Life Beyond Bars: Nine Prisoners and Their Families, and Faith-Based Efforts to Recognize and Avoid-Cross-Generational Criminal Habits.

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LIFE BEYOND BARS:

NINE PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND FAITH-BASED EFFORTS TO
RECOGNIZE AND AVOID CROSS-GENERATIONAL CRIMINAL HABITS

Approved by:

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Advisor

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Reader

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Director of Doctor of Ministry Program
LIFE BEYOND BARS:
NINE PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND FAITH-BASED EFFORTS TO RECOGNIZE AND AVOID CROSS-GENERATIONAL CRIMINAL HABITS

A PROFESSIONAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

ALFREDA REESE

M. DIV., PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, SMU 2022

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**Life Beyond Bars**: Nine Prisoners and Their Families, and Faith-Based Efforts to Recognize and Avoid Cross-Generational Criminal Habits.

**Thesis Statement**: When prisoners and families recognize current cross-generational criminal habits, they will aim to avoid future criminal behavior and create a foundation for hope and a future for generations to come. Criminal justice reform is imperative to ensure the successful reintegration, restoration, and redemption of prisoners and their families.

**Abstract**: The aim of this study is to examine prisoners’ firsthand experiences and their underlying family issues to bring awareness and delete current cross-generational criminal habits. Through analyzing a series of individual experiences and exploring underlying family issues, the study intends to bring awareness and exposure to the implications of the criminal justice system on prisoners and their families. This study will analyze personal stories of prisoners and their families to identify, interact, and intervene in best practices to avoid criminal habits. The research gathered aims to empower prisoners and their families in suggested ways to delete repeated criminal patterns and focus on reintegration, restoration, and redemption. This research is intended to direct both prisoners and families toward positive outcomes of hope, faith, and healing. Acknowledging, addressing, and analyzing these stories allows prisoners to motivate their families to avoid criminal behavior and create new generational abundance. The call of Jesus is twofold as an ethical calling to society to hear and embrace the stories of prisoners while encouraging prisoners to embrace a future of being heard and transformed.

**Key Words**:  
Cross-generational behavior – Analyze the behavior of current young people.

Cross-generational habit – youth that bring their own challenges, beliefs, and ideas by different experiences.

Criminal justice system – Social system that manages incarceration of individuals due to misconduct.

Reintegration – The process of weaving incarcerated or previously incarcerated persons back into family, church, and or community.

Restoration – The process of forgiveness and healing between incarcerated or previously incarcerated persons and community (church, family, society at large).

Redemption – In terms of theological salvation

Incarcerated individuals – those who are or have been previously imprisoned.

Criminal justice reform – Transformation of either the incarcerated individuals or the criminal justice system itself.
“In memory of my dearest brother Warren and those still in prison”

I want to be the voice for devalued inmates,

speaking for them for heaven’s sakes!

I desire to be the voice restoring inmates’ lives,

hoping they will accept Christ, ask for wisdom, and become wise.

Remorse, regret, and pity are opportunities that inmates made,

yet still confined in prison serving time they hoped would fade.

I pray that inmates will transform their lives to be,

in the fullness of joy, love, and what God wanted them to see.

Inmates allowed a chance to voice their stories of life’s preventions,

go to bed troubled and wake up with great ideas of future intentions.

They know in their hearts that their lives are worth living,

not just struggling but where people are genuinely forgiving.

I am praying that faith leaders will follow the examples that Jesus left,

expressing compassionate empathy that Jesus felt!

Alfreda Reese, 2022
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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Question/Problem

As an officer led my mother and me to a spacious room full of prisoners sitting at tables the day I visited my brother in prison for the first time. There I sat, emotions running rampant, trying to deal with the baffling thought of who would want to spend time in a place that felt so cold and unwelcoming. I saw tears run down my mother’s face as my brother entered the room. He came in, embraced us, and when he sat down to visit, I noticed he was crying, too. I could not help but think that this was a sad moment for such a bright sunny summer day. I felt severely impacted by my brother’s incarceration far into my adult life because I did not know how to express the pain and trauma that dreadful day. As time passed, there were not opportunities to visit him in these prisons, but his situation troubled me. During college I volunteered collaborating with an employee at a community center aiding former prisoners and restoring them back into society. While collaborating with people who dealt with prisoners, all the emotions came back as if it were that miserable day when I visited my brother in prison. Talking to these people helped me release my feelings, and I was able to express the pain I had felt for so many years. It was both healing and liberating. Prisoners have been an interest in my life for more than twenty years, and the topic has particularly impacted my life. Throughout that time, I developed a heartfelt desire to demonstrate love and empathy for prisoners who were guilty of their crimes, lost, and misguided. I am deeply enthusiastic about assisting in the restoration of incarcerated persons to their families, churches, and communities.

I had no memory of my grandparents, parents, or my sibling’s imprisonment; therefore, my parents were not knowledgeable about how to assist him. Nor did they have funds readily
available to hire an attorney. It troubled me as to why anyone would choose to commit such awful crimes resulting in the criminal justice system. It became my desire to explore deeply the reasons why individuals engage in a life of crimes. I thought that criminal involvement was a result of sinful patterns passed down through generations or even by social influences. Underlying conditions leading to crimes neglected by those in authority, families, churches, in various communities, and it affects the outcome of the children involved. Parents’ awareness of their children’s activities can help them control these challenges that are vital in determining their behavioral patterns.

The focus of this study is to investigate the relationships of families, and prisoners by engaging in conversations about patterns of imprisonment followed by children when criminal activities occur. Family members may not be conscious of underlying characteristics that influence the lives of children, and they may not be aware of actions to deflect their children from bad behaviors. The experience of having an incarcerated parent could develop a spillover effect on children. It could result from shame, social isolation, or a lack of financial support. Parental imprisonment could also serve to prevent children’s wrongful acts. The effects on the children could depend both on their parent’s crimes and what the children learn from their parents’ experiences. If parents deviate from crimes and build a better life it could be a positive effect on the children, but if parents continue to repeat crimes the children could be led to copy their parents’ negative behavior and disrupt the home environment. Manudeep Bhukker and others states that there is little data known about the effects of incarceration on parents and the intergenerational spillovers.¹ These scholars believe that there needs to be a dataset for parents’ criminal behavior linked to data for their children over an extended period of time. The second challenge comes into

play from omitted variable bias where there could be unobserved characteristics common to both parents and children. As far as scholars know, the only other work was done on a type of research design attempting to establish a cause-and-effect relationship to capture longer time periods of different events to control for various threats to validity and reliability.\(^2\) There scholars found no evidence that paternal incarceration affects a child’s criminal activity or school performance.\(^3\) The family should acknowledge, accept, and take responsibility for ways to shift patterns of bad behaviors that may be influenced by incarcerated parents. I hope that these observations will provide informative descriptions that can lead to ways for deflecting repeated patterns for the children.

My involvement with prisoners began after my brother united with older boys skipping school, which turned into a series of crimes in the neighborhood. The boys started breaking into the neighbors’ cars, homes, stealing, and selling the stolen items to anyone who would purchase them. Their activities continued until they met with law enforcement officers who took them into custody. Since this was my brother’s first offense, the officers released him to my parents pending a court date. Upon his release he was devastated thinking about his behavior and the actions taken for his situation. Frightened his criminal activities discontinued, everything was back to normal, he returned to school, and was doing well. My brother had developed a strong bond with these outside acquaintances who convinced him to commit more unwarranted and wrongful acts. Still, it was not long before he reunited with these friends and engaged in more criminal acts. My parents monitored my brother closely, consulting with him to try to change his behavior and lead him to make better decisions for his life. These conversations conveyed the consequences his actions


\(^3\) Ibid.
caused not only to him but to the entire family in pursuing this downward path. I could see that my brother was struggling, and I showed compassion by trying to reach him. In our discussions he listened and responded for a while then he became angry, as though he was confused, and even defiant when I explained that he needed to obey our parents’ authority. He pushed back and ended the last conversation I tried to have with him. It was at that moment that I realized that part of the underlying issues was a disconnect from our parents, and from authority, where he had developed a stronger bond with his friends who convinced him to do these unwarranted acts. The lack of communication resulted in a misguided situation because the patterns of criminal activities continued to resurface, and each time the crimes were more serious than earlier ones. Officers in the community arrested the boys and my brother for breaking into local businesses, and stealing, the boys were charged with repeated multiple crimes, which progressed to substance abuse, resulting in a long-term prison sentence.

In this project, I hope to answer the questions: are there ways to deflect repeated criminal patterns? Indeed, if repeated patterns of formerly incarcerated parents engage their children, what are the underlying causes for these circumstances? This work can teach faith leaders, families of the incarcerated, and even the society at large, ways to develop close relationships and allow them freedom to decide for themselves whether they will accept, support, and help restore prisoners back to a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, I argue that this study seeks to discover information that could gain knowledge from stories of destructive patterns and find ways to deflect repeated offenders.

It intends to record, examine, and analyze stories of prisoners to help deflect criminal patterns of crimes with their children. The collection of stories can establish a basic foundation for developing detailed descriptions of events within the family that may contribute to incarceration
and encourage those involved to feel safe from judgment. As individuals become aware of specific patterns related to events or situations in their conversations, this awareness may inspire prisoners to work intensely in exploring ways to deflect repeated patterns. Analyzing stories of family members’ emotional behaviors and recording critical information of crimes could be significant in the transformation of prisoners’ children. Jaboa Lake reports that prisoners with criminal records create cycles of multigenerational challenges for their children. These disparities burden the children for generations and prevent them from getting the strength and stability needed to keep families together. Jaboa Lake explores the depth of these complicated situations impacting the children long-term because it takes a toll on their emotional, physical, and educational well-being. Children may be involved in the justice system as youths and experience more adversities exposed to emotional difficulties as adults. Lake states that these challenges do not disappear after one generation, in fact they linger for years and pose worse outcomes that produce disadvantages for their children’s children and beyond. Therefore, a collection of data is required to determine a true prediction for repeated patterns of crimes for future generations following parental incarcerations.4

Further, it is important for incarcerated individuals to discourage their children from ways that can lead to a life of crimes. Sharing the details of these powerful stories can grant faith leaders, families, and communities the opportunity to honestly hear the inmates’ stories and their heartfelt experiences; they share their feelings, love, and display acceptance of prisoners. Prayerfully Prisoners hope that faith leaders and others can genuinely express a compassionate connection with them. They can acknowledge information about their state of mind and their emotional

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experiences, it can also allow prisoners to interpret the events of their lives and assist in describing their actions at the times of the criminal incident.

**Methodology**

The methods used helped to provide an overview of the historical and biblical account of Jesus’ imprisonment and treatment along with other biblical characters. The same dynamic that contributed to the harsh treatment of prisoners in Jesus’ days still exist today. This study will examine destructive patterns of prisoners, and the underlying conditions that prevent individuals from enjoying wholeness in sharing with their children. The biblical witness includes innocent individuals imprisoned. Emotional ties can bring family members closer together or drive them farther away depending on the person’s strengths or weaknesses. Deflecting family ties in various situations and discussing painful events openly in conversations can help seek close relationships. It is important to have conversations affirming awareness of various situations and enabling the parties to share openly what prisoners and families perceived, and what they presently feel may have contributed to repeated patterns of bad behaviors. The observation of stories will note information learned about the families and may suggest ways of deflecting repeated patterns with the prisoner’s children.

Published stories collected on prisoners can show relevant information gathered to determine the objectives of the study. The information gathered will focus on the social interaction of prisoners’ experiences making effective and practical use to achieve events recognized from prisoners’ actions. After careful evaluation of the prisoner’s stories, they will be placed in various groups based on their feelings of empathy, sympathy, restoration, reconciliation, and non-transformation. The attention is gathered on transformation of behaviors and appeals for prisoners to connect with families, churches, and communities. Investigations of further research and various
emphasis can show how the information reviewed focuses on the effectiveness of both prisoners and their children.

