

July 15, 2024

Greetings Dear Friends!

When the trial started, there were just five of us in the court room: the judge, the court clerk, the prosecuting attorney, the defense attorney and me. There was no defendant. I had been subpoenaed to appear because a burglar had broken into our property and had stolen many things. He was subsequently caught, and ordered to appear for this trial.

The prosecuting attorney told me, "We don't think he will appear—he may be on the run." No sooner had these words crossed his lips when there was a click at the court room door. To everyone's surprise, in walked the defendant.

He had a humble demeanor, but his appearance told part of the story of his life. With a shaved head covered with tattoos and a gaunt appearance, it was clear to see that he had a problem with drugs. I found myself wrestling with mixed emotions. On the one hand, he had broken into our property and stolen many things and deserved justice. On the other hand, he was desperately in need of help. It was on his need for help, that I chose to ponder.

It struck me as strange. There I was, someone who had given 40 years of life helping those in the clutches of drug addiction, and now in a felony trial I was seeing that very thing. So many of our Teen Challenge programs in Europe and around the world are full to capacity of men and women whose lives resemble the above mentioned defendant. I prayed, "Lord, give me a chance to offer hope to this man." This is the same prayer prayed by hundreds of TC leaders and workers around the world. On the streets, in the jails, and even sometimes in court rooms, the hope of salvation in Jesus Christ is the only solution for them. So, we become pushers of hope...not dope.

The defendant eventually pled "guilty" to the charges he faced and was ordered by the court to pay for what he had stolen. I may never see the money, but my prayer is the same. I want to offer him hope in Jesus Christ! Pray with me for this positive outcome. Then, as Jesus said, I will leave the 99 to help the one who is lost.

May God abundantly bless you all for your faithful giving and prayers for us and our work!

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