Outreach Center Network News Letter

May 2016

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### A Dreamer’s Devotion

Once again this spring we celebrate the Day of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The OLD TESTAMENT READING read in many churches is JOEL 2:28-29

"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams,

Your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."

On the first Pentecost day the Spirit was poured out in a marvelous way. The church was blessed and grew. Thousands came to know the Lord.

Who would have thought it possible? Who would have even given it a thought, let alone a dream or wish. Yet in a very real sense Joel’s words, God’s Word is happening anew. God is training and equipping people who are blind to reach others who are blind. Through the outreach centers, all around the country, the gospel is being shared. Often those who come to the center for the first time, hear it for the first time.

My vision, your vision, was and is that people who are blind would help blind people. After all who better understands our unique challenges and problems. My dream was that people who are blind would share and show God’s love and care. Who better can make God come alive but one who speaks the same language. That is what happened that first Pentecost; the message of salvation found in Jesus was shared in the language people understood. Remember, language is not just words, but it includes how a person thinks and views the world.

Certainly that is what is happening in the United States. You are a part of this. Each one of the outreach centers is what Joel is talking about: a dream come true! You would not be here if you did not share the dream, the vision, of sharing, supporting and helping one another.

We give thanks to the Lord for his continuing to make come true the day of Pentecost.

Pastor Dave

### This Month’s Focus

Having established the core values, those things which are absolutely necessary, here are some practical, hands on items. See how your center is doing. Use these to improve what you are doing so that more people who are blind may be touched by Jesus’ love.

THE APPROACH

Quite often, people who are blind feel broken by life’s hardships and the circumstances of their lives. Over the years, they have learned not to trust programs designed for them. Quite often, these programs, established by well-intentioned people, have fallen through and they are left alone once again. Consequently, they do not immediately trust either new programs or sighted people. People who are blind need to experience God’s love around them. In that way, they will believe and have a thirst for God’s Word.

THE STRATEGY

Have people who are blind invite other people who are blind to come and experience a caring community of acceptance and love. This type of community is formed by meeting basic human needs among a group of caring sighted and blind Christian people.

In time, many of the people who are blind will integrate more fully into the sighted community because they want to stay in this community of love. Even if they do not integrate into the sighted community, they will hear and experience God’s love and forgiveness.

OUTREACH CENTER OBJECTIVES

1. Reach isolated blind people to demonstrate God’s love and faithfulness to them. By keeping human commitments, we reflect that God’s promises are not empty.

2. Train and/or empower people who are blind to be leaders in other areas of life.

3. Melt away separateness; integration occurs when blind people learn that sighted people can be trusted and when sighted people learn what blind people have to offer.

GOALS OF AN OUTREACH CENTER

1. Show human compassion, care and kindness. This must come first, because many people who are blind have not experienced much kindness or compassion in their lives.

2. Have a person who is blind come to the center as often as possible so he or she is constantly in contact with God’s love. God’s people demonstrate this love in both word and deed.

3. A long-term goal and hope is to move a person who is blind into an active relationship with a congregation. Do realize that for some people, this will never happen. That is all right, because if number two occurs, we will see the blind person in heaven.

Do not be tempted to push this goal up to number one. If you do, it will backfire and cause the timid, cautious blind person to go away. Therefore, this is more a result of the first two goals than a goal in and of itself.

## Notes from Centers

The Peaceful Vision Outreach Center is located at Peace Lutheran church, **Covington Washington, a suburb of Seattle. The outreach center** Open March 2010.

This center does not provide drivers. Instead all are encouraged to find their own rides. The paratranset system in this area is very good and used by many.

The center continually advertises is meetings through the local and state communications set up for people who are blind. From this they have had people travel from some distance. At present a 21 year old gentleman travels over an hour by car, driven by a family member, to attend the gatherings.

On average the center sees about 15 people come to each gathering.

Pastor Dave

### Audio Bible Study Options

At your next outreach center meeting you might want to ask who has a computer, Victor stream or smart phone. With any of these electronic forms an audio weekly Bible study and devotion can be received from this ministry; Not Alone Internet Ministry for the Blind.

The devotion is called “Week in Reflection”. It connects an event, or life circumstance of a blind person to the Word of God: 6 to 8 minutes long.

The audio Bible study is also done by myself but includes Cecilia Lee, a former outreach center blind leader. Again, we relate the Word of God to the life of a blind person. The Bible study is called Room 4216: 25 to 30 minutes long.

In the upcoming lessons we are beginning a book from the Old Testament.

You can sign up to receive either of these podcast in several ways. You can go to the Apple podcast store. You can send me an email and I will add you to the email list which sends out the link to play when posted. You may also use a Victor Stream and search for the podcasts.

Pastor Dave

### Final Thoughts

In upcoming issues we can and will look at many of the same topics as well as others. If you have questions, thoughts or suggestions, please post them on the blind ministry email list.

Pastor Dave