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Course: UR641: Pastoring the Urban Church

Assignment: Site Visit

Site Visit 2

I visited Teen Challenge, located at 309 Old Farmingdale Road, West Babylon, NY, for this assignment. I interviewed Pastor Winston C. Trumpet, Dean of Academics and Men and former client of Teen Challenge. He has been in this field for thirty years and has worked in the secular world for nineteen years.

Teen Challenge is a network of Christian faith-based corporations established to provide rehabilitation services to persons struggling with controlling issues such as substance abuse, gambling, anger, and criminal behavior. The organization was started sixty-four years ago by a Pennsylvania preacher named David Wilkerson. Led by an incredible faith, he left his country pulpit in 1958 to the streets of New York City, where he helped seven teenage boys on a murder trial who society had dismissed. Wilkerson started by assisting gang members, and he found out that many were suffering from addiction which led to violence, robberies, etc. God placed it on Wilkerson's heart to deliver these people through the power of the Holy Ghost, and He followed His lead.

Teen Challenge survives through donations. Their first location was at 416 Clinton Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. There are now over two hundred and sixty (260) centers in the United States and over 1200 centers worldwide in every major country. The program they offer is about discipleship. Pastor Trumpet describes it as a seminary, military boot camp, daycare

center, and home. He said this is the place where hope lives. They offer services to everyone over age sixteen struggling with life-controlling issues. I asked him how they keep them together and committed to the program. He said we don't. We believe God for them. The program last for one year, but unfortunately, not everyone stays. He said although some don't complete the program, they are happy, motivated, and confident that they have tilled the ground and planted the seed.

On a typical day, they wake up at 6:00 am, do devotion, have breakfast, then worship and prayer, have a break, then class, then another break, worship and prayer, lunch, recess, vocational training, study and homework time, dinner, and break, in this order. Then, at about 6:30 to 8:00 pm, they usually have ministries, such as Brooklyn Tabernacle, coming in or Teen Challenge staff doing something with them. He said this is the time they get to focus on doctrinal questions. Then, at 9:00 pm, they go to their rooms, do devotion, and then at 9:55, the room captain has lights out.

How to get into the Program?

To get into the program, you call the intake department at 718-738-1414. This number they have been using since they started. The arrangement to stay is not necessarily immediate. It is made after the conversation. They have to ensure the individual is not fleeing the state. The client is also required to get a hepatitis shot. Also, they cannot actively use drugs or alcohol. If that is the case, they must detox. Teen Challenge does not offer this service, but they help them to find a place that does this. For those who finish the program and want to intern at Teen Challenge, they teach them to do things like ushering, conducting a prayer time, becoming a

leader, and how to support their pastors. After the internship, they can apply for a position at any location. The staff members are primarily those who have been through the system.