



Youth for Christ/El Paso-Juvenile Justice Ministries

March 25, 2017

Dear Charles,

I want to thank you for your quick response to my request and yes, please feel free to use this in your online newsletter. Your letter and the depth of your heart contained therein touched my heart. I shared it this morning with the Challenge cadets at the juvenile probation detention center.

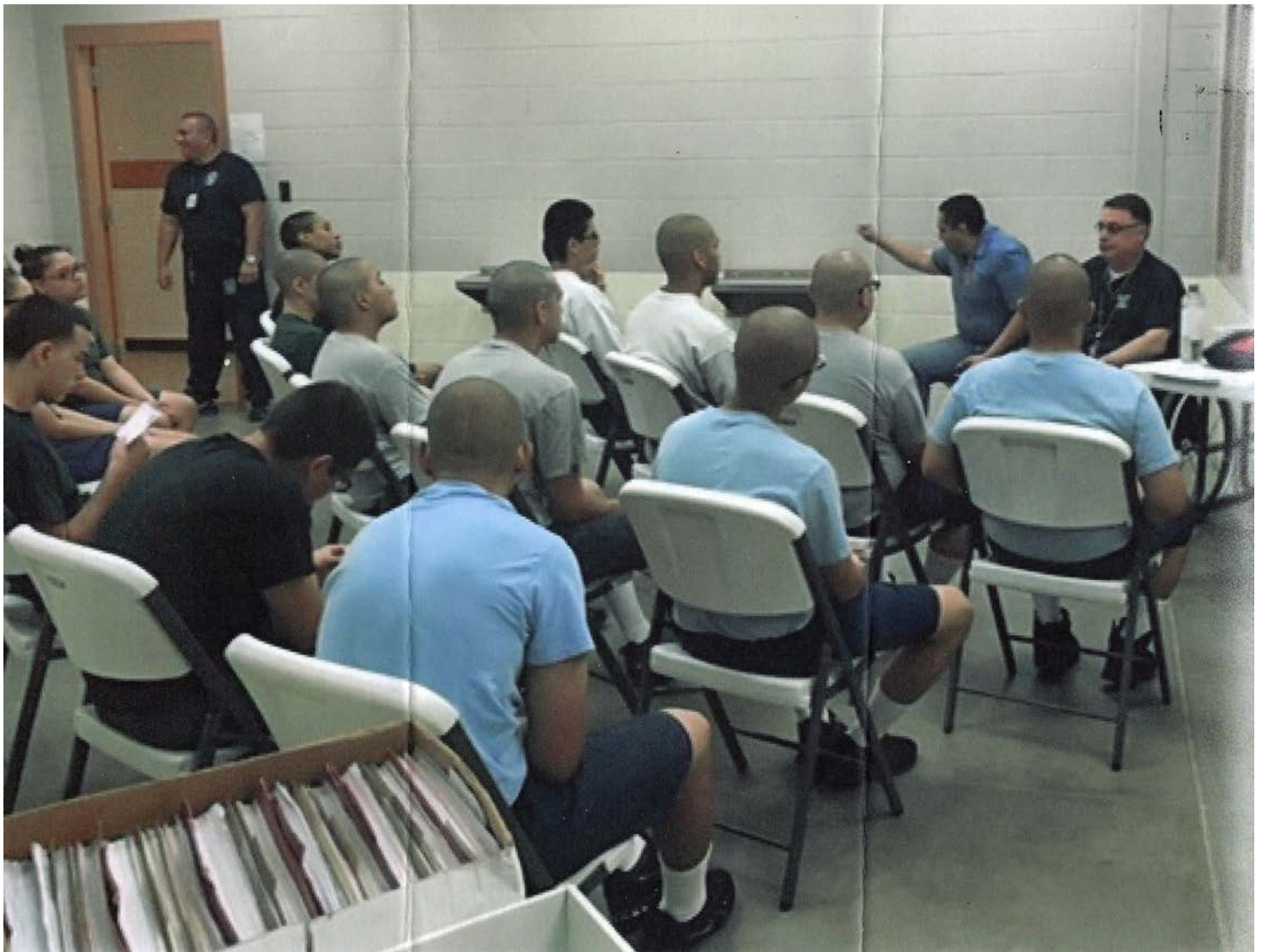
First, I preached on 2 Cor. 5:17 to the cadets. I shared how Saul was “captured” by the light of Christ on the Damascus road and how Jesus changed him, gave him a new nature and how he, subsequently, changed his identity as Saul, destroyer of the church, to Paul and made him one of church’s greatest advocates to this day. They were a little more than attentive than usual. But their attentiveness went from “mostly complete” to “complete” once I began to share your story. Typically, 20 minutes into the service and they’re shifting around, yawning, etc. when I preach. (I don’t think I’m boring..but it is the nature of teens to have little in the way of attention span!) But not this time. All eyes were straight ahead and taking it all in. I gave a summary of your backstory, the highlights of it, and that alone was enough to keep their attention.

The real awe seemed to come in when I told them that you were there today to speak to them directly, not kids in general, but them specifically. They looked around as if to wait for you to walk in. I said that, while you couldn’t join us personally, you did write to them directly. I then gently admonished them to be sure and pay attention to everything contained in your letter. Again, all eyes were front. I read it aloud and then waited. It was as quiet as could be. I asked what they thought and there were varied responses but all agreed that it, indeed, did get their attention. Afterwards 4 kids asked to speak privately. One young man told me it woke him up and he wanted to get right with God. We prayed for him to receive Christ, which he did! A young lady (who said she wants to write to you) said she was wanting to change now. Her dad’s in prison and she asked for one of your brochures to send him and I gave her one. All the kids got your brochures and I believe I can assure you that they won’t be tossed aside like other handouts I gave them. Please know you touched the hearts of 14 kids today (as well as the guards!) who no doubt understood the mystery of grace, God’s mercy, and Christ’s redemptive power just a little more, yet much deeper, than they understood it before.

I thank you, Charles, and the cadets said to please thank you as well. Also, please know that I pray for you.

Your brother in Jesus our Savior & Messiah,

P.S. Here’s a pix of them listening to the letter.



Justin ministering to the cadets. One cadet checking out the envelope from Charles' letter.