

From Mike Erickson

The Lord prepares us for a Ministry, but it sometimes takes awhile to recognize the calling. A good part of my work career was as a correctional officer. Working in a corrections facility you experience many different situations and a wide variety of people and attitudes. While on duty as an officer we were not allowed to pray with prisoners, but we could provide them with Bibles and tell them about our faith in Jesus. Some responded negatively, some not at all, but a few positively.

About three years ago at an auction sale I saw this big biker-type guy who had on a leather vest that said on the front, "These are my church clothes". I walked around to look at the back and it said, "Jesus". We did not immediately recognize each other, but after a minute he said, "Hey, you're the guy who introduced me to Jesus when I was in jail". Then I recalled that I had given him a Bible and talked to him about Jesus. Today he is a minister in the inner city of Minneapolis.

Since I retired I have looked for a way to become more involved with the Annandale Free Church ministries, and the ministry in Sun City, Arizona, where my wife and I winter. I attended Pastor Jeff's Sunday school class on evangelism. I realized I was being called to become more active in evangelism and that some of my background had prepared me for this role. I had experience talking to a wide range of people under difficult situations, learning how to remain calm and reasonable when facing rejection, and at times, outright hostility. I was extremely thankful for my faith in Jesus and convinced that if I talked to enough people about Jesus, some would listen and allow the Holy Spirit to work in them.

I became involved in the Swapper's Meet team and a jail ministry at the county jail. I have learned that each person who evangelizes has different techniques and ways of approaching people. The important thing for me is to remember that my job is to shine the light on the words of God's truth. I do believe that the Holy Spirit takes one's feeble, disorganized words and through them convicts the hearers of sin. It is God who convicts and it is God who saves. We just need to be willing to step out in faith as God leads in our lives.