The study aims to explore published stories of incarcerated individuals by placing them in groups to acquire more detailed information from their personal stories. The prisoners will be carefully observed and examined to see if they expressed empathy or sympathy connecting and sharing their thoughts and feelings towards the person/persons victimized or exploited. Restoration group would include prisoners whose bad choices burdened family and friends, forgiven, supported, and restored back into the society. Reconciliation group would include prisoners’ stories exposed publicly yet they turned their lives over to Christ, forgiven by families, churches, and communities. Lastly these are prisoners whose personal stories expressed no change in their behaviors toward those victimized. These prisoners had emotional difficulties and there was non-transformation in behavior neither towards the person victimized nor towards families or friends. This information can serve as a foundation for parental incarceration and their families that extended as further work done in this area.

The prisoners are placed in these diverse groups according to their response to thoughts and feelings as a result of their stories. The connections prisoners shared with family members can be related in fashion; what one person does could affect those around them. The information collected and presented at the end of the study seeks to discover suggested ways of deflecting patterns for prisoners’ children. These stories expressed may deflect repeated criminal patterns for prisoner’s children as well as to inspire positive behaviors and bring hope for the future.

Positive emotional behaviors are fundamental in discovering ways to unite families, faith leaders and others. Listening to the humility of prisoner stories will not resolve issues, but it can

be the beginning of communication and building relationships and hope for transformation in the lives of all involved. Opportunities will give prisoners a chance to express their feelings and thoughts, and they can acknowledge how their stories would affect them if it were their loved ones victimized in real life. When the prisoners are aware of new experiences, it could promote empathy, sympathy, restoration, reconciliation, healing, and a chance to transform their behaviors. It can also allow an opportunity to communicate in ways that can lead to deflecting criminal patterns with the children. Empathy, healing, and forgiveness viewed through the emotions of the incarcerated parents and their family members could unite them. Therefore, this raises the potential that emotions can be used to redirect thinking in deflecting patterns of criminal tendencies in committing wrongful acts. The offspring of incarcerated parents may risk arrest and incarceration as adults. In as much, examining research over an extended period of time can provide more specified data in repeated patterns of the present generations. Especially when children tend to follow the same patterns of their parents resulting in imprisonment. It is vital that this study examine detailed ways to find repeated patterns of prisoners and suggestions to any repeated patterns within their families if any exist and work towards interventions to deflect the patterns. Collecting these stories can enable the prisoners to become aware of family relationships to help evaluate whether the patterns of crimes continue or if they need deflecting. In one collected story, Kendall Rae described Diane Downs’ emotional state after a professional treatment which may have been the beginning of her troubled life that continued throughout adulthood. Kendall Rea stated that Dianne Downs functioned as if she had no conscience, no sense of responsibility, and no concern for the welfare of other people. Downs fell to profit from her experiences in life because


she was not trustworthy. Downs did not show concern after charged with her crimes. She functioned as if she enjoyed the media attention and was going to get away with her crimes.8

Empathy in this case is being able to imagine the feelings and experiences of prisoners by understanding their situations. The prisoners’ personal experiences viewed by faith leaders expanding, hoping that leaders will be able to bond, build trust, and transform behaviors. Leaders can genuinely listen, accept prisoners, and welcome them back into the community. Tracy Trothen’s research Engaging the Borders: Empathy, Religious Studies, and Pre-Professional Fields, claims that religious instructors gain insight regarding the value of empathy from counseling fields and from empathy exercises that are teachable.9 An excellent example is for faith leaders and families to listen carefully to the personal stories and imagine the prisoners’ predicaments as if these circumstances were their own experiences. Faith leaders and families can show empathy for their feelings and thoughts while experiencing what it is like to observe others walking in the prisoners’ footsteps, which would be appropriate for the purpose of this study. The stories of those imprisoned are deeply personal and humiliating because of their suffering. Those within the faith community can be an inspiration for prisoners as they express shame in exchange for the power inherited by these stories told aloud. Life beyond the bars for prisoners is about change that is how they grow and move where unexpected experiences are worth living. Faith leaders could take decisive actions to help transform prisoners’ suffering situations. The smallest action in changing prisoners’ lives is with kindness that can make the greatest difference by letting prisoners show up for themselves and make wise and healthy choices for a better outcome. All


parties can learn as God reveals a deeper sense of understanding towards those released from prison.

Prisoner’s silence is based on the life they chose that separated them from their families. Children involved in this process help them understand how patterns transform family members. Boys’ incarcerated fathers during their childhood are more likely than others to show antisocial behaviors in adulthood of imprisonment themselves. Yet rehabilitation programs do not always bring new hope because prisoners may fail in this process of transformation and do not gain positive results. On the other hand, the Amachi Texas Program provided a mentoring session for 1,300 children allowing those who had incarcerated parents to participate and none of them entered the justice system.\textsuperscript{10} Faith leaders demonstrating empathy, acknowledgement, and acceptance can allow prisoners the courage to ask for forgiveness if they desire to do so, and perhaps even express the desire to fellowship with a faith community.\textsuperscript{11} While prisoners began to heal it can bring new life to the faith community for an opportunity to bond, be restored beyond feelings, and thoughts when underlying conditions unfold. Prisoners are given a chance to change their relationships with families and pour their hearts out to God. Prisoners simply want to be acknowledged, heard, and know that they matter to others, where their stories will no longer be an issue of adversity but an awakening of God’s unmerited favor. In this way faith leaders, families, and others may be able to grow in God’s grace and hold these truths as endeavors towards a closer relationship with those imprisoned.


Various aspects of prisoners’ stories deal with sins, grace, and forgiveness. It is vitally important for prisoners to connect with their families to strengthen their relationships. Recognizing a disconnect with the family, the prisoners cannot establish a favorable outcome with their children or provide the family with a sense that they have changed without acknowledging their criminal activities. Persons trained in pastoral care could be instrumental in supporting young people by counseling those who may need assistances with emotional issues. They could create a spiritual environment to encourage a healthy life-style for the children by engaging in conversations to help change bad behaviors when acts occur following unacceptable patterns of crimes. Guiding Children at an early age can deflect further issues later in their lives. Monitoring and guiding can allow children to enhance their quality of life for healthy living. Overall, throughout this study there will be attempts to show how prisoners can demonstrate favorable opportunities for acknowledging patterns that may affect their children. I propose that gathering personal stories, observing, and documenting family information can be essential in identifying underlying causes and preventing repeated patterns for their children, and it aims to offer ways for deflecting any patterns.

How can underlying conditions bring awareness to families of prisoners to deflect repeated patterns for their children? Not only families but key influencers can impact individuals as mentioned in the case with my brother, where acquaintances in the community shaped my brother’s life through negative words and actions. The words were believable, a close bond developed, and the boys continued committing crimes, not acknowledging the harm to victims. There are challenges resulting in individuals’ participation in repeated patterns stemming from issues of violence, emotional behaviors, lack of education, difficulty with employment, and unfair treatment. According to a prior Center for American Progress Analysis, nearly half of all children
in the United States, about 3.3 million to 36.5 million, have at least one parent with a criminal record.\textsuperscript{12} Of these, 5.1 million children have experienced unfavorable childhood experiences separated from incarcerated parents.\textsuperscript{13} These experiences are detailed in the challenges that take a toll on the child’s social, emotional, physical, educational well-being, and abuse in the home environment.\textsuperscript{14} As a result, these children are six times more likely to enter the justice system at a young age.\textsuperscript{15} Therefore, the second-generation prisoners who had a parent incarcerated, experience more challenges in life by being exposed to violence, and to social and emotional behaviors leading to more difficulties for a healthy lifestyle.\textsuperscript{16} The impact of parents having a criminal record is not removed after one generation; rather, they are repeated and pose significant consequences causing disadvantages for their children’s children and beyond.\textsuperscript{17} Other factors have effects as well such as child maltreatment, parental use of alcohol, drugs, parental mental illness, and domestic violence. Studies fail to account for other risk factors in peoples’ backgrounds. Methodological flaws in studies about how parental incarceration affects children often appear in the research supported by observation rather than theory.\textsuperscript{18}

This study seeks to explore the challenges of these underlying causes of repeated imprisonment for prisoners’ children. The studies derived from family information can provide details about issues in behaviors and related situations in real-life circumstances. Prisoners can


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

also help shape their children’s characters if observed and recorded on how they interact socially. Once more the information gained can further better results in the study. Examining the patterns passed down from parents to children, their emotional behaviors, and their relationships can be integral in understanding the repeated negative patterns in families. The question remains, what are the underlying causes of these repeated negative patterns and how do we address deflecting the patterns? The argument that children follow the patterns of their parents who have strong influence over them is one way of addressing deeply rooted problems. The patterns the children face in their lives is transformed by talking to parents, grandparents, and others. Invite them to acknowledge the things that keep recurring in the family, such as anxieties, worries, and fears passed down. Forgiveness, which is paramount, may help to deflect patterns for the prisoners’ children. This process can be a course of action for a beginning phrase by bonding, building trust, and engaging in difficult conversations. In this way the children express and examine patterns in their lives to help them allow challenges of criminal activities.

**Contribution to Scholarly Field**

Angela Y. Davis believes that prisons are invalid in her extraordinary book entitled, Are Prisons Obsolete? Davis argues that prison practice of incarceration is similar to slavery rather than a system of criminal justice. She states that incarceration threatens children when they have no access to their communities and families. Davis offers different alternatives for schools to bring new vitality in education, a place that transforms healing, restoring civil rights, and ending sufferings in communities of color. Davis suggests a justice system based on amending wrongful acts, and unifying individuals, rather than punishment and vengeance. She removes the idea that a particular group is inferior yielding superiority, power, privilege, discrimination, and oppression
for others.\textsuperscript{19} Instead of acting on one single alternative there are opportunities to evaluate various aspects of society for racial transformation but failure to address these issues will not end the suffering. Davis believes that connecting the prison industrial complex to a complicated strategy may provide more alternatives than just one option for punishment.\textsuperscript{20} Prisons of today from my perspective are outdated because many are not producing the intended purpose for confined prisoners. I think, it is unacceptable when prisoners who need health care suffering from mental and emotional illnesses are denied services. Although I believe that people should be punished for their crimes, I do not feel they should be sentenced to death or life in prison without parole. Perhaps rehabilitation or some other alternative could serve the same purpose as prisons. International human rights advocates have declared parental incarceration “the greatest threat to child well-being” in the United States.\textsuperscript{21} It is a threat that disproportionately impacts disadvantaged children already coping with the burdens of poverty, unstable housing, unemployment, and community violence prior to their parent’s incarceration.\textsuperscript{22}

The hardships imposed by parental imprisonment intensifies undesirable economic, psychological, and social outcomes for the children.\textsuperscript{23} Therefore, children are more likely to experience negative physical, and emotional behaviors, antisocialism, substance abuse, homelessness, foster care placement, school failure, and unemployment.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{19} Angel Y. Davis, \textit{Are Prisons Obsolete?} New York: Seven Stories Press, (2003), 107.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 106-108.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
Children with incarcerated fathers, are nearly six times more likely to experience school suspension and expulsion compared to children with non-incarcerated fathers and three to six times more likely to exhibit serious violence behavior.\textsuperscript{25} Research shows that many youths with incarcerated parents eventually end up in prison themselves.\textsuperscript{26} According to Besemer, parental criminal involvement is the strongest predictor of later offending among youth.\textsuperscript{27} Additionally, more than half of the children in the juvenile justice system reported having at least one parent in prison according to Cain.\textsuperscript{28} Children can struggle and suffer greatly throughout their lifetime because of their incarcerated parents. Likewise, faith leaders should assist in being a connectional organization for finding family structure where people genuinely love, accept, and give the prisoners and their children a sense of belonging. Family members can play a vital role in transforming prisoners to wholeness once they are released from prison to help restore them back to society. The tarnished status of prisoners prevents them from flourishing in the community, yet it can give people in society the opportunity to assist them in finding solutions.\textsuperscript{29} Therefore, faith leaders can play an important role in the lives of prisoners by following Jesus’ examples, studying and sharing the gospel, supporting, teaching, equipping, and supporting the prisoners for ministry behind and beyond the walls. Clergy and people on the outside are all the same in God’s sight and are saved by God’s grace through their faith. Faith leaders especially have a responsibility to represent prisoners who need to hear the message of salvation because of their suffering situations. When faith leaders recognize the brokenness of prisoners they should be able to understand for

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
themselves that it is their responsibility to assist released prisoners and all people in committing their lives to Christ. Prisoners and all people should be included in the church as mentioned in Matthew 9:36-38.

