

ABC USA MATTHEW 25 GRANT APPLICATION

Matt 25:34-46

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world...I was **IN PRISON** and you came to **visit** me.' Then the righteous will answer, 'Lord, When did we see you **IN PRISON** and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers or **sisters of mine**, you did for me.' Then the King will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. I was **IN PRISON** and you did not **look after** me.' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you **IN PRISON**, and did not **help** you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." NIV revised

An Educational Program for Incarcerated Women  
NH State Prison for Women  
Goffstown New Hampshire

Provided by the  
Institute for Learning of ABC V/NH

Certificate in Foundations of Christianity  
IFL101 Spiritual Formation  
IFL102 The Bible  
IFL103 Theology  
IFL104 Church History  
IFL105 Denominational Distinctives  
IFL106 On Being Church  
*2 credits each*

following ABC Continuing Education Guidelines

Taught by qualified ABC VNH clergy  
Administered by a Governing Board  
under the Department for Professional Ministry  
under the Board of Trustees of ABC V/NH

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

### 1. General Information:

Organization Name: Institute for Learning of the American Baptist Churches Vermont/NH  
Affiliation with ABCUSA: ABC Vermont/New Hampshire  
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### 2. Mission statement of the Institute for Learning:

#### From the Institute For Learning **By Laws: Article II: Purpose**

The purpose of the Institute for Learning is to increase the knowledge, skills, and faith of individuals, to encourage them to answer God's call in their lives. IFL provides opportunities to become more knowledgeable about Christianity. The Program is designed for individuals who desire training to enhance their development as Christians. It focuses on essentials and practical training of benefit to individuals. This program of study seeks to provide the participants with theological and Biblical reflection. IFL is primarily designed for those who want to grow in knowledge and grace. However there are no pre-requisites. Foundation of Christianity is open to anyone who is interested in the Christian faith, or who wishes to grow spiritually.

IFL provides education for church members, church leaders, and for Certified Lay Ministers. We have 20 people enrolled in the IFL Program from churches in our Region, and we are starting a Program in the Women's Prison. The Program in the Prison we have no income and expenses coming to \$15,000 as follows. Without this grant we will need to solicit churches around the Region to support this ministry through their mission giving. We do not have excess income from the rest of the Program to fund the Prison Program.

3. Financial Statement for this Ministry Program for Women in the NH State Prison:

INCOME (projected): \$15,000

**Tuition** per course \$200

Number of Courses 6

Number of Students 10

Total Tuition per Student: \$1200

Total Tuition for 10 students \$12,000

**Books** \$50 per course

Number of courses: 6

Number of Students 10

Total Cost of Books \$3,000

Total Income needed: \$15,000

EXPENSES

**Books:** Total Cost for **Books** for 10 students taking 6 courses \$3000

Cost for books per course \$50

Cost per student for 6 courses \$300

**Supplies** distributed to inmates, as approved by the Chaplain: \$600

folders, handouts, pens, pencils, notebooks, markers, etc.

\$10/student per class

**Resources** for Library and Classes, approved by the Chaplain \$900

and Captain, placed in the Library and/or used in

classes: maps, videos, DVDs, concordance,

Inter-linear Bible, commentaries, etc. \$150 per course

**Instructor** stipends (\$1000 per course) \$6000

**Administrative** Costs (30%) \$4500

TOTAL EXPENSES \$15,000

### 3. How will the funds specifically assist individuals battling poverty and its effects?

The NH State Prison for Women is the only such facility in New Hampshire. It houses 125 convicted inmates in an old, crowded building. Being women in poverty, the inmates do not have the funds or the means for paying for education. The funds will be used for educational purposes toward the Certificate program, Foundations of Christianity. In addition to those receiving scholarships, approximately 25 women attend each course. The classes are open to all residents, and many like to sit in, documenting their hours. These sessions cost \$50 when offered outside the prison, but are given for free in the Prison.

