



Rev. Chandler Fozard
...Founder, HOPE Prison Ministries

THE IDLE AMERICAN

Looking Back at Easter....

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

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Easter, 2025, was a time like none other!

Before choirs proclaimed that He is risen, before church bells sounded around the world celebrating Jesus' resurrection and before children skittered around lawns for multicolored eggs, I saw history's greatest moment patterned in a quiet Fort Worth neighborhood.

It's a place where tattered lives are transformed by Christ, these parolees who earlier chose the craggy streets of ungodly pursuits, inevitably crashing into barriers, their lives splintered....

Chandler Fozard founded HOPE Prison Ministries in 2009. It offers Christ-centered HOPE, counseling and living.

Fozard was born into a dysfunctional family, raised in boys homes and incarcerated by age 22. God's judgment was only the beginning of Fozard's redemption. He was early in completing both his incarceration and earning release from supervised probation.

Thirteen years later--married in 2001 and with a thriving business in full swing--Chandler felt "led of the Lord" to help others released from prison....

There's a reason that he's often contacted by the Texas Juvenile Justice System, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and countless others for help.

HOPE'S founder has a passion like few others.

I've known Chandler for about two months, believing that he embodies the poetic lines on the Statue of Liberty that proclaim: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."....

At age 55, he's on task most of every 24 hours, praying, working, planning and dealing with folks who are intellectually, mentally and/or physically challenged.

After 5 p.m. one Friday, he drove to Houston, retrieving a parolee who was off to a bad start following his release after 21 years in prison. It was after 4 a.m. the return trip ended.

Stricken with multiple illnesses, the "newbie" had been denied health care by another alternative housing program, kicked out because he was physically unable to work. The new guy was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. Is it any wonder that he had been unable to work?....

In the early days of ministry, Chandler and his wife, Barbara, housed clients in a renovated garage, depending heavily on faith and funding from a few donors. In addition to monetary donations, the ministry is in constant need of mentors, vehicles, household items and more.

Today, the ministry operates multiple, Christ-centered west Fort Worth transitional homes housing 44 men and a few women. It is guided by Jason Rodrigue, two employees and volunteers who have completed the program.

Clearly, the Lord has provided. An article in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* touched the hearts of several eventual donors, one of whom--a CPA and wealth manager--continues to provide significant support critical to the ministry's continuance....

Though it might be an overstatement to describe facilities as modest, it's a place where HOPE abounds, love thrives and victories are many.

In the computer lab, clients were working on their curricula, one that is bathed in scriptural insights.

I met six clients, most in their early 20s. They all memories of past drug scenes never to be forgotten. Two of the couples are soon to be married by Chandler, founder of the More Than Redemption Church. They will reside in the house recently purchased for married couples. They were in tears as they praised HOPE; I joined them in boo-hooing....

With almost two decades of service, HOPE is gaining momentum but remains in constant need of regular donors. Learn more on its Facebook, YouTube and Instagram channels.

Hundreds of clients have been served. Among those mentored by HOPE during and after incarceration, not a single one has returned to prison. One recently completed his GED and is seeking college admission!

Their church attracts some 50 worshipers most Sundays. Guests are welcome, but, understandably, few attend. I was chilled by Chandler's parting comment. "Each year, we participate in North Texas Giving Day, and we are grateful for the gifts received. However, pet charities receive more." (More information at HopeGivesBack.com). Perhaps it was providential that I visited on Maundy Thursday, when Jesus shared the last supper with His disciples, urging them to love one another....

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