There are challenges factored into the character development and behavior of people who are contributing to the outcome of the study. Deflecting negative patterns, observing behaviors, and listening to stories of former prisoners can bridge the divide with empathy for families. This allows prisoners transformation and a voice to express experiences encountered once they are released and to restore dignity without intimidation by those who do not accept them. Their stories can provide truth to the root cause of their real problems. More consideration for investigation is necessary to gather and generate information from prisoners. The information passed down to their children can be useful in recognizing underlying patterns and assisting in various ways to deflect the patterns verified in real-life settings. Observing the findings from these stories are essential for further research from real-life situations. It will engage further developments more thoroughly into the relationships of incarcerated parents with their children. This information gathered will help find what may constitute the underlying causes of repeated patterns to a broader population in reclaiming new life and restoring all parties to healthy conditions.

Diane Downs’ was diagnosed as psychotic, narcissistic, and had antisocial personality disorders. These underlying conditions caused failure throughout her life. Diane did not show compassion for other people, was not restored, or reconciled back into the community, nor did her behavior change. Downs was arrested, convicted, and transferred to maximum security prison, and still claims her innocence. Children of incarcerated parents face many psychological disadvantages, and antisocial behaviors that stem from being separated from parents, likely leading

30 Rae, I Really don’t Have Words. [https://www.facebook.com/KendallPlace/videos/492479268734970/?is_lookaside=1]
to criminal convictions for themselves and sometimes causing the cycle of generational incarceration to continue.\textsuperscript{31} At the time of Diane’s trial she was pregnant again with her youngest daughter, Becky. Becky was adopted but as she matured she felt lost, afraid, and guilty that she would follow Diane’s pattern of crimes. She turned to drugs, dropped out of school, and ran away from her foster parents. Becky reached out to Diane in prison but after a time she concluded that because she was biologically related to Diane, she decided she did not have to be like her mother. Becky decided to deflect the pattern by working and getting her life in order. This resulted in Becky having a son, receiving a degree in psychology, and beginning work as a behavior health coordinator for children.\textsuperscript{32}

The decision Becky made in breaking away from a destructive pattern of parental criminal activities depends totally on her awareness for choosing a healthy life. There is no way to predict how the children end up when their parents are continually incarcerated; research findings on these children’s risk factors are mixed.\textsuperscript{33} This research also suggests that careful attention must be given to law enforcement, public schools, and child welfare agencies, which address the underlying issues with the family to ensure safety and success for the children.\textsuperscript{34} Foster care has not provided sufficient resources for finding positive role models for the children in the system. There are agents in place to engage many of the risk factors that the children face, but they do not address the needs of the child’s relationship with the incarcerated parent, and any potential support systems.\textsuperscript{35} When children of incarcerated parents are handed over to caregivers, they need a stable home.
environment in which they can feel love and a sense of belonging. The children need to feel that they are cared for, loved, and supported by family members so that their social skills can be enhanced, then they can strive, to do well in school. The caregiver’s influence on the children and the impact of incarcerated parents, can cause them to act differently in school. The children of incarcerated parents may suffer from limited education, experiences of substance abuse, and exposure to traumatic incidents in terms of battering, parental alcoholism, addiction, domestic and community violence. Hence, the children may have difficulty managing schoolwork, associating with other children due to their parent’s arrest, and experiencing rejection from families, churches, and communities. Individuals’ may learn patterns of behaviors passed down through the family line from one generation to the next for what the member conveys to children through words, and actions. The people involved may not be aware of passing on underlying issues that take place in the family, but often they believe them not to be true. Even if not, these issues may still pass down throughout generations. Understanding generational patterns and traumas take years of investigations to discover underlying roots causing incarcerations in multiple generations of a family.

The Bible states that the compassionate and gracious God, is slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet God does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation” Exodus 34:6-7. Whether the future generation

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38 Generational Incarceration, https://sites.google.com/site/generationalincarceration/home/cylce-effects-on-children
inherits the behavior of their parents or grandparents, God evaluates future generations on their own merits. Ezekiel 18:30-31 summarizes that God loves all people, forgives iniquities, transgressions, and sins to all who accept him by faith and repent for their disobediences. But those who do not repent and are rebellious in their sins, God will not forgive them of guilt. God will punish their unrepentance and that of their children through future generations.

If children believe negative words spoken by family members, it is possible that they may mimic their incarcerated parents, yet clearly punishment will follow as a result promised for their iniquities. Additionally, another passage of scripture that examined further is John 9:1-5, where Jesus heals a man blind from birth. The disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus says, “Neither sinned, this happened because of God’s divine works. Inquiries into the family is the foundation for discovering hidden causes of imprisonment that can impact children. Therefore, the next generations who choose to follow the Lord’s way by acknowledging and transforming their behavior can change in their own lifetimes, and it is strongly anticipated that the future generations may be able to deflect repeated patterns of imprisonment.

Nine published stories of families and prisoners will display information for exploring and examining ways to identify the effectiveness as to what may constitute underlying repeated patterns. My hope is that the research results will inspire faith leaders to experience feelings of empathy for prisoners and allow them an opportunity for acceptance back into society. Giving prisoners a chance to share truth to family members and others can exchange shame for power. These prisoners fall to pieces and their hearts also breaks in releasing the pain as they communicate awareness of any repeated patterns of bad behaviors.
Investigation of further research is an inevitable opportunity for more knowledge resulting in what may constitute underlying causes prisoners’ situations. This information can provide the prisoners with greater possibilities to feel that others can share a deep awareness of their sufferings. This study can allow opportunities for prisoners to proclaim their voices, purposes, experiences, and transform their lives through new lens. The prisoners can recognize strategies to acknowledge sin, guilt, and shame that can and probably will make them whole again as they transform their behaviors. The hope is that other people can genuinely see them, listen to them, and believe that they matter, but more importantly for their acceptance into society. Acknowledgment of underlying causes, repeated cycles, and acceptance of these suggestions can help in deflecting patterns.

This information supports the argument that parents can be a profound influence on their children by deflecting a pattern of bad choices and engaging in conversations, making them aware of family drama, and taking action to guide them toward a positive and healthy lifestyle. High numbers of children experiencing incarceration of parents follow their parents to prison; they face risk factors that cause significant challenges throughout their lives. For example, in the article *Following in Their Footsteps: The Risks of the Intergenerational Cycle of Incarceration Among Inmates and Their Children*, Megan Harris explains in detail the viewpoints that not only do children with incarcerated parents face high numbers of physical risks, but they also have a vast array of emotional and behavioral difficulties that follow them throughout life.39 Hence, research in *Stop the Cycle with the Generation*, records that there are many factors that contribute to children engaging in a life of crime. It may result from socioeconomic status or the environment,

39 Megan Elizabeth Harris, Following in Their Footsteps: The Risks of the Intergenerational, Cycle of Incarceration Among Inmates and Their Children. (December 2017): 5. https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=all_theses
but one interesting and understudied factor is that of the family crimes. The family’s history can begin observing patterns in the current cross-generational criminal habits of prisoners leading to imprisonment for further developments. The purpose is to look closely at the underlying ways families can deflect the current cross-generational habits of prisoners. This information can establish support for observation and examination in repeated patterns of current cross-generational habits to deflect patterns within the family. Former prisoners can relate personal stories of family relationships and experiences with their children. Observing and recognizing underlying causes, the families must become aware, accept, and consider ways to deflect repeated patterns. Conversations and awareness of the family is the key for transformation, in avoiding known patterns, and moving forward towards living a life of wholeness.

Faith leaders, and all people, can engage in a study of this sort because it is worthy for the cause of Christ. They can accept a chance to fellowship and develop relationships with prisoners. Accepting the prisoners allows them a second chance and an opportunity to start the process toward future accomplishments. The prisoners must have a chance to balance their playing field, letting them see themselves in the eyes of God, deflect patterns of imprisonment, and move toward a healthy lifestyle. Not all prisoners will be successful in this process to transform their lives but hopefully it will be a beginning for those who attempt to achieve a better life. Hence as faith leaders we must continue to encourage those who fail to change by passing the microphone to prisoners enabling them to voice their painful and sorrowful experienced stories loud enough for others to hear and say, “We believe in the prisoners even if they do not believe in themselves.”

“Help the incarcerated refuse to inherit dysfunctions. Learn new ways of living instead of repeating what they lived through.”

Theme Davis

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40 Generational Incarceration, https://sites.google.com/site/generationalincarceration/home/cycle-effects-on-children
CHAPTER I

Biblical and Historical Context

Throughout the Bible there are stories and experiences of imprisoned individuals. Various characters held in captivity, chained, and led off to prison included Joseph, Samson, Jeremiah, Micaiah, Zedekiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Silas, Paul, Epaphras, and even Jesus. On the authority of the chief priests Paul persecuted the church, took God’s people as prisoners, punishing, casted votes against them, and forced them to blaspheme (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; 22:4-5; 26:10-11). Paul believed his actions were befitting for this culture, but God converted him on the road to Damascus, and he submitted to God’s will. Later The Jews seized Paul and planned to destroy him, and Felix charged him with stirring up riots among the Jews deprived of proof. Felix was frightened when Paul spoke about the judgment to come, and left Paul in prison after Porcius Festus became the successor of Felix (Acts 23:12-35; 24:1-27). King Herod had John the Baptist captured, arrested, bound, and put in prison because he told Herod that it was wrong for him to marry Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife (Mark 6:20; Matthew 14:3-12). Peter and John were two other characters arrested, chained, and imprisoned for teaching and preaching the gospel, but during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison and brought these men out. Paul boasted about his weakness in the horrible punishments he received including beatings, stoning, and exposure to death many times for the cause of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). Yet God’s divine invention was already in place to release these men from prison and save them from disastrous situations. Individuals may be inclined to understand times when God’s divine intervention does not take place or when God steps in and cause something to change the outcome in a person’s life. Why did God not free John the Baptist from the hand of King Herod? Before John, the Baptist was born an angel appeared unto his father Zechariah stating that his wife
Elizabeth would bear a son, name him John, and fill him with the Holy Spirit before his birth (Luke 1:11:16). This was the beginning of God’s plans for his Son Jesus Christ written in Isaiah the prophet where John the Baptist’s mission would be the forerunner for Christ preparing the people for Christ’s coming and fulfilling the prophecies Isaiah made about him before he was born. (Isaiah 40: 1-5, -9). John the Baptist was obedient and faithfully directed the people to Christ’s preaching repentance and baptism for forgiveness of sins. His voice was the one crying out in the wilderness to bring the people of Israel back to the Lord (Mark 1:1-4). John the Baptist obeyed God’s mission for his life. King Herod beheaded John the Baptist for his willingness to follow God’s plans exemplifying a sacrificial offering as Christ did in his life on earth. The people mocked both Jesus and John the Baptist, John for his clothing and his sacrificial offering when the King has him beheaded. The soldiers gambled for Jesus’s garments, and Jesus died for the sins of the world. God’s divine intervention was in place before John’s birth, and God knew his plans for John’s life to prepare the way for Jesus. Various characters of the early church possessed signs of criminal behaviors, but God used them victoriously to complete his plans. John died in respect for Christ and his faithfulness to God’s mission, and Jesus died for the sins of the world. The Bible states, “There is no one born of women greater than John, meaning that John is a great prophet,” he is a man, but not greater than Jesus (Luke 7:28). No one can stop those whom the Lord sends out on a mission not officials or any force on earth can hinder God’s plans (Acts 5:19, 12:6-11, 16:25-26). It is God’s will that causes good things to happen or prevents something from happening; this study provides a historical context that refers to the social, religious, and political conditions that existed during the early church. The Bible interprets the events and places Jesus’ imprisonment within the passion narrative appropriately between (Mark 14:72 and Luke 22:1-6). These passages indicate Peter denying Jesus and weeping, after the Sanhedrin chained and handed Jesus over to
Pilate. The Bible also records various accounts of Jesus’ custody at Calvary in the events of his passion, the place where Jesus died, buried, resurrected, was imprisoned by guards in his grave (Mark 15:21-47; Mark 16:1-20). Abbot Daniel’s writing in 1106-8, mentioned “the holy prison where Christ remained for a while until the Jews came and set up the Cross to crucify Jesus,” was unclear. However, Peter described “the umbilicus, the cosmological ‘nave’ of the world” was the prison location, where the soldiers bounded, scourged, robbed, and divided Jesus’ garments. Therefore, the attempt in this work is to show how the historical account of Jesus’ imprisonment was savagely cruel and is still significantly brutal for prisoners who are locked up in today’s society. Biblical literature and a historical perspective capture the description of Jesus’ cell in the Middle Ages and how it impacted the ninth century. This century depicts Jesus’ prison mission as a pilgrimage site celebrating his imprisonment. The event was more than pilgrims traveling to historical sites and reviewing religious relics; it has had a deeper and more spiritual meaning.