While it is difficult for convicted felons to get jobs, completing this program gives them a better chance for employment; courses can be included on job applications. Study skills transfer into work skills: arriving on time, staying until the end of the weekly 2 hour class, completing assignments, speaking in front of a group, reading the Bible and other resource books, research in the Library, interaction with others, processing how to make good decisions, how to make amends when they have done wrong, how to write well, and all the other skills attained by attending a liberal arts college or university. The program teaches knowledge, skills, attitudes, and character to highly motivated inmates who voluntarily take the courses. Being students, completing projects, readings and assignments, is a challenge to them and is preparing them for a successful life both in prison and when they get out. Earning a good grade builds self confidence and a sense of achievement. Earning credit for these courses will bring the incarcerated women a sense of hope and accomplishment. Earning a Certificate results in a ceremony like a graduation.

Those who are incarcerated will describe their trial and conviction as the worst day of their lives. Many have committed some kind of homicide under the influence of drugs and alcohol. While in prison they are clean and sober for the first time in many years. Many have had a “wake up call” and are eager to start a new life. They desire to better themselves, and have the time and energy to do so. They are eager to use their mental capacities and to accomplish something worthy. Many have come to faith in prison, and are motivated to grow their faith.

The premise is that criminals have made poor choices due to a spiritual and moral deficit, and this led to their incarceration. They have inflicted untold damage on themselves, their children (many are mothers), and families, as well as the victims (who are still alive) and families of victims. Society too suffers when crimes are committed. And yet prison can save their lives as they reflect and have a change of heart. This is where learning in a classroom setting, under qualified, experienced, and gifted instructors who present knowledge and wisdom in their field, who encourage new skill development in the area of decision-making, and who show the inmates a better way, is literally a God-send to them, the prison community, and beyond. The core of the Program is spiritual and moral development. Notice that Matthew 25 refers to “brothers and sisters” in prison. Many inmates come to Christ in prison, and are new to the Christian faith. The Great Commission is to “teach them all things”. Matthew 25 uses the word “visit” or “came to” or “helped” or “took care of”. This is personal contact, willingness of the instructors to meet prison system requirements, the spirit of helping and taking care of intellectual and spiritual needs face-to-face. There are strict rules that those who work within the prison facility cannot work with inmates who have been released. But because the Institute for Learning offers courses on the outside as well as the inside (with different instructors), inmates can continue with the Program when they are released. The Institute offers a bridge between the prison environment and society. Inmates are encouraged to contact churches, especially American Baptist Churches, when and if they are released.

The first course introduces them to the idea of having a soul, a spiritual life, and a transformed life. Words like confession, contrition, repentance, restitution, reconciliation, and restoration are explained and used. Tools for growing spiritually are explained and experienced. In the Bible course most are opening the Bible for the first time in their lives. They are coached to read it as a moral and spiritual guide. In other courses they learn how to live in community in a peaceful, life-supporting way, as they study the church. They are encouraged to join a church when they are released, so as to build a support group that will help them battle poverty and its effects. Different denominations are explored for their distinctives and history. The theology course is designed to safeguard them against cults and destructive religious groups. All of this is for the purpose of improving their prison experience and making it worthwhile, as well as preparing them to re-enter society as good people, strong in their faith, and able to support their children in positive ways. The goal is that they will contribute to their churches and communities, that even though they are convicted felons, they will be able to enter the work force as honest, reliable employees of integrity, a strong moral compass, and faith-filled.

Other funding sources such as Cecil B. Day and the Palmer Grant are being sought. IFL has received help with tuition for those entering the Certified Lay Ministry Program from the Northern Baptist Education Society and the Silver Bean Fund.

4. \$15,000

5. Scholarships for 20 courses \$5000

6. Solicited: Cecil B. Day, Palmer Grant

7. I certify that all the information submitted with this application is true and correct, and that we will use any granted funds as described. We will supply a 1-page report on the use of the funds and a photo within six months of receipt of the grant.

(Signed)\_\_\_\_\_ Date: February 20, 2015

Printed Name/Title: Rev. Dr. Lori Wiley, Dean

We agree to share our story via the ABCUSA website.