



HERE'S THE LATEST

Spring Newsletter



Pacific Youth's Biggest Goal

PYCM's biggest goal in 2018 was to co-sponsor a one-day conference with CMCA for those involved in correctional ministry. CMCA stands for Correctional Ministry and Chaplain's Association, which was formed in conjunction with the Institute for Prison Ministry at the Billy Graham Center in 2011. The mission of CMCA is to connect, encourage, equip and strengthen Christians as they fulfill the Great Commission in Corrections.

All other CMCA conferences have been held back east so Chaplain Steve Lowe felt it was time to see what could happen out here on the West Coast. Steve is a founding board member and very connected.

Planning began last year when a date was placed on the calendar, mailing lists were created, a venue was selected, brochures were designed, and seven workshop topics were assigned. I knew several people who needed to be there and began getting the word out. Para-chaplain Tim Alexander designed a new, professional ministry display that was first used at the conference.



Chaplain Steve felt most of the weight regarding the conference as his "to do" list grew. One of the last big items he needed was to find a worship team to play different times throughout the day. The founder of Northeast of the Well, Laura Johnson-Suk was conducting a workshop at the conference and her team

ended up being the perfect choice. A special thanks goes to Kitt Del Sesto (PCM Volunteer) for assisting Steve during the four months leading up to February 24th.

Ninety-five individuals registered for the day, which was great considering this was the first CMCA conference in California. A large group of attendees came from San Diego and those that came the farthest were from the Bay Area. It was good to see old friends and to meet new ministry partners in the region. Those who spoke were authors, national ministry leaders, and seasoned prison ministry veterans. I was impressed with the competence in the room.

I am creating a ten-minute highlights video with the moments I was able to record and will share it with you in my visual newsletter later in the year.

Personal Reflection Day

Due to being away a few days after Christmas, I was not able to take the time off the following week to be refreshed at the CC Mission's Conference. The next best alternative was to schedule a reflection day in mid-January. Ayres Inn was kind enough to provide a free room at their Costa Mesa location and allowed me an early check-in time of 2:00 pm.

As I began my time with confession and repentance, I quickly sensed the Lord telling me to simply be thankful and enjoy where he has allowed my life to be. For quite a while I reflected on how the Lord has been working and as I read over an old journal, I noticed that I don't really worry about the things I did twenty years ago. Early in the evening I asked the Lord about the coming year. I began to talk to him about the normal ministry activities I have planned and gave him permission to change whatever he wanted.

The longer I meditated, the more I kept hearing the Lord tell me not to worry about the ministry. The main idea I got was to glorify God and keep my goal of loving him my main priority. What I do or how many contacts aren't as important as just making the Lord look good.

That was exactly what I needed to hear and kept me focused when I started to worry about how the Easter Outreaches would turn out at YGC and Joplin. Below is a letter I received from someone I invited to serve.

Rick,

I appreciated the opportunity to serve with your ministry at the Joplin Easter Outreach. It gave me a chance to make a difference and impact someone's life. I felt welcomed by the facility staff and other volunteers. You are doing a great work with these youth who are normally not given the guidance they need. But you are there every week. My short experience at Joplin was very rewarding and encouraged me to keep making a difference. Thank you again for allowing me the chance to serve our community.

Sincerely,
Issai Ochoa

Overcoming Childhood Trauma

I recently redesigned my website and made a way for viewers to order a copy of my Overcoming Childhood Trauma workbook. People are also able to view the cover, the preface, the introduction, and table of contents. I have sold about 70 copies to people I know but need time and wisdom to develop a marketing plan.

A few days before the workbooks were going to be printed, Chaplain Steve finished writing a preface, which was a great addition to the project. Here is an excerpt.

God had a complaint during the time of the prophet Jeremiah that might apply to His people today. God's complaint: "They dress the wound of my people as if it were not serious" (Jeremiah 6:14a-NIV). This book is Chaplain Rick demonstrating to God, "I do take the wound of your people as if it were serious."

We normally see what we want to see in people and don't want those asking for prayer to be as messed up as they are. It would be nice if a short time in a correctional facility, along with some spiritual growth would get our youth back on track. Couldn't their arrest just be a bump in the road that is quickly overcome?

The youth who attend my church services can look like they are doing good but what I see and what is really going on are two different things. Everyone tries to appear to be fine but when I meet with them one on one, I hear the real story.

The type of youth who end up in Juvenile Hall are not average delinquent teenagers. Most are wounded individuals who need someone to be real with them. The trauma workbook is a tool that forces them to face unwanted emotions and bring God's Word into the broken parts of their lives.

On the day the workbooks were ready, my printer friend delivered them while I was meeting with Moises. Moises and I met in Juvenile Hall a few years ago and when he saw the cover he said, "This looks like something I need." That day he made a commitment to meet weekly and work on the issues he is still struggling with. I am thankful to have a tool that can be used for situations like this.

Why Is Our Nation Divided?

As I have been reading through the Bible again this year, I noticed how individuals from the Tribe of Benjamin really opposed David throughout his reign. King Saul was a Benjaminite but because of David, no one from his tribe was going to be king. Their identity came from their tribe and not from being the People of God.

When citizens divide into particular tribes, they only associate with those who agree with them (circling the wagons). When the person they understand and relate to does not get elected, they become fearful and make other "tribes" the enemy rather than trying to understand them.

Thank you for being a part of this ministry and I look forward to seeing what the Lord will do during the rest of the year.

Rick Johnson

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