



Epiphany Ministry, Inc.

OUR GIFTS

2017

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPLAIN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Did you know that “those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength? They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint”. Isaiah 40:31. Prior to this mid-year meeting there were those of us, myself included, who after our last annual meeting were a little bummed out after our last meeting’s state reports and wondering what these reports were going to be like.

But awhile ago, Louisiana had our State OJJ staff/volunteer training and found out that after 3 years of trying and virtually giving up, we now have our foot in the door for two more facilities! And we are not the only state possibly going in this direction! Our National Coordinator, Ms. Leslie, and I were discussing our woes as God was opening up a door for us in West Virginia with the Department of Juvenile Services!

So good things DO come to those who wait upon the Lord. Our strength was renewed. And while discussing this in the national meeting, we had a great revelation. PRAY (duh!) So we decided to set a time, high noon, to pray. Everyday. So if you are reading this, please pray with me.

Father, we truly are clay in Your hands. Mold us and make us in Your will. I pray for this ministry and ask that we learn to wait on YOU, Lord. I pray for our National Board. And each state represented. Increase our boundaries. And renew our strength. Give us patience, boldness, and help us not get discouraged and throw in the towel, and most of all, teach us to love. Forgive our failures and our impatience. We will give you all the praise. In the name of Jesus. Amen

Rev. Jeff



With our Thanks



We are most grateful to and appreciative of the hospitality of the Ohio Epiphany community, which hosted the Annual Meeting in September. To Jim and Grif for organizing our outings; Fred and Jim for transportation; our chefs Jayne, Ginger, Mindy, Iva, Cindy; Juanita for her words of inspiration; Linda, Tamara and the State Committee for all the great agape and snack bags! We felt truly loved and cared for. And... a standing “O” for Erin and Jeff Sanford’s music.

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Words from the Mothers of Stars

As you may recall, we honored the memory of one of our Stars, Antonio Styles who was killed this year, at our meeting. His mother reached out to me this morning via email and asked me to call. Here is her story.

Shortly after Antonio died, his brother found his bag of letters and agape from our March Epiphany event. She was not prepared to deal with it at the time, so put it off. She finally sat down with the bag and started reading the letters on Saturday. She was so moved at the words of love and encouragement from our team that she decided to track us down. She found the National website and called Leslie who gave her my email address.

So like God to have her read these letters while we were at Stonewall on Sat! She and I had a wonderful conversation. I was able to share with her that Antonio had prayed with one of our clergy and accepted Christ. And that he was truly loved by our team. I told her that her son had been a leader at Stonewall and a positive influence on his fellow students.

We cried and prayed together. She thanked me over and over for the love we had shown to "her baby". She said that she had never heard about Epiphany but planned to share our website and information with others.

It is clear that those letters brought this grieving mom comfort. I don't know about all of you, but I have often written my letters in a rush the night before an event. Going forward, I intend to spend more time with them. You just never know how many lives they may touch.

Joyfully In His Service,
Melissa Andreotti

In Case You Wondered...Two Letters

Hello,

I just wanted to Thank You and your team for spending the wknd in Greenville. My son is currently there and will attend court yet again tomorrow morning. This has been a very unfortunate situation for us and anyone aware of our case would not shy away from agreeing in how wrong it has gone. But I've talked and visited with my son this wknd and our conversation mainly revolves around your group of volunteers and what he's done, the letters he received and plans to keep the contact info to continue writing once he comes home. Everyone keeps telling us he has a purpose in life and this path is setting it in motion. I just wanted you to hear from me a Very Thankful and Appreciate Mom for doing ALL that you do.

Sincerely, (Proud Mom)

First I would like to Thank Epiphany ministry for taking the time and reaching out to the children at GJD. These boys and girls have one thing in common they've all been hurt. Some of them literally have been abandoned by everyone they loved. What y'all did made those children have hope and faith. What everyone needs! Even if it was for a short period of time it made an impact.

My son is one of the boys there. He's had a difficult childhood to say the least. When I spoke to him on the phone he told me about your group visiting. Then at our next visit he was still talking about y'all and the experience. The testimonials and the Bible moved him. Which opened the door for [name omitted] and I to talk about God.

I'm a member [church name omitted] and have friends that would love to help with Epiphany ministry. Please let me know what I can do to help. Thank you again! [Name omitted]

Highlights of the 2017 Meetings of the Board of Directors

The following are highlights only. It is in the discussions that much of the value of the meetings lie. The full Minutes of the May 5-6 meeting are posted on the website. Those for the September 29-30 meeting will be posted shortly.