There was no established Roman penal system for punishing prisoners in Jerusalem and no confirmed idea in the Greco-Roman world of what a prison might have been during this time. Jesus and Barrabbas were imprisoned in a small dark, gloomy chapel with barred windows that had become a popular site for tourists. The pilgrims believed the Prison of Christ was a uniquely precious site, and their thoughts were about grace, redemption, imprisoned individuals, and

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42 Wilkinson, and Joyce Hill. Jerusalem Pilgrimage. 129.
43 Ibid, 212.
purifying their souls through repentance. The pilgrims remembered the passion of Jesus and developed a belief around the prison with an emotional and religious experience of a period of grace. Hence, it was as though the pilgrims cherished the idea of being in a cell with Jesus and held captive; imprisonment was something they wanted to eliminate their sins. The Pilgrims suffered, and they embraced incarceration thrilled by their piety for Jesus’ passion. Jesus’s imprisonment took place in a small gloomy chapel in Jerusalem before his crucifixion. Even in the darkest moments of prison Jesus showed empathy that enlightened others around him.

The Western Europeans acknowledged Jesus’ imprisonment as an important piece as mentioned in John Mandeville’s Book of Marvels and Travels (c.1356), as one of the most respected sources of information about the Holy Land in late-Medieval Europe and the model for many other writers’ descriptions of Jerusalem. Richard Torkyngton further offers an account of the prison of Christ and explored how pilgrims continued to use the prison; they made transformational sense of it and “exported” it back to the Western European devotional culture. By the mid-twelfth century, Jesus merged into a larger building as part of a spiritual empire where the life and suffering of Christ was successful and commanded great recognition. Bale added that the prison sentence was Jesus’ own will in offering himself for sacrifice. Likewise, Felix Fabri recalls the fear of something bad happening with the hope of achieving something great in keeping with the persecutory aesthetic through which Christ’s imprisonment created. The Pilgrims entered the prisons one by one where they reconstructed memories of Christ’s events, and those placed in the cell did not regard imprisonment with sorrow for how Jesus wept and waited the torture of the

47 Ibid, 78
48 Ibid, 78
49 Bale, The Medieval Story of Jesus’ Prison Cell. https://doi.org/10.1086/684237
The people incarcerated entered the prisons groaning, bowing to the earth, and kissing the footprints of Jesus to receive forgiveness for their sins.

“Now, as soon as we were inside, the Saracens straightway pulled back the doors of the church quickly behind our backs, locked them with bolts and locks, as men are wont to do after they have pushed robbers violently into a dungeon, and went away with the keys, thus leaving us prisoners in the most delightful, lightsome, and roomy of prisons, in the garden of the most precious Sepulcher of Christ, at the foot of the Mount of Calvary, in the middle of the world. Oh, how joyous an imprisonment! how desirable a captivity! how delightful an enclosure! how sweet a locking in, whereby the Christian is locked in an imprisonment in the Sepulcher of his Lord!”

Fabri’s account of Jesus displayed the rich tradition and beliefs surrounding the prison, where the pilgrims’ invented the emotional and religious experience of Christ’s imprisonment. Their pilgrims’ reports showed the belief in Christ’s incarceration during his Passion had spread throughout Latin Europe. This was where the prison appeared as a setting of Christ’s punishment, and his imprisonment suggested that it was not his choice to offer himself for sacrifice. His place of imprisonment functioned as a location where pilgrims were being purged through His suffering, which was something the pilgrims wanted to experience. During the Byzantine Period the church was rebuilt and at this time, the prison was renovated dating to the early Middle Ages from the Greek traditions. The Crusaders transformed it as part of their empire where the devotion of life and suffering of Christ was paramount. The twelfth century brought about a significant transformation, and the cell developed as a place of resurrection rather than the burial and Jerusalem was presented as the scene of Christ’s lifetime. This century featured spirituality and the devotion to the humanity of Christ and his life on earth, the desire here was not only to follow

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51 Bale, *The Medieval Story of Jesus’ Prison Cell.* [https://doi.org/10.1086/684237](https://doi.org/10.1086/684237)

52 Ibid.

Jesus but to replicate His life in every detail. The pilgrims and crusaders re-enacted the sufferings of personal redemption as Christ’s death had made possible the salvation for all men. One can only imagine how courageous these people were to flog themselves for the sake of Christ, to find peace, and joy, and to claim the reward of everlasting life. These people felt that bearing the cross by tormenting themselves was imitating Christ’s crucifixion because it was of little value if it was not a sign of true repentance, and they took the cross even their burdens to suffer pain for the love of Christ. As the prison of Christ became a popular site in Jerusalem, the Latin West remained doubtful, but the events circulated as true. The medieval understanding of Christ’s imprisonment helps explains the widespread use of prisons, and the social control of spaces in saints’ lives. Yet Christ’s prison continued to be unnoticed in postmedieval history, disregarded as the original site that was not in accord with scriptural or theological evidence.

According to the Ancient Roman society, people facing imprisonment were treated differently based on their status; those under the Roman law of higher rank were not punished as severely as those of lower rank. Prisons for the wealthiest citizens were practically nonexistent because they faced house arrest instead of imprisonment; and execution for the upper class was offensive to those who were a part of the government. There was no one to defend the lower-class people who died tormented by crucifixion or thrown into an arena as meals for wild animals. The law also called for different treatment of individuals depending on whether they were Roman citizens, yet Paul and Silas were Roman citizens beaten and thrown in prison (Acts 16:37). Paul and Silas both were excluded as citizens and tortured. The Roman authorities decided the fate of

55 Ibid, 67.
56 Bale, *The Medieval Story of Jesus’ Prison Cell.* [https://doi.org/10.1086/684237](https://doi.org/10.1086/684237)
57 Wansink, *Chained in Christ,* 41.
those imprisoned, whether they died from physical prison conditions, execution, strangulations, beheading, or hangings.\textsuperscript{59} Descriptions of imprisonment in the ancient world was an issue of horrendous circumstances that were worse than death. Individuals in the first century like individuals today, may not be accustomed to the legislations or regulations involved with imprisonment. Even so through a wide variety of sources, they would have had specific impressions of what prisons were like and what prisoners experienced.\textsuperscript{60} The prisons were overcrowded then as they are today, and it was common for prisoners to die in custody, from starvation (Matt. 25:37), torture (Matthew 18:34; Hebrews 13:3; Jeremiah 52:11; 2 Chronicles 16:10), execution (Mark 6:14-29) or suicide (Philippians 1:19-24).

Craig Wansink expressed Paul’s decision that death for gain, was far better than life. Paul stressed that he would not choose death but was willing to stay and continue to instruct the people he started with for their benefit. Allowing them the opportunity to gain experience into mature Christians and remaining in the flesh’ for him was ‘more necessary’ for the sake of the Philippians’ ‘progress and to joy in the faith’ (Philippians 1:23-25). Craig Wansink also suggested that Paul’s reference to voluntary death in prison may have been an allusion to suicide or to ensuring his own execution by failing to co-operate with the authorities.\textsuperscript{61} Jesus was chained, led from his cell, carried the cross to Calvary, died, buried, was resurrected, and entered eternal life, now Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Luke 23:26-56; Luke 24:1-12). Those who have no hope of the resurrection are those who have rejected Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. One thing that can comfort the Christian and bring hope in the Scripture (John 14:19), is because Jesus lives,

\textsuperscript{59}E.g., Cat Cicero, 4:13, Vat. 11:Livy 29, 19.5-6; Plutarch, Cic. 22.2; Phoc. 36.2-4; Dio, 60.16.1; Pliny, Ep. 2.11.8; Tacitus, Ann. 3.51; The Martyrs of Lyons 27. J. S. Pobee, Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul (JSNT Sup. 6; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985): 1-6.
\textsuperscript{60}Wansink, Chained in Christ. 95.
\textsuperscript{61}Ibid, 27-125.
the fact that Jesus rose from the dead gives hope that Christians shall also rise. Gloria and Bill Gaither wrote the lyrics to the song “Because He Lives.”

“God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus; He came to love, heal, and forgive; He lived and died to buy my pardon. An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. Because He lives I can face tomorrow, Because He lives all fear is gone; Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living just because He lives.”

Today prisons in America are in crisis, even though they are different from Ancient Roman society. Judges in the United States have ruled that prisons are so overcrowded that they violate prisoners’ constitutional protection from cruel and unusual punishment. Severe overcrowding is a major problem, and corrupt officials do not provide safety measures for those incarcerated. The officials beat imprisoned individuals. Stabbings, rapes, and killing take place in facilities run by officials in authority. Bryan Stevenson showed that more than 60,000 prisoners held in the United States are in isolated cells for 23 hours a day and denied basic human rights. This study also indicates that prisoners held in long-term confinement cells suffer from anxiety, deep depression, and isolation, which accounts for about 50% of prison suicides. States like California and Alabama have horrendously inadequate services, which is incompatible with the concept of human dignity and has no place in civilized society. After two decades of monitoring prisons in New York, Arizona, and Maryland, Human Rights Watch reported terrible conditions and abusive behaviors by officers.

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63 Bryan Stevenson, Prison Conditions Millions of Americans are incarcerated in overcrowded, violent, and inhumane jails and prisons that do not provide treatment, education, or rehabilitation. EJI is fighting for reforms that protect incarcerated people, Equal Justice Initiative. https://eji.org/issues/prison-conditions/
The Texas Penitentiary at Huntsville opened for the first time with three prisoners in 1849. Authorities allowed a selection of officers to administer and operate the institution on policies and punishments. These policies on punishment and rehabilitation have been swinging back and forth for the past sixty years on how the organization should run and has not settled as prison numbers increased. Prisoners experienced managerial changes while the prison system repeated financial losses with legislature investigation, alleged mismanagement, corruption, and poor treatment of prisoners. During 1970’s through 1980’s there were dramatic changes in the Texas Department of Corrections marked by the increase in prison populations, and the opening of new units due to overcrowding that caused legal challenges in managing the prisoners. The function of prison units changed because of the longest running prison lawsuit in United States history after the case of Ruiz V. Estelle filed in 1972. The Justice ruling decided that the conditions of confinement violated the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution regarding cruel and unusual punishment. Therefore, the state required the reduction of overcrowding, the improvement of rehabilitation, and the avoidance of practices deemed unsafe for prisoners’ welfare. However, in 1988 the prison population continued to grow exponentially creating even more challenges within the system.

