

Take a Risk!

A monthly publication from Risk Takers *for Christ*

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By Calling and Vocation

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President



I recall a conversation I had several years ago with a Bible college professor. He said - with more than a touch of disdain in his voice - that the biggest difference between today's students and those of 20 years ago was their motivation.

"Students used to attend Bible college to pursue a calling," he said. "Today, they attend Bible college to pursue a career."

Now my friend wasn't saying that all students fit into those categories. Nor was he suggesting that a calling and a career cannot be one and the same thing. However, I think his point was a valid one and it provides some food for thought for the rest of us.

I started my first prison ministry in 1987, when I was a mere "lad" of 27. After five years of eating, thinking, sleeping and dreaming about the idea, I knew I had to take a baby step of faith and see what God had in mind. Seven years later, I entered full-time ministry for similar reasons.

Today, when people ask me what I do for a living, I tell them that I am a prison minister "by calling and vocation." The call came first, as early as 1982. The vocation, at least the full-time version, came later.

Now they are one and the same...and inseparable.

Sure, I dabble in politics because I see public service as an extension of my ministry. After all, you have to be a real "Risk Taker" to run for office...or maybe just a little bit crazy. And yet, being a candidate has given me an elevated platform from which to share my faith - as well as my faith-based solutions for America's problems.

But at the end of the day, I am a prison minister, through and through. In fact, after three decades of ministering to inmates across North America and Africa, I sometimes feel more comfortable "behind bars" than I do on the outside.

I used to tell people that I felt fortunate to have "stumbled upon" my own destiny. I guess that's my way of saying that God designed me for a specific purpose and I am more than happy to go along with - and submit to - His plan for my life. It sure beats mine.

In other words, Father truly does "know best" and yes, Philippians 1:6 (which happens to be my life verse) is as true today as the day the Apostle Paul penned it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

If you are unsure whether your current job is a career or a calling, ask God to show you the difference. My guess is that He will either meld the two into one or move you elsewhere. Just remember that His ways - as well as His timing - are always superior to ours.

Photos from our Living H2O Initiative



Portrait of a Servant

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

"The key to prison ministry is flexibility."

- Rev. Larry "Chap" Lilly

What Chaplain Lilly meant was that, in prison ministry, there are many different variables. The concept of using sports to attract an audience in order to communicate the gospel may remain the same, but virtually every other element is in a state of constant flux.

From the size and location of the correctional institution to the level of custody and yes, the actual sporting activity...no prison trip is exactly the same. Even the weather can play tricks with outdoor events and cause postponements or move a scheduled activity indoors.

However, at almost every Risk Takers for Christ event, there is one constant...and his name is Tom Palladino.

Tom has been volunteering with RTC since 2012, when he joined us on our South Carolina Prison Project that included 14 different prisons over an 11-day period. Since then, Tom has participated in almost every prison trip, whether it was to a Florida state institution or a more distant location such as Kentucky.



Above: Tom Palladino

In his mid-50's, Tom doesn't play on any of our sports teams. Instead, he serves as our Jack-of-all-trades. He willingly carries our portable sound system into every facility and sets it up while our team is warming up. As soon as that task is completed, Tom starts distributing gospel literature - often single-handedly - to the hundreds of inmates roaming the recreation yard.

Tom is always willing to share his testimony, too, and it is one that the prisoners can readily identify with because of his past drug and alcohol addictions. Tom also spent some time "behind bars" himself and so, he can relate to the men he meets because he knows exactly what they are going through.

In between prison trips, Tom faithfully volunteers at our Living H2O Initiative. Every Thursday evening, you can find him at First Baptist Church, setting up our display table, registering the young men, manning our Christian resource table, and overseeing the competition. He is always "ready and willing" to share his life story, offer a prayer and engage a young man in a spiritual conversation.

When God made Tom Palladino, He broke the mold. I am just glad that we have the "original" as part of our Risk Takers ministry team.