May 5-6, 2017 Meeting held in Charleston WV

- The newly adopted logo will be used on garments and Epiphany documents, with the exception of the Manuals, which will use the old logo.
- Asks that Epiphany communities join in prayer for the ministry each day at noon.
- Maryland's request to become inactive was adopted.
- The Expansion Fund is now the Expansion/Mentoring Fund.
- The weekend fees are now \$100 per table up to a maximum of \$400 instead of a flat \$400.
- Elected Officers: Ben Robertson (Chair); Jeff Sanford (Vice-Chair), Phyllis Nadler (Secretary) and Bobbie Stein (Treasurer)

September 29-30, 2017 Meeting held in Springfield OH

- Team Manual 2017 adopted
- Voted change in By-Laws to allow electronic voting on urgent matters. Adjustment me to Board of Directors Manual to show this.
- California and Kentucky made inactive, pending scheduling of weekends
- Authorized Robert E. Lee, Accounting to prepare Epiphany taxes.
- Extended the terms of Jeff Sanford (LA) and Roy Bradshaw (KS) by one year.
- Added two additional at-large Board members: Jim Caldwell from Ohio and Ben Robertson from South Carolina.
- Elected Officers: Jim Caldwell (Chair); Jeff Sanford (Vice-Chair); Ben Robertson (Secretary) and Bobbie Stein (Treasurer).

Following are two thought-provoking articles about the expansion of Epiphany from the Former Chair of the Board of Directors, Ben Robertson.

Adult Stars Join the Epiphany Galaxy

South Carolina Epiphany ran an experimental recruitment program at the behest of the National Epiphany Chair. Borrowing from Episcopal Happening – designed for teenagers (they call the adults Geratols), and Kairos which includes outside people in their weekends inside prisons, we included a table of adult Stars at our Camp Aspen Boys Epiphany #2.

The experiment was designed to meet two needs. South Carolina currently has more demand for Epiphany than we can meet and people of color are underrepresented on our teams. This year South Carolina will hold four weekends. If we had more volunteers we could double this in facilities requesting more Epiphanies and facilities requesting that Epiphany begin to serve there. Three adult Stars, all people of color with a desire to work with young people were recruited for the initial inclusion of adults in Epiphany.

The three adult Stars, participated in every aspect of the program. No changes were made in the weekend to accommodate the Adult Stars, with the exception of assigning the Spiritual Director for the weekend to serve as the Star Guide for one of the adults who was the pastor of a church. It was decided that discussions with this Star might delve deeper into theology than a typical volunteer would be competent to undertake.

This experiment was a stunning success. The weekend was exceptional, even by Epiphany standards. Recent communication with the director of the facility indicate that four weeks after the weekend her charges who attended Epiphany are still talking about it

enthusiastically. I mention this not to suggest any correlation between the presence of the adults and the success of the weekend, rather to indicate that there is no evidence of the presence of adult Stars in any way detracting from the experience of the young Stars. The young people were completely accepting of the adults and showed no indication of even noticing that the adults were in anyway different from themselves.

We began with three adult Stars who were completely unaware of the three-day community, much less of its presence in juvenile detention facilities and completed the weekend with three new volunteers excited by the experience and its impact on juvenile offenders, who cannot wait to serve on a weekend. The pastor, mentioned above, sang and danced after being presented his cross at the end of the weekend much to the delight of the other stars and the weekend staff. We have not been able to identify any aspect of this experiment which was not successful.

We recommend this highly as a recruitment tool, especially where there is a need to bring in volunteers who are members of groups currently under-served by the existing three-day community.



For Your Calendar

Please pray for the Stars, team and the staff at these institutions. Weekend/ community agape may be sent to the State Reps.

October 13-15 Louisiana - Swanson
October 27-29 Ohio - DCI # 12
October 27-29 S. Carolina – Broad River #6
November 3-5 Ohio - CRC #5

Some Thoughts on Epiphany

I wanted to pass along some general thoughts from two years as National Board Chair about our ministry.

Have you ever been on a train or subway car and looked out the window and felt you were moving backwards only to discover that it was just the train beside you moving forward? It might occur to you that if everything else is moving forward and you are sitting still you might as well be moving backwards because everything else is moving on.