American prisons today, just as it was during Jesus’s time, desperately need urgent attention. Staff brutality and degrading treatment of prisoners occurs across the country when there is a lack of leadership, and critical observation invokes a climate where abusive behaviors take place repeatedly. In 1999, a federal judge concluded that prisons in Texas had a widespread problem with a culture of guards who received pleasure by inflicting pain on prisoners in malicious violence. There have also been patterns of staff assaults on prisoners involving beatings, stunning

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https://www.tshaonline.org/publishication-types/tsha-press
with electronic devices, and dousing with chemical sprays by officials who were supposed to guard and keep them safe. Often when these attacks take place, the guards admit having struggled with the prisoners but deny they used excessive force. They claimed the injuries were self-inflicted. Violence was acknowledged openly, tolerated, and at times expressly approved by high-ranking correction officials. Yet the issues are continuously repeated while officials ignore the pleas of prisoners seeking protection from other inmates. Most prisons do not have access to the press and human rights groups, or members of the public. Inspections presenting public findings are rare, and they only occur after the situations have intensified to a degree that prisoners file lawsuits. Therefore, a culture of brutality has developed in which correctional officers know they can get away with excessive, unnecessary, or malicious violence.

There should be more public programs implemented and designed to counteract the issues that exist in these overcrowded prison cells today. However, there are people in place that are truly enthusiastic about incarcerated achievements for the good of humankind. Still the prison system needs to enlist more people to assist with physical, mental, emotional, psychological, and spiritual counseling. These professionals can assist in the rehabilitation of prisoners brutally attacked, confined, and isolated for long-terms. Poor conditions, violent treatments, and repeated corruptions by officials need immediate attention in prisons. It is possible that when incarcerated individuals’ treatment in prison is fair, they can allow opportunities to show remarkable improvement toward reforming. Equal justice in prisons is the consistent cry for help towards fairness. Officials in today’s society may be theoretically trying to assist in restoring prisoners back to a healthy life.

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67 Prisoners Abuse: How Different are U. S. Prisons. May 13, 2004, 8:00 PM EDT [https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/05/13/prisoner-abuse-how-different-are-us-prisons](https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/05/13/prisoner-abuse-how-different-are-us-prisons)
through therapy and not focusing on punishments and confinements. Bale, notes that Medieval Latin Christians, believed living the good life involved being in the prison cell of Christ. The pilgrims understood how a holy site of Jerusalem reconstructed through their culture and through their influence of Western ideas and European space took place. Jesus’ imprisoned site brought back and introduced to the West from pilgrims’ reports, pilgrimage as a precious tradition, and as a connection to God.  

Theologically the centerpiece was for all people to experience God’s love, and a process to practice, and prevent wrongful activities, whereby people’s transformation can result to a full and healthy lifestyle. God’s Word is true. Prisoners, and all individuals, must clearly understand that God’s love overflows to sinners. God’s love is far above anything man can understand. It is *agape* love in a moral sense, and it goes far beyond the human ability to love. God extended this type of love for everyone, not because of, but despite of the sin nature of humankind. God sent his son to do the work on the cross to save all people: not because they deserved it, but because they do not deserve it. Jesus came to save the lost, yet it seems so difficult for people to show empathy, acceptance, and forgiveness to those imprisoned. All who know God must continue to believe because salvation is a way of life, and this is not something done causally. This belief means to believe in God and love him more than anyone or anything. Hence, people who really believe can practice their faith for God’s glory, where there is no way to perish if they are in the right standing with God who has prepared a place for all to spend eternity (John 3:16).

The key was for all people to know God, study his Word, repent, and ask for forgiveness for things that are unpleasant to God. Sin in God’s sight is serious even though if forgiven by God’s grace and mercy, people are no longer under condemnation when they walk in the spirit of

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68 Bale, The Medieval Story of Jesus’ Prison Cell. [https://doi.org/10.1086/684237](https://doi.org/10.1086/684237)
God (Romans 8:1-2). Forgiveness does not take away sins, but it can provide individuals victory in their desire to attempt to overcome sins. For people, not just prisoners, sin causes them to lose families, friends, jobs, and sin can become a burden for the victims even after God gives them grace. The pain of suffering and hardships can continue to linger because God’s forgiveness does not excuse people from their responsibility for the punishment of sins. As well, prisoners may still contend with habits that tempt them to repeat their bad behaviors. Ministry leaders must honestly approach God’s throne of grace in prayer, with bold assurance asking God to help them meet the need of prisoners (Hebrews 4:16). When faith leaders are patient and afford prisoners an opportunity to deal with their sins in kindness, forgiving others as God has forgiven, and understanding their circumstances, then and only then can love abound (Philippians 1:9-11). This is an excellent charge set before faith leaders as an example for others. Christians’ lifestyles genuinely lived to the best of their abilities before prisoners delivers the best sermons; this is preaching without words. People who love God and accept imprisoned individuals can help turn them away from old habits and allow Jesus to live in them. Operating in the flesh causes a battle for people who listen to sinful flesh and not to the spirit. God is the author of salvation and of life as well who brought all people back with his precious blood and defeated sin and death when he rose from the grave (Hebrews 12:1-2). It could be exceedingly difficult for an individual struggling to forgive a perpetrator who committed murder of a close relative. This type of trauma for an individual losing a love one can feel unfair and perhaps they have no power in the situation. They may grieve so long that they become angry and bitter over the loss of their relative. Bitterness could be the only relationship they have left with their lost family member and find it grievous to let go. Prayers petitioning God’s strength, faith in our Lord and Savior, and devotionals may help
in this situation. Forgiveness is a process that may take an enormous amount of time; it can also be heartbreaking because the victim may feel disloyal to the person murdered.

The scripture passages mentioned are God’s Words providing insight into God’s heart for sin and grace concerning those who have been outcasted, forgotten, and imprisoned. I hope that faith leaders and their congregations will follow Jesus’ teaching in ministering to former prisoners, families, churches, and communities.
CHAPTER II

Transforming Emotional Behaviors

Cognitive Behavior

Transforming one’s behavior is not just an outwardly change, but it is the essence of a major change from deep within individuals that can allow the persons to alter or restore a healthy and new life. Various emotions and thoughts are engaged in cognitive, affective, and aggressive behaviors. Learning more about a person’s behavior can help individuals to become knowledgeable about negative thinking and to better manage stressful situations. Individuals can utilize a way of finding resolutions to specific relationship conflicts of analyzing information to better understand their behavior and what triggers other types of reactions.

Cognitive behavior involves assisting with individuals’ negative thinking, to view challenging situations clearly and responding to them early on in more effective ways. Hence, understanding how individuals’ troublesome emotional behaviors are the results of negative patterns and may develop is essential. One theory that tries to understand the social roots of emotions is cognitive labeling theory. This theory proposes that emotional experiences are a result of an event that takes place in the environment, an event causing a reaction through a feeling of anger or nervousness. Typically, this occurs when one is concerned about an imminent situation of an uncertain outcome. For example, outside influencers may describe how something might occur to convince people to do wrongful acts. An example of cognitive labeling is when a leader of the group convinces a member to steal other people’s property for his own interest. If the member continues these illegal activities, the leader may reward the member for his wrongful acts.

On the other hand, the leader is utilizing the member to commit robbery so that he can benefit from the resources. Afterwards the leader may decide that the member could be someone that he can use to steal something even more valuable. Over time the leader’s expectations may change, for example, expecting the member to steal a car. If the person in the group decides to discontinue any illegal activity, he would be insubordinate. The leader then begins to expect and support the unlawful activities by the member over time as a process intended to regulate and control the group member’s behavior.70

The individual may mimic the environmental factors that surrounds the situation, and the effect of the event can be determined by their reactions. Schacter’s theory assumes that the physical arousal depends on the context. In other words, if the person takes part in the illegal activities and believes he/she could perform the act without thinking about the circumstances or consequences, this results in a dangerous situation. Social psychologists believe that when younger individuals express their thoughts others can manipulate their behaviors especially if they are trying to identify with a social group. For example, if a person participates in an environment where there is an encouragement of his emotional state, he may take part in the illegal activities that suggest their behavior acted upon.71 This theory predicts that environmental conditions strongly influence labeling people’s physiological state. Research also suggests that the emotional label sometimes even precedes the awareness of arousal.72 The social environment suggests what individuals experience in various emotional states and then actually verify their beliefs, whether people are happy, sad, or angry, and they address these feelings. The strong bond associated with social

groups develop and confirm the behavior implied by the leader who may convince an individual to agree to commit criminal acts introduced even if the individual agrees unconsciously. The decision of the individual represents an obligation to the leader in performing illegal acts that will more than likely lead to increased involvements and motivations of complex patterns that take place outside of the individual’s conscious awareness.

Returning to the story about the boy’s criminal acts in the neighborhood, depended on the leader in the social group with an ulterior motive to influence one boy to change his actions and conform to community criminal activities. The leader of a social group can convince other members by establishing clear details on how to perform wrongful acts or by persuading them to think that it is a way to acquire items by stealing and selling the items for financial gain. The connection to the social group, the strong bond, and the context may cause individuals to make unconscious decisions on their own emotional state. They may allow the leader within the environment to sets the stage for crimes by determining how others are feeling and how the events will take place, and the members are not fully aware of the process before they decided to react.73

The decision an individual makes concerning his life will define him by his positive or negative outcomes after he is released from prison. The individual could engage in crimes of various other ways including individuals living in the community, social interactions, or families. Whereby repeated patterns of crimes can expose young people to wrongful acts as well as problems such as worry, fear, nervousness, or anxiety. Hence the effects of exposure to crimes for younger people at an early age can lead to adult acts resulting in convictions, long-term sentences, and the risk of substance abuse. As a means of deflecting bad behaviors, parents should observe their children’s everyday activities and monitor their social relationships, which could help with a

variety of situations that may occur. The focus of observing children’s social group behavior is to understand their emotions, thoughts, and making sure they are interacting positively with others within the community. This is extremely important for parents trying to guide their children in a positive direction. Social psychologists are not only interested in what children do, but also what they feel and think.  

The leader of the group could have influenced others in the group with the time they spend interacting, by dominating, and exploiting others to follow them. This was the results of the boy’s wrongful activities mentioned earlier in this project where these activities became normal to the boys and influenced by the person in control. It is possible that the leader planned the crimes for the group, but it was the boys’ decision to participate. Although it may not have been one of the boys’ plans to engage in these criminal acts, he agreed to follow the others in committing these unlawful acts, resulting in his arrest. Scholars believe that social feelings are not acknowledged by interactions to the outside world but experienced by social standards. Likewise Shott 1979, states that social emotions connected to empathy and the importance of social interaction is in experiencing and defining social processes. More than likely guilt may have been the awareness one of the boys felt after he had done something he should not have done. The boy’s self-evaluation was viewed through the lens of someone else where he accepted the standards. Feeling guilty the young boy attempted to correct the issue by obeying the authority of his parents; he went back to

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school and was doing well. This situation may have been a socially flawed plan as well as the methods in dealing with this situation. These boys should have known the risks of implementing their plan of action but did not consider the risks. Faith leaders who show empathy and who imagined themselves in the place of prisoners can possibly grasp their situations. Faith leaders can certainly be instrumental in embracing these young boys and others who have made bad choices to help them avoid an intended purpose. Faith leaders could also begin to see themselves viewed from the prisoners’ embarrassing predicament to a degree that could cause faith leaders to understand their own mistakes in life. Perhaps the leaders could make objective decisions as to what it would be like to put themselves in the prisoners’ misguided circumstances.

