehigh County Prison will testify of how and when Jesus came into his life and Angelena Green will hold your attention with how she became saved. Angelena will be signing her book "Transformation" at the Yokefellow display table before and after the concert. You can read more about Rich and Angelena on the back of the concert flyer.

Valorie Hinkle will return to sing and also on the program for the first time Scott Redfield from Bethany will be featured. Scott was with Valorie, Mel Everson,

and Wayne Benjamin on June 23 at Teen Challenge, Rehresburg, to sing to over 300 men.

Other details will be forth coming to make it a special night of celebration you will not want to miss. We praise the Lord for 27 years of ministry, to all the volunteers that have help reach the men and women at Lehigh County Prison, the men at the Salisbury Annex work release center and the juveniles at Cedarbrook. We look forward to seeing you September 25 and remember we do it all ~~~

"BECAUSE HE LIVES!!!"

DIRECTED LIFE RE-ENTRY PROGRAM GRADUATION

The seventh graduation for men in the Yokefellow Directed Life Re-Entry program took place Monday, June 7, 7:00PM at Lehigh County Prison. Many of the Directed Life instructors, team members, and volunteers along with Warden Dave Meisel, Assistant Warden Nancy Afflebach, Steve Miller, treatment supervisor and Yokefellow council director Wayne Benjamin gathered together for the special occasion.

Six men received certificates certifying their completion of phase one of the program. To qualify for

graduation requires attending eight weeks of classes Monday through Friday, 6:30 to 10:00PM, with perfect attendance, not missing any.

Phase two begins upon discharge from Prison! This includes attending the Tuesday night Timothy program held 7:30PM at Bethany Church, Wescosville, which offers the men a support base continuing life application courses, mentoring and job placement, place to live, food, clothing and other needs.

Candidates for the next group of men for the eight week class is underway. If any Yokefellow volunteers, as well as men interested in being part of the Directed Life program would like to lead a course or be a team member, now is the time to apply. Phone, write, or email now. We welcome your participation in this important program.

NEXT CRAFT/VENDOR SHOW OCTOBER 9, 2010

Yokefellow has set aside Saturday, October 9 for the second craft/vendor show. This fundraising event for the ministry will be held at Bethany Church, 1208 Brookside Road, Wescosville, 11:00AM to 3:00PM. Set up time is 10:00AM. Eight foot tables and 2 chairs will be provided for each vendor..

Take advantage of various

crafts and vendors. Get a head start with your Christmas shopping. Enjoy food options: hot dogs, soft pretzels, brownies, soda and bottled water, also delicious chocolate covered pretzels. So come and invite others while helping Yokefellow raise funds for the Directed Life Re-Entry Program.

Attention vendors! Fill out form below to reserve your table now. Fee: \$25.00 per table but \$45.00 for two tables. Plus a donation from your table for the silent auction, value no less than \$20.00.

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE BOTTOM PORTION BELOW AND RETURN NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 15TH.
ALSO INCLUDE THE NONREFUNDABLE CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY.**

Please send the \$25.00 check made payable to Yokefellow Ministries and the attached form to:

Gayle Benjamin
2445 New Market Sq. So
Bensalem, Pa. 19020

If you have any questions, please contact Gayle @ 215-245-6607
OR animalhall@aol.com

Bethany church nor Yokefellow Ministries is responsible for your items!

Only 1 vendor per company and only 2 vendors of similar items.

First come, First Serve!

PLEASE **do not** contact the church.

Name: _____

Phone # _____

E-Mail: _____

Craft or Business _____

Bethany United
Methodist Church
1208 Brookside Road
Allentown, PA 18106

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Note: In the interest of good Christian Stewardship, if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please notify us so we may cancel your subscription.

In This Issue...

Youth Ministry Takes More Than A Good Heart—Directed Life Graduation —Vendor Show

27th Yokefellow Fund Raising Concert

Saturday, September 25, 2010

With

**Special Guest
Bob Varricchio**

7:30 PM

Bethany UM Church
1208 Brookside Road
Wescosville, PA 18106



Testimonies by:
**Rich Savaki
And
Angelena Green**



music by:
**Valorie Hinkle
And
Scott Redfield**

TICKET RESERVATION INFORMATION INSIDE