Making Judgments

by Os Hillman, TGIF Today God Is First Volume 2

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

Have you ever made a judgment about a person or situation only to discover how wrong you were in your assessment? Such was the case in a story told by Os Guinness in his book, *The Call*.

"Arthur F. Burns, the chairman of the United States Federal Reserve System and ambassador to West Germany, was a man of considerable gravity. Medium in height, distinguished, with wavy silver hair and his signature pipe, he was economic counselor to a number of presidents from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Ronald

Reagan. When he spoke, his opinions carried weight and Washington listened.

Arthur Burns was also Jewish, so when he began attending an informational White House group for prayer and fellowship in the 1970s, he was accorded special respect. In fact, no one knew quite how to involve him in the group and, week after week when different people took turns to end the meeting in prayer, Burns was passed by-out of a mixture of respect and reticence.

One week, however, the group was led by a newcomer who did not know of Burns' status. As the meeting ended, the newcomer turned to Arthur Burns and asked him to close the time with a prayer. Some of the old-timers glanced at each other in surprise and wondered what would happen. But without missing a beat, Burns

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Praying for Prisoners

by Judy Morgan, RTC Prayer Partner

Whoever is reading "Praying for Prisoners" right now can be a victim of Satan's lies. If it's not happening to you right at this moment, then at some point in time it will be.

The Bible says that Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). I'm not trying to focus on what Satan can do or not do in our lives, but we need to be aware of his temptations and how Jesus says that you can be an overcomer through Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Has Satan ever tempted you with words (lies) such as these: "You don't have time to pray today. If you're praying for prisoners that won't affect whether or not they want to change their lives for Christ. They've already made decisions and there is no hope for them." Lies and more lies that Satan will use to keep you from praying for prisoners or anyone else for that matter. Why are we bombarded with those (and other) lies? Because the liar knows that there is power in prayer. God's Word says in James 5:16, "The effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much".

In Billy Graham's "Hope for Each Day" Morning and Evening Devotionals, he states that, "God desires that we Christians be concerned and burdened for a lost world. If we pray this kind of prayer, an era of peace may come to the world and wickedness may be turned back."

Will you be willing to resist the enemies lies, with God's help, and pray daily for those in prison and those who are lost without Christ?

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reached out, held hands with others in the circle, and prayed this prayer: 'Lord, I pray that you would bring Jews to know Jesus Christ. I pray that you would bring Muslims to know Jesus Christ. Finally, Lord, I pray that you would bring Christians to know Jesus Christ. Amen.'

Burn's prayer has become legendary in Washington. Not only did he startle those present with refreshing directness, but he also underscored a point about 'Christians' and 'Christianity' that needs repeating regularly. It highlights another important aspect of the truth of calling: Calling reminds Christians ceaselessly that, far from having arrived, a Christian is someone who in this life is always on the road as 'a follower of Christ' and a follower of 'the Way.'"

Before you judge a situation, consider that your judgment might not be an accurate assessment of the situation.

Reprinted by permission from the author. Os Hillman is an international speaker and author of 15 books on workplace calling. To learn more, visit <http://www.MarketplaceLeaders.org>

Notable Quotables

"Where should the physician be but where there are many sick? Where is honor to be won by the soldier but in the hottest fire of the battle? And when weary of the strife and sin that meets you on every hand, consider that all the saints have endured the same trial. They were not carried on beds of down to heaven, and you must not expect to travel more easily than they. They had to hazard their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, and you will not be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Therefore, 'stand fast in the faith, quit (carry) you like men, be strong.'"

- C.H. Spurgeon

Upcoming Risk Takers Events:

- ◆ September 10: Basketball at Martin CI
- ◆ September 24: Dare 2B Daring men's conference at Southside Baptist Church, Dover DE
- ◆ September 29: 4th Annual Racial Reconciliation Conference, Vero Beach FL

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