Our goal is not to increase the size of the organization we participate in, this is a just byproduct of our actions, our goal is to reach more young people with the message of Jesus Christ. Remember that when Louise Johns decided to create this ministry it was to expand religious programs to a facility in Alabama which was not being served. When the program seemed to benefit the youthful offenders, her next act was to expand it to other facilities and other states.

I don't know what other people's experience is, but in the three-day weekend I attended, the last words they spoke to me were "Christ is counting on you". I hear lots of reasons why expansion is not possible. It's too far to drive, we don't have enough people to do that, it will cost too much and we don't have enough money. None of these are insurmountable, they are challenges we face to be sure, but each of them can be met and overcome to reach more young people and deliver the message we have been charged to spread. Christ is counting on us and we must not fail to faithfully honor the mission we have been given.

One of the parables of Christ that we do not do a skit of in Epiphany is the Parable of the Talents Matthew 25:14-30, we might consider this for

Team meetings. We have been handed a ministry by our Master. We are charged by Christ to grow this investment in us. We are expected to show a return for what we have been given in service to him and service to others. We can sit on the ministry and return to Christ just what we were given, or we can grow this investment and return to our Lord more than He entrusted to us.

Growth is not easy, I have learned the hard way that it is the work of years of effort on the part of many people. We have our models from the past and know what will work, yet somehow some of the lessons of the past have been overlooked. Louise Johns began with a committee of fourteen, in South Carolina we began with a team slightly larger than that, North Carolina began with a single person but developed a committee to complete the work a year or more before the first weekend.

We know that a sizable committee, including clergy, works, but somehow that lesson has been lost and we watch as one or two well-meaning individuals try to establish the ministry and stall or founder. Yet expansion must be the goal we strive for, to reach more young people, to manifest Christ and impact lives. We can achieve this with a renewed commitment, by recalling the lessons of our history and insuring that our investments are made where a solid foundation has been laid. Only then can we truly be good and faithful servants.

God gives us the freedom to choose our actions, Christ's teaching gives us the wisdom to see what is right, the Holy Spirit enters our hearts to give us the courage to do it. Let us not falter in our Lord's charge.

Ad gloriam Dei (To God's glory).

Introducing the New Epiphany Website

One of the many achievements of Ben Robertson as Chair of the Board of Directors was the redesign and expansion of the Epiphany website, address is www.epihanyministryinc.org. It is rich in content and serves both to introduce the Epiphany ministry to newcomers and to provide resource materials for team members.

General information available to all visiting the website includes who we are, what we do, where we serve, upcoming weekends, the Board of Directors list, the Epiphany video, and how one may help (including donations through PayPal).

The Resources area is password protected (State Representatives have the passwords). It is designed for team leadership and members. Here is posted the 2017 Team Manual that can be downloaded in PDF format. The manual was expanded so that it is also possible to copy discrete segments.

In WORD format are pieces of the Manual that are frequently used for downloading: Talk Outlines, Epiphany Rules, Meal Buddy forms, skits, Weekend Outline. Also included are a sample Epiphany brochure, Newsletters, Minutes of Board Meetings and some leadership training.

The newest additions to Resources are the beginnings of "Agape Ideas", "Reunion Ideas", and an Expansion/Mentoring Manual. Please send any table or agape-bag pictures or descriptions to Ben for inclusion, as long as they are not copyrighted. In the reunion section, samples of tried and true programs can be shared (again, not copyrighted).

With a second password, members of the Board of Directors can see full contact information for Board members and download the 2017 Board of Directors Manual in PDF format.

Thanks, Ben!!!!!!!!!!!!

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States Growing Epiphany Communities

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We Are Somebody

This is one of several quilts made by the young men (some are Epiphany Stars) of the Beaumont Juvenile Correction Center (recently closed) in Virginia. The beautiful quilts were displayed at the Richmond Quilt Guild Show.



Epiphany Store

There have been some questions recently about whether here is an Epiphany Store. In short, there is no store. That being said, the Ohio website has an order form for their beautiful t-shirts. In addition, the National office houses several items that can be yours for the incredibly low price of \$5.00 each. Please request these from the National Office.

- Epiphany tie-tacks and medallions—beautiful gold and blue pieces, perfect as gifts to those who support the ministry
- Epiphany bears—adorable green and white, stuffed, plush, with an Epiphany cross embroidered on its chest—could be used as table centerpieces or as gifts.