**Affective Behavior**

Affective behavior deals with the mental state of the mind whereby the individual’s thought process is under control by what he may be thinking at the time, and he/she reacts to these emotional feelings. For instances, when one boy engaged in this criminal act, his first thought may have been doubtful about the scheme. Perhaps pressured to decide whether the event posed a threat, whether it was relevant to him, or even questioned what would he gained by participating in the crime? If he decided that it was to his advantage to engage in this unlawful act, he might have felt excitement or anticipation because he thought this was a situation that could have positive effects. On the other hand, once he committed the crime a secondary issue would be how he would deal with his own evaluation or ability to cope with the consequences of addressing any perceived threats. At this point, he must face how he truly feels about what he did and how he feels about himself. According to Decely & Jackson, the affective process involves sharing another person’s emotions for a brief duration of time with an anticipated outcome guided by a plan of action. The

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intention is to provide a conscious aim to respond in a way that transfers an awareness of the thoughts that the other person is experiencing.\textsuperscript{78} Hence Gulsum Angel explains that these emotions have distinct aspects where the main objective is to understand the nature and feelings of others when exchanging information but to refrain from individual opinions. Angel’s research also suggests that the most successful intervention of cognitive behavior aims to influence the development of intellectual training.\textsuperscript{79} Other scholars have noted that cognitive behaviors are useful, but in the first analysis they warn that from the beginning individuals should be able to recognize the difference between themselves and others, which involves understanding sympathy and empathy. Empathy is feeling the same emotions as others, whereas sympathy is feeling sorrow for another person’s internal life of discomfort such as an emotional state of troubled, confused or out of the ordinary conditions.\textsuperscript{80} Scholars’ second warning is that of mistaking what people think about their own personal emotions and what could possibly be acknowledged by their experiences of what they understand is acceptance of others.\textsuperscript{81} This is not necessarily taking on the other person’s behavior.\textsuperscript{82} In other words, to understand affective behaviors one has to feel other people’s emotions in sharing their thoughts, which can help individuals build an emotional connection with them and truly relate to their feelings.

Additionally, Salovey and Mayer refer to empathy as representing one of the most important aspects of emotionally intelligent behavior because it involves the understanding of


\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.

another’s emotional state and the effectiveness in sharing their emotional state.\textsuperscript{83} The difficulties come with understanding the unique ability to influence the behaviors of others.\textsuperscript{84} Faith leaders can model compassionate feelings of empathy by guiding and sharing opportunities to encourage and teach others. Leaders could also assist in helping others maintain self-awareness and ways to reflect personal knowledge, beliefs, and emotions. Faith leaders can appreciate what other individuals feel and help them determine the difference between themselves and others to keep a balance and not take on the same perspective.

**Aggressive Behavior**

Aggressive behavior is an intentional harm to another person’s feelings, causing sadness, or someone physically inflicting bodily injures upon another person. Anger is one aspect of the betrayal of a commitment as reflected in the anecdotal story in chapter IV, where a husband used his power in judgment by suggesting that his wife was unfaithful. This story indicates that the husband enjoyed his wife and stated that she was supportive in the marriage, but he was afraid when he felt threatened about losing his wife. This made sense to him because he loved her, but he resented the idea of her cheating with another man, and he became enraged thinking about something he recalled in his mind concerning their enduring relationship. The husband tried to maintain his emotional state during what he thought was a deteriorating situation with his wife. He was worried, he was fearful, and uncertain about the outcome of his wife’s disloyalty. The husband became aggressive and responded as a result of his frustration and his inability to change the situation. He just snapped and destroyed everything in their home, then murdered his wife,


committing a horrible crime that he would regret for the rest of his life. Sigmund Freud considers aggression to be an innate instinct to hurt others which demands the release of hostile impulses by aggressing others that can also advance from parents to their children. Freud believes that humans are aggressive creatures by nature that delight in exercising aggressive behaviors and hurting one another. This scholar also argued that aggression is not only humanity’s natural instinct but that this inclination to aggression constitutes the greatest hindrance to civilization.\(^\text{85}\) Dollard asserts that hostility leads to aggression, and every aggressive act is a result of a former frustration. In other words, the husband’s violence could have been a direct response to his aggression.\(^\text{86}\)

In violent situations involving current or former inmate spouses or significant others, women are the victims 74% of the murders and 85% of assaults in many of these cases,\(^\text{87}\) where the aggressive patterns are found more among Blacks, Latinos, and Whites.\(^\text{88}\) Abuse within the family is found among both men and women but it depends on the type of aggressive behaviors, and children are more than likely to be abused by their parents. Wife abuse is as prevalent as husband abuse,\(^\text{89}\) by the same way both women and men are likely to engage in aggressive behavior. Men have been a mastermind for more violent behaviors; data disclosed that men were guilty of almost 90% murders of both men and women conducted in 2009. Most murders involve men when anger or unpleasant petty problems intensified to harm another person. An aggressive pattern challenges social beliefs and norms but displayed in the home teaches children that violence within the family is acceptable. Furthermore, these beliefs and norms encourage men to

physically abuse women by controlling them. For example, these norms are related to the
dominate gender indicating that they are in authority to use aggression in obtaining respect as well
as to compete with other men, for prestige in a group, or to rule over women. This behavior for
control often leads to insults that provoke others causing anger, and physical challenges. This type
of behavior is similar to a gang leader who often intimidate others in an attempt to create fear.

In the story of the husband’s murder of his wife, his emotional pattern indicated that his
aggressive behavior conveyed the thoughts of his wife’s infidelity. The husband’s aggression
resulted in a horrific crime that was likely to happen supported by what he thought was true. The
husband reacted without proof and failed to observe the limits of what was appropriate. Even
though the husband expressed his regrets, his children were able to deflect a repeated pattern when
they refused to communicate with him. Anderson and Bushman proposed that once a crime is
committed, an initial appraisal of the occurrence allows the brain to interpret the information and
to understand what actually happened at the time of the incident. The husband was outraged and
went out of control. The awareness of his emotional state and behavior became a reality behind
the walls of a prison cell where he was unsatisfied with his actions but was able to externalize what
he had done. His discontentment led to his longing for his wife, he grieved, was honestly sorry,
and regretted his actions. The importance of this situation was for the attacker to apologize, which
indicates that the harm to his wife was possibly unintentional. However, Barlett and Anderson
noted that in situations of domestic violence, as the severity of the harm increases, the effectiveness
of apologies decreases. The husband deeply apologized, was truly remorseful, and accepted

responsibility for his wrongful act, but his children did not respond to his expressions of repentance and decided to deviate from what could have been a repeated pattern.\textsuperscript{94}

George G. Bear’s research indicates that blame, anger, and aggression is actions between shame and a person’s natural urge to feel in a particular way they may express problems with self-control. Shame is motivated by harmful behavior that exited in cultural differences. Observing blame and anger the person acts differently because the individual experience something regrettable where shame is positively to blame in all individuals of all age, and all occupations. This unwelcomed feeling of shame is correlated with anger, hostility, and the reaction was to put the blame on someone else.\textsuperscript{95} Scholars believe that shame is related to influencing someone to do something associated with aggressive behavior, particularly among those who are only interested in themselves. To escape the embarrassing emotions of shame, people are inclined to defend themselves\textsuperscript{96}, by turning the tables and giving voice to blame and anger outward onto a convenience victim.\textsuperscript{97} The shamed person attempts to reclaim feelings of control and arrogance in their life, but the long-term experiences can be sudden. Friends, inmates, and loved one may feel confused and isolated by unreasonable outbursts of anger. The link between shame and physical aggression is openly observed but not in all studies. Guilt individuals are likely to be inclined to take responsibility for their wrongdoings and errors. The external reality of blame has been consistently and negatively correlated with guilt at both the condition and normal levels. When shame is internalized and becomes pervasive and enduring, a person can be at risk for developing


https://www.pep-web.org
unhealthy conditions such as depression. Shame can be divided between public and private dimensions of an individual’s self-concept.\textsuperscript{98} Guilt prone people are vulnerable and are as prone to anger as anyone else, but when angered, guilt-prone individuals are inclined to manage their anger productively and they are reluctant toward aggression.\textsuperscript{99}

Shame and psychological problems are consistent with procedures, various age groups, populations, and the tendency to experience shame linked to an extensive array of symptoms, including low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, and substance dependence.\textsuperscript{100}

**Guilt, Shame, and Embarrassment Behaviors**

Other social emotions are guilt, shame, and embarrassment. Guilt involves individuals who see themselves judged by other social groups or the community. After reflection, an individual may realize that they have done something unacceptable and feel guilty for their wrongful actions. They evaluate themselves by what others think of them and their guilt causes them to avoid dealing with their own personal behavior in an attempt to remove the uncomfortable issues, thereby allowing them to return to a natural emotional state. This means that they would need to apologize for their inappropriate behavior.\textsuperscript{101} Social psychologists do not believe that guilt has a negative impact on individuals. They have found that guilt supported and strengthened relationships by distributing the negative consequences among those victims and the guilty person. In this way an


apology would soften the situation and give approval for both the victim and the guilty person to bear in the suffering to a degree.\textsuperscript{102}

Scholars have found that guilt and shame focused heavily on dispositional feelings and crimes for individual differences shifting to experience humiliation and remorse across a range of situations. The feelings of shame and guilt comes together with a natural mental emotional mood. The mood changes to abrupt shifts in one’s emotional state, and which is a normal part of life. Sometimes caused by mental health disorders like borderline personality disorder or bipolar disorder, which is characterized by extremely high and low moods.\textsuperscript{103} Moral emotions acknowledge the link between moral standards and moral behaviors, focusing on three negative emotions of shame guilt, and embarrassment. Guilt is the more adapted moral emotion, while shame is a moral emotion that can easily go wrong. Research explains the traits of an adaptive purpose of a person’s guilt, is different from the hidden costs of shame.\textsuperscript{104} Research consistently shows that shame and guilt lead to contrasting motivations or action tendencies.\textsuperscript{105} Shame motivates efforts to deny, hide or escape the shame inducing situation. Guilt often motivates change, such as the action of confessing an apology or efforts to undo the harm. Feelings of guilt go hand in hand with other positions aligned with empathy. Shame is apt to disrupt people’s ability to show understanding and to share their feelings with others. The differential relationship of

shame and guilt to empathy is noticeable at both the level of feeling a natural state of mind and at
the level of depression.106

Substance use deserves special attention, given the high rates of substance use disorder
among incarcerated individuals. Shame and guilt-proneness show a distinctive relationship. In two
independent studies, adults in recovery programs had lower guilt-level scores and higher shame-
level scores as compared to individuals in community samples.107 In two samples of
undergraduates and one sample of jail inmates, shame-proneness was constantly progressively
related to both alcohol and drug problems, whereas guilt-proneness was less consistently
negatively related to such problems.108 In a longitudinal study shame and guilt proneness in the
fifth grade predicted alcohol and drug use at 18 years of age.109 Children high in shame started
drinking earlier than those low in shame and were more likely to later use heroin, hallucinogens,
and other stimulating drugs. Those high in guilt started drinking at a later age than those low in
guilt and were less likely to use heroin, with similar trends for marijuana and other stimulating
drugs. Criminal behavior raises the question: to what extent are shame and guilt associated with
criminal behavior? Tibbetts found that undergraduates’ anticipated shame was inversely related to
students’ intention to drive drunk or shoplift and suffering from shame was unrelated to such
intentions. Regarding actual unlawful behavior undergraduates’ criminal offending listed by
number of criminal behaviors including use of drugs was consistently negatively related to guilt-
proneness. Tibbetts researched the degree shame and guilt that were associated with criminal

