



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RUTH GRAHAM TO LEAD STUDY FOR MISSISSIPPI SEMINARY INMATES

JACKSON, MS (May 17) – Ruth Graham, the daughter of renowned evangelist Billy Graham, has agreed to lead a new seminary program for the Mississippi Department of Corrections. MDOC Commissioner Burl Cain announced an agreement with Ms. Graham to start a 14-week program at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility starting May 18, 2021. The program will be funded by private donors.

“Every week, Ruth Graham will lead three of our prison seminary programs about how to forgive,” said Commissioner Cain. “In her acclaimed book, *Forgiving My Father, Forgiving Myself*, she talks about having an absent parent and about what it means to forgive and move on.” Ruth Graham’s beloved father Billy Graham traveled the world with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association for over 50 years, leaving his family for weeks at a time.

“When I visited Angola Prison in Louisiana,” said Ms. Graham, “I had an experience with a death row inmate story that made me realize I needed to understand more about forgiveness in my own life. My father was often gone when I was growing up and though I adored him, my little girl’s heart read his absences as abandonment. That resulted in a deep sense of insecurity and many bad choices in my life. Once I discovered my ‘core’ issue, I was able to forgive myself, my father and even feelings that God had let me down. Now I live in the freedom of forgiveness and I want to share it.”

Ruth Graham will teach 27 women seminary students at CMCF via Zoom while simultaneously broadcasting to seminary students at Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.

“Forgiveness is the only real path to growth,” said Ms. Graham. “If you hold on to bitterness and anger, it is impossible to be happy.”

The 14-week Graham program is being underwritten by Calvin Sutphin, founder of Catalyst Ministries of West Virginia.

“At no time in world history has forgiveness been needed more,” said Sutphin. “Commissioner Cain is spot on about the key to true rehabilitation in prisons is Moral Rehabilitation. And it’s not just prisoners either. All of us need to soul-search with regularity.”

MDOC seminary students will train with Ms. Graham over the summer term and will then lead satellite groups within prisons on the study of forgiveness.

“You want a reduced crime rate in the streets?” asked Commissioner Cain. “Start with prisons. To quote the Apostle Paul, we really do war not against flesh and blood but against principalities. At the heart of drugs, alcohol and failed relationships is unforgiveness.”

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