

Future Projection

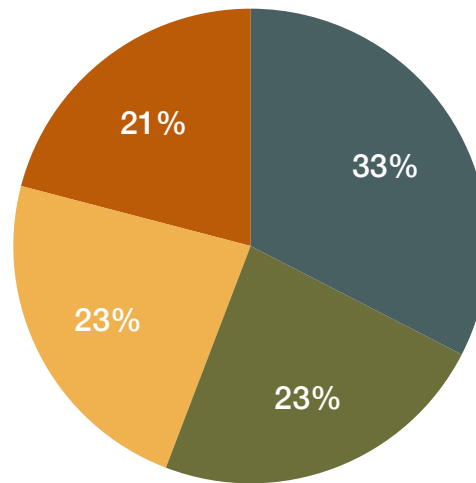
Twice a year I sit down and write a list of the concerns and issues that are on my mind. The list is then posted on a date six months in the future on my digital calendar and I never look at it until then. Several days ago I looked at the list I created last July. Most of the concerns were about the lives of various youth that I was working with. Some were about family issues and the rest were various ministry related concerns. Most of my concerns turned out fine and those that didn't weren't that bad.

This past year will always be remembered as the year that the Joplin Youth Center closed. I no longer have to drive 45 minutes after the JH and YGC church services but can head over to a local church and enjoy the last half of their service. Without Joplin, I am able to give the Youth Leadership Academy more attention and it only takes 3 minutes to get there. A majority of the Protestant youth in that facility usually attend the weekly church service on Thursday evenings.

Prayer Letters

At some point this past year, I told the Lord, "If you want me to be a full time missionary, please allow me to write a quality monthly prayer letter." A quality letter in my mind is one that contains answers to prayer and other evidence that the Lord is working through the ministry and in the lives of those we are serving. Being able to sit down each month to share what God is doing and the opportunities he gives has helped reaffirm my call to the ministry. On my desk is all twelve of last years prayer letters and looking through them made me realize that 2019 was another blessed year.

- Juvenile Hall
- Extra Security Risk Units
- Youth Guidance Center
- Youth Leadership Academy



Church Attendance Graph

For most of last year, there were three units in Juvenile Hall that housed extra security risk youth who were facing serious charges. We were required to hold three separate 45-minute Sunday services in a row for these units. Two of our volunteers and one staff member take turns leading the services. As you can see from the graph, these units have just as many or more attending church than the two camp facilities. Around one third of my one on one contacts were with youth in the extra security risk units. At the end of the year, one of the units closed so now we are back to two 60-minute services.

At Juvenile Hall, 70% of the youth who attend a church service also attend a weekly bible study. At the Youth Leadership Academy it's 55% and at the Youth Guidance Center, 100% of the youth who go to church also attend bible study.

God is Faithful

The number of youth who normally get booked into Juvenile Hall dropped about 40% in 2019. Another unit closed permanently at Juvenile Hall and the Youth Guidance Center also has an empty unit even with the closure of the Joplin Youth Center. All year my prayer has been, "Lord, please cause more youth to sign up as Protestant on their religious preference form." I thought the Lord was not answering that prayer until I divided the number of bookings with the number of forms our ministry received. It was 5% higher than last year so God is faithful!

For years, I remember looking out on a sea of faces at the Juvenile Hall church services. But with less youth being arrested, the sea of faces has now turned into individual people. With a smaller number of youth attending, I don't just see a face but a person and I can usually remember their name. I no longer have to rush from unit to unit trying to keep up with the requests for contact. Each request for a chaplain is valued and I am able to give each youth the special attention he or she needs.

List of Praises

This past year, I listed 53 answers to prayer or things God did that I was thankful for. Sixteen of the items were about released youth who have stayed in touch with me and were doing well. Six of them were written down after my outreach activities turned out well even though some type of crisis at the facility threatened them. Many of the others were just ways I saw God bless my life or the life of someone else.

A highlight of the year was seeing the Lord help me prepare the workshop material I presented at the CMCA Conference at Wheaton College.

Contacts Count

Even though there were less youth in the facilities, my total contacts were not that much lower than last year. I was encouraged to see an increase in aftercare contacts (8% higher) which is something I have no control over. I spent time with 49 released youth but a third of the 374 contacts were with three youth who had big needs.

In 2019, I conducted 129 church services at three facilities and helped lead 49 bible studies at one facility. Twelve special guests were cleared to assist at a church service and 55 volunteers were recruited to serve at one of my outreach activities. I added a movie night at YGC but the other six outreaches I sponsored were the ones I have been doing for years.

What I Taught

From the beginning of February to the end of October, I taught 26 lessons through the Book of Romans. Certain parts were challenging to apply to my audience but I am glad I finally covered this important book of the bible. After Romans, I did a five lesson series called, "Knowing Your Enemy" that dealt with spiritual warfare.

Teaching through the Book of Romans and preparing a CMCA workshop on how to counsel juveniles biblically, really challenged me to look again at what I believe about how a person changes. The Lord used these two things to inspire me to re-write some of my counseling material and I feel better than I have felt in 30 years about what is being presented.

This past year I watched one of my disciples go through a family crisis that was unlike anything I have ever seen. It was a tough season and I wasn't exactly sure how I could help but today this young man is stable and growing in Christ.

MY MINISTRY CONTACTS

Church Services:	1254
Bible Studies:	498
Chaplain Requests:	346
Counseling:	216
Discipleship:	67
Aftercare:	374
Outreach Activities:	259



This past year I spoke at one Sunday School class and four times at a Streetlight Church service. I attended four conferences and two training days. One was with the Timothy House staff at Teen Challenge and the other was a mental health training put on by the Center for Individual and Family Therapy.

I am encouraged to see the youth continue to turn in requests slips to meet with a chaplain and normally I have 5-6 other youth that I meet with weekly for discipleship or counseling. Thank you for your part in helping me stay full-time on the mission field!

Chaplain Rick Johnson

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2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Photo of the Year



My most liked post on Facebook this past year was the collage I made for the National Day of Prayer. We had a good turnout and when the gathering was over, two thin clouds had moved together to form a cross in the sky off to the east!

Quote of the Year

You can't judge a book by its cover and you also can't judge a life by its first chapter.

Father Greg Boyle