106 J. Joireman, Empathy and the Self-Absorption Paradox II: Self-rumination and Self-reflection as
107 M. A. Meehan et. al. A Guilt, Shame, and Depression in Clients in Recovery from Addiction. Journal of
108 R. L. Dearing, et.al. On the Importance of Distinguishing Shame from Guilt: Relations to problematic
109 J. P. Tangney, and R. Dearing, Shame, Guilt and Remorse: Implications for Offender Populations. The
behavior and found that shame was related to wrongful acts. Proneness to shame was unrelated to these intentions as well. When dealing with illegal behaviors, Tibbetts found criminal offending had a value of illegal behavior with drugs and was negatively related to guilt-proneness. The results of shame proneness were mixed and shame-proneness list, containing three dispositional measures of shame, was unrelated to dishonest behavior, and further proves to be the wrong purpose of shame.110

Shame is an equivalent emotion to guilt, but in both guilt and shame an individual may have committed a crime towards another person. The difference between the two is that shame is more profound and lingers longer than guilt. When a person feels guilty for hurting someone else, it may be easier to distinguish it and to respond. For example, by stealing something from others, the person may feel guilty about their conduct, but it is more about how they express disapproval of themselves.111 In contrast shame is a hurtful feeling about one’s humiliation or distress caused by the remorseful reflections concerning one’s bad behavior.112 The response to shame according to K. C. Barrett and J. P. Tangney is that the shamed person wants to run away from the situation because it threatens the deepest thoughts of the individual’s self-respect.113 The shamed individuals want to remove themselves from the circumstances or try to hold someone else responsible for their behavior so as not to be held accountable. T. J. Scheff and S. M. Retzener indicate that when shamed individuals feel an intense emotional state for the difficulties of their unpleasant acts, they

will simply avoid the danger by not taking responsibility which is much more of an emotional condition than guilt.\footnote{114 T. J. Scheff and S. M. Retzinger, Emotions and violence: Shame and Rage in Destructive Conflicts. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, (2001):196.}

When individuals focus on a certain bad sinful behavior without acknowledging self, they retain their sense of identity and honesty. They feel pain but it is not overpowering. They try to fix their behavior and the consequences, and they are determined to do so. When people feel shame physically, and socially devalued, they may shift in their perception and experience of themselves. They feel small and unworthy, but at the same time they socially evaluate themselves by what others think of them. Therefore, they do not feel an apology is necessary or the need to repair the issue but to hide because the pain is too extreme, the self is impaired, and transforms formation from destruction to approval is impossible. John Braithwaite’s 1989 notes two types of shaming theory: one is reintegrative and the other disintegrative shame. He believes they are closely related to clinical-social psychologists’ notions of guilt and shame. Reintegrative shaming deals with practices that identify the crime for behavior looked down upon, but the person is respected, accepted back into society, and given a chance to makes atonements for his behavior.\textsuperscript{119} Braithwaite and Mugford, state that reintegrative shaming self and behavior disconnects so that the self of the offender strengthens as sacred rather than disrespectful. The second shaming theory practice labeled disintegrative is where the individual focus is on unforgiving, dishonoring, separating, and embarrassing a person, in an attempt to instill feelings more similar to shame.

Tibbetts observed that criminologists often use the terms shame and guilt interchangeably,\textsuperscript{120} not acknowledging the importance of shame vs. guilt distinction that Lewis

described. In fact, Tibbetts, notes that shame is the amount of guilt an individual feels if he were to commit a given act. Whether shame and guilt are disintegrative or reintegrative shame, there is still two ways to feel bad about one’s failures, transgressions, and one is more adaptive than the other.

The social emotion of embarrassment involves a sense of humiliation that injures one’s pride or self-respect. An individual can become critically distressed from a feeling of being ashamed of the actions that they consider as beneath their moral standards. People get embarrassed more quickly in a group setting rather than by themselves, with one other person, or with unfamiliar people because they fear that it changes other people’s opinion of them.\textsuperscript{121} The embarrassed person realizes that he/she made a terrible mistake in public by failing in front of a social group. They feel they do not feel favored by others, and they are also ashamed and consider themselves to be self-conscious emotionally. Therefore, disappointment in their hopes and expectations can impact the persons negatively by feeling disapproval from the group.

Guilt, shame, and embarrassment requires that individuals take a good look at themselves to improve their behavior. Once these individuals have spent time reflecting on themselves after an embarrassing situation, it is possible that they feel uncertain in their own abilities to interact with others. Scholars have investigated studies of diversity across social groups and noted that the emotions of embarrassment, shame, and pride recognize other cultures. Results suggest that cultures behaviors influence the beliefs one holds about oneself and the responses of others.\textsuperscript{122} Culture and the self-conscious emotions have been a very important part of research due to the

role culture suggest in influencing self-concept, and with the conditions of the self-conscious emotions. The research showed that self-conscious emotions are important assessments and the evident is worth voicing because there are cultural variations in social behaviors, in the ways they are used in socialization practices, and even how they are experienced. Sometimes embarrassing moments are indicated by inappropriate gestures that may cause one’s behavior to change, the individual’s emotions are affected by how they view themselves, and how they think others perceive them as well.

CHAPTER III
Social Interactions with Families, Churches, and Communities

Underlying Family Behaviors with Incarcerated Individuals

There are issues that result in underlying conditions for children of incarcerated parents entering the prison system. Scholars have confirmed that children are offend abused and their needs neglected in the absence of strong parent-child relationships that benefit them. This study will investigate discussions exploring stress, oppressive conditions, and resolution disputes.\(^{126}\) As young children grow and develop others can influence them in social groups. Furthermore, children may experience stress, anger, or frustration stemming from incarcerated parents; hardships remain throughout their lives. Social groups may exploit young children for self-gain, adding more tension and demanding that the children participate and commit in wrongful acts. Impacted by social groups the influence of others can affect the development of the children who may be immature. Stress causes uncomfortable emotional situations in young children who may suffer significantly from frustration. For instance, the distance separating children from their parents can be an issue of concern. While supporting the socialization of prisoners is important, various programs can deal with the potential financial barriers that limit individuals from regular family visits which impede communication with families. The way children react to unfamiliar situations can also be emotionally distressing. Introducing unfamiliar experiences to children can produce anxiety and stress, compelling the children to behave in certain ways. Those in a social group who impose their demands on children to commit unlawful acts may recognize the nature of the act at the beginning, but those who agree to conform in the collective groups’ criminal

behavior may desire to identify with the group. The bond in the group and the need of acceptance may lead to the children believing that they can accomplish the act even if the risks end in undesirable outcomes.

Causes for underlying conditions may include children’s responses to events such as stealing and, in cases, more violent crimes. These conditions involve undue stress brought on when there is a change in an individual’s personality: anger, frustration, or engaging in a risky behavior resulting. Young children may mimic behaviors in interactions with social groups, such as trying to keep up with associates. As the children try to develop their own identity, the influence begins when they see the behavior of others. In fact, when individuals offer a bad choice in a group setting, they may choose to take part because they do not want to miss out or become rejected. When children are trying to make effective decisions in a group, their choices hinge on sharing information within the group for the best choice. At other times they may choose to go along with everyone else so as not to offend the others and as a favor for the group. For example, the boys who discussed plans to take property from private homes, from local businesses, and from cars, obviously overlooked the potential consequences. The members may have had more influence over the others, which led to not acknowledging the truth about the situation. They were confident and believed they would not fail at their criminal schemes, so they took risks and intentionally disregarded the outcome.¹²⁷

**Children's and Prisoner’s Oppressive Conditions**

Children who have at least one parent in prison may suffer bitter disappointment by being away from their parent or during long time sentences for nonviolent crimes. Parental incarceration can lead to an array of cognitive development issues that affect the children’s performance in schools. The children may undergo stress, depression, or misbehavior. Schools in lower economic communities of color create structures like prisons for children by placing a significant value on punishment to correct disobedience, rather than presenting children with educational advantages. In other words, they are being prepared for prisons. The principals and counselors are no longer managing disobedient students in schools without the involvement of the criminal justice system for minor non-criminal offenses or violations of other petty offenses that may later cause jail or prison time.

Author Angela Davis’s attention in her book focuses on mass incarceration and student performance. Student performance is harmed when parents enter the prison system because this is what the future generation may encounter if there is no change in the society. Author Kristin Turney states that those children suffer at the cost of parental incarcerations. Foster and Hagan state that children with incarcerated parents are 33% more likely to have speech or language problems, stuttering, or stammering. These experiences certainly damage the children’s physical

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well-being, socially, emotionally, and educationally. The oppressive conditions for the children give them a feeling of disapproval, and they are six times more likely to enter the justice system at an early age.\textsuperscript{133} The prisoners who had incarcerated parents experienced more difficulties by being exposed to violence, as well as social, and emotional behaviors causing adversities for a normal life.\textsuperscript{134} Prisoners follow a daily routine specified by their superiors; they depend on others for basic supplies, for human services such as food. Their prison conditions cause intense displeasure, especially when the environment is absolutely appalling.\textsuperscript{135}

**Children’s and Prisoner’s Resolution Disputes**

The impact of parental incarceration lingers on even after the prisoners’ release, and it continues to be a hardship for the children. The stories and conversations within the family can provide insights into frequent changes in family relationships, including dependence on non-parental adults for care. These are common causes of disruptions in the lives of children. The anxieties that occur about their parents can be devastating, and the children can more than likely become aware of their parents’ situation. As a result of the stigma and social isolation, family members may deceive the children concerning their parents’ circumstances. Prisoners can be hopeful that their children will have a healthy life but sometimes it could be possible that the children may follow their parents’ path of imprisonment. Combined, these toxic factors can expose children to the criminal justice system early, and frequently the children of incarcerated parents may be at risk of developing alcohol and substance abuse that may lead to imprisonment. Even if the details seem unimportant, an explanation that is only known by the family can be valuable.

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 27-32.
The parents’ behavior and present situations can place the lives of their children at a disadvantage. Disputes for prisoners who experience strong feelings of unfair treatment continue. When the children separate from their parents for extended periods of time, this could be harmful. Officials should develop more consistent policies to connect prisoners with their families. Private institutions should publicize policies to ensure everyone understands procedures for correcting injustice. When children face situations that affect their well-being and their environment, it can be worrisome to the entire family. Angela Davis suggests that the management of violence, prison conditions, and unfair treatments can resolve better ways when dealing with various prison complaints and the wrong done to prisoners. Davis speaks of a prison system where punishment is not the result of obedience. Davis states that people who wanted to end slavery believed the world was perfect in achieving social justice, and they are in favor of institutions and capitol punishments. Davis states that these ideas are unrealistic and impracticable. Prison disputes can achieve needed conversations, and more importantly, actions of justice for prisoners.

**Family Support and Deflecting Family Patterns**

I collected stories because I hoped to discover ways to deflect patterns based on the relevant information from former incarcerated individuals and families. If unknown information is revealed disclosing any controversies, it may be helpful toward addressing underlying issues. All parties can act by working through a process of forgiveness and healing. Repeated patterns of crime sometimes go undetected when conducted by single individuals, but often when engaged with others they are unwilling to confess. At other times it calls for those in the group to speak up when they know what is going on and who might be the blame for the unlawful acts. These boys who befriended my brother implemented a series of fraudulent schemes for self-gain; the members of

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137 Ibid, 9, 10, 107.
the social group did not turn each other in to the adults because it would have impeded their goals. Secrets withheld and hidden from the adults may have caused all the boys in the group to plan for financial benefits from the stolen items. Although influencers may have contributed to encourage the group to continue these activities, the members could have avoided this type of behavior. The boys may not have realized the nature of these criminal activities at the time of their initial state of mind, but they agreed to comply and believed that they could accomplish their plans. Their scheme caused disappointment to their parents, and even more, it humiliated the boys and created unfavorable consequences. The police officer who arrested first time offenders may have reacted differently than most citizens, especially if he desired to give the boys a second chance. In fact, a neighborhood officer did try to get one boy back on track for a while because he wanted to work with the troubled youth upon a suggestion from a faith leader in the community. Acquaintance with the family may be another reason that citizens tried to assist the first-time offenders. The neighborhood watch committee depends on others in the community to assist in deflecting various crimes that occurred, yet there were those who attempted to alter negative consequences. Faith leaders can make meaningful suggestions for children’s incarcerated parents to assist in deflecting patterns of crimes, and it should begin with the current generation. Families should also consider acquiring information at each level of the criminal justice system including arrests, convictions, sentencing, case management, and re-entering the communities.138 Further research should also

focus on expanding and assessing constructive interventions for children of incarcerated parents because there are no evidence-based interventions engaging this vulnerable population of youth.

Mentioning the abundance of crimes, the young boys committed in homes when breaking and entering residential dwellings, local businesses, and motor vehicle theft led to more serious offenses. Parents involvement is vital to checking social activities during adolescence when children’s behaviors start to change. A parent who pays close attention to her children’s social contacts, keeping track of where they are going, what they are doing, and with whom they are associating is wise. Various characteristics can come into play from the children’s frustrations, anxiety, or anger at this point; parents can engage in conversations to redirect their behaviors. These emotional behaviors need attention before any further unwarranted consequences occur. Perhaps when parents notice patterns of bad choices, they can deflect their children’s behavior by explaining that their actions violate the rights of others; they are displaying a lack of compassion for those they harm. Most importantly it is dependent upon what explained is to the children at home about honesty, ethical values, and being responsible for their actions. Parents should be present and at least knowledgeable as to what is happening in their children’s lives, encouraging them to make positive choices. Since parents may not be able to be with their children in every single circumstance that happens, the children will have to make positive choices for their lives. Likewise, there are more concerns today than ever before in the daily news reports of young people taking part in violence, damage to other people’s property, risky behaviors, and disobedience to adult authority. Parents are sometimes fearful that their children may be determined to commit wrongful acts with their troubled friends trying to identify with their peers. Parents who instruct their children at an early age prepare them for problems they encounter and offer positive ways to deflect criminal acts by making better choices.
Faith Leaders’ Connections with Incarcerated Individuals

Faith leaders can connect with prisoners by spending quality time, developing relationships, and building trust. Showing genuine interest in the prisoners and sharing information that is useful are essential. Particularly if the leaders attempt to deflect these individuals from a continuous pattern of illegal activities there is hope. Persuasion is more than likely successful if the leader’s goal is to reintegrate the former prisoners back to their families. Once the leader and the prisoner’s involvement heighten into a more personal relationship, the situation may affect whether the leader can persuade the former inmates to receive the information and transform their behaviors or whether they will reject it. Of course, the influence in getting these prisoners to change their behavior will most definitely take more than just talking to them, trying to encourage them, and convincing them to alter their behaviors.\textsuperscript{139} It will require a great deal of work because those who have a criminal record create barriers with difficult consequences that will need careful attention.

Faith leaders, family members, prisoners, and close friends can assist children who may be struggling to find their positions intermingling with social groups that go against their parents and other adults. These people can offer support in conversations with the children by genuinely listening with compassion and by letting them reflect their feelings. Connections with peer groups are particularly important to children because they want to feel love, value, and care which are vital at any stage. As children mature, they may not connect easily with others, if they lack confidence, and feel insecure or disconnected, they can be vulnerable at a crucial time in their development. These issues for children can lead to the individuals getting involved with social

\textsuperscript{139} Delamater, et al., \textit{Social Psychology}, 339.
groups that recognize their weaknesses and take advantage of them by convincing them to participate in unpleasant activities. The ideas of belonging and fitting in the group may cloud their judgment to the point where they choose to agree in taking part in acts that go against their parents’ authority. Parents who acknowledge that their children’s behaviors have changed, can help these young people understand who they are and what is important to them. As well, parents can allow them opportunities to find friends who have the same interests and who will mix well with them in the group. Faith leaders and other adults can be a great inspiration to these children by conversing and listening to the children. This allows alternatives for a better understanding towards bonding in unity with the families and the communities. Communicating with each other can help these individuals learn more significant information about underlying conditions and suggestions as to how the children can avoid repeated patterns of crimes. Faith leaders and friends can also show an effort to assist these young children before they engage in illegal activities and enter the juvenile systems and prison cells. Faith leaders and family members who take interests in these children at an early age in the absence of their parents can help deflect crimes. Parents who may be angry or frustrated about their conditions, or who may not be concerned about their children, may not show any attempts to change their own behaviors. The families, and communities working together to demonstrate that they care may be able to help parents change and direct children to a healthy lifestyle. Children incorporate a variety of emotional behaviors as a result of parental incarceration. These challenges continue throughout life resulting from social economic status, mistreatment, and rejection within the environment. Sometimes a life of crimes begins with the present generation trying to find their place in the community. Faith leaders can play a vital role in the lives of children when they intervene positively with the children to help guide them in the right direction. Family members can make suggestions in conversations of interest, and by means
of being aware of the children’s emotions, which can be the key for deflecting criminal patterns established and supported by unwarranted behaviors.

The family is crucial in child development and in affecting the personality of children including parental mental attitudes, family unity, physical aggression, and foster parenting skills. Non-family factors also impact juvenile delinquency: failure of the justice system, poverty, lack of access to education, drug abuse, and underlying family issues. The family is imperative for children’s involvement in crimes. Families serve vital roles in the community including socialization, financial support, providing protection of family members, strengthening family social groups.140 Regardless of the cultures difference, families may be able to find ways to function with financial hardships, improving family problems, and maintaining their independents. The typical concept of the family includes obligations and tasks such as togetherness, love, self-confidence, giving birth, and promoting the physical emotional development of the child.141 The parents responsibility for their children’s development should include interest from birth to early childhood, middle childhood, and especially adolescence to young adulthood.

According to John Watson children are passive beings molded by a controlling stimulus-response linked together, while the United States Department of Education believes that children are to become responsible human beings. Mitton and Harris state that the responsibility is being able to make good choices and being able to accept the consequences of those choices. Therefore, children who are directed at an early age can progress from their training to accept complete

responsibility for their actions.\textsuperscript{142} It is important to engage in conversations with children at an early age so that they can understand the effectiveness of their responsibility and apply these principles to their lives. Parents have to be intentional in their instructions as they guide their children to help them succeed in these challenging times. Other scholars like Whitebread and Wingham believes that persistent success in responsibilities makes children productive in life. Conversely unacceptable home environments and unpredictable family issues can lead to negative behaviors and persistent failure in responsibilities, could encourage children to become delinquents.\textsuperscript{143}

Uwo, et. al. believes that the proper development of children is the fundamental responsibility of parents because the standards given to children, and the type of guidance they receive from their parents will determine their potentials in life. Parents supporting their children will set a firm foundation for their behavior, and once established these feelings may be difficult to change or defeat. Parents who instill unacceptable viewpoints and behaviors in their children encourage such attitudes to persist into adulthood.\textsuperscript{144} A child’s success has emotional, cognitive, social, and physical regards in a distinct way with the family being the foundation whereby their development transpires. The family structure is important as a foundation for significance results in molding children by providing security and developing their values and skills.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/998563
https://www.doi.org/10.1086/458585

https://www.doi.org/10.4236/jss.2019.73004

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bac7/a9089a9001c4da90d72223697.pdf
The family’s purpose is to investigate the relationship of related influences and crimes by playing a significant role in the lives of the children. Parents should have appropriate discussions with their children concerning crimes, hoping to deflect criminal activities. The children should also be alert and fearful of social groups and outside influencers. As parents motivate their children’s activities, they should feel comfortable enough to talk about crimes by finding the right balance for what is relevant and what is happening around the world. Children may feel vulnerable, but they must work hard at resisting crimes with social groups. Parents who participate in self-defense classes, join neighborhood programs, and school activities are better able to discuss openly crimes with their children. Parents can see firsthand who their children are associating with and what type of activities they engage in with social groups. The family can develop close bonds and build trust when parents are active allowing the children a sense of security and letting them feel loved and cared for. The children can use the training taught by their parents where necessary. It is equally as important for parents to listen to their children when they relay perspectives about their experiences in life, as well making sure that they both understand. When children break the rules, they may feel guilty and ashamed, but parents can redirect their behaviors by reminding them of their training and telling stories about other children their own age without frightening the children.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{145} Mwangangi, The Role of Family in Dealing with Juvenile Delinquency. https://www.doi.10.4236/jss.2019.73004
Communities Connections with Incarceration Individuals

Inmates face a great deal of challenges released from prison. First, they need a place to live. When prisoners reside with family members, it is only temporary until they can secure employment. All parties involved should at least discuss a plan of action so that the inmates understand the expectations before release to live with family members. Most families have rules in their households, and they would want the inmates to abide by their conditions which may cause serious disagreements if they neglect the condition. It can put a strain on family members, and it may cause confusion based on the stigma or disgrace associated with prisoners once they have been in prison. This type of arrangement can lead to stress that may turn into broken relationships over time when everyone is not of one accord. Making sure that everyone understands will be an adjustment that more than likely can prevent difficulties especially if the inmates had a lengthy sentence. They may be out of touch with the real world. It can also be a disaster for inmates who are trying to rebuild their lives and connect with those in the community. Perhaps if resources such as people who can help secure housing and jobs provide before they leave the prison, it could help them be more successful. Faith leaders and various faith organizations could play a key role in this area in communities to welcome and assist offenders by providing support at the time of their arrival.\(^\text{146}\)

Prisoners must attempt to change their mind set from the prison community to that of the real world in order to make this alteration it may take time for adjustment. It is important to note that this is a challenging situation because it can determine those inmates who will be successful in the outside world and those who will re-enter prison after their release. Scholars believe that

social connections are related to psychological and behavioral outcomes. Membership in a social
group forms the foundation of social identity of who they are, or their beliefs about themselves.
The individual believes he belongs to a specific social group together with emotional and value
significance to him with his group membership. Various social psychological theories describe
the situations whereby a person perceives a gathering of people and himself as a group and
provides relevant insight into the process by which social connectedness promotes distinct
functions. These theories suggests that self-identity occurs at many levels and distinguishes them
from others with respect. The more the individuals define themselves as members of a certain
group the more they accept group norms, and view themselves as possessing an image of the
group. Therefore, when the person’s self-identity is salient to the individuals in a given
situation, the individuals act and think as group members relying on the ingroup as a guide for
their own thoughts and behaviors.

The criminal system could shift from re-entering prison to the inmates’ successful re-entry
into the community which can help with re-entry outcomes. The challenges still hold true that
prisoners face weaving back into the community because employers are reluctant to hire people
with criminal records (Urban Institute, 2008). The jobs authorized for prisoners are below wages

417.
149 A. G. Livingston, S.A. Haslam, T. Postmes, and J. Jetten, “We are, Therefore We Should:” Evidence
that in-group identification Mediates the Acquisition pf om-group norms. Journal of Applied Social Psychology.
538.
151 D. J. Terry, and M. A. Hogg. Group Norms and the Attitude Behavior Relationship: A Role for Group
152 Feig, Issue of the Advocates’ Forum, Breaking the Cycle: A Family Focused Approach to Criminal
and the average living standards. Limited finances and low educational issues result in difficulties securing employment and housing for formerly prisoners.\textsuperscript{153} The greatest difficulties for inmates released from prison are the risks of becoming homeless,\textsuperscript{154} and when they are not supported with government assistance, it increases the likelihood of them returning to prison.\textsuperscript{155} Especially if they have been involved with drugs or felony convictions, they cannot acquire public assistance for housing.\textsuperscript{156} There is a great need for various plans of action on behalf of the prisoners to successfully reintegrate them back into the communities. One of the repercussions of prisoners’ is the association with families and popular communities that hinder offenders released from prison producing more disadvantages socially and economically.\textsuperscript{157} More services put in place can focus on targets of individual needs and incorporate re-entry programming to prepare inmates to be productive members of their communities. These programs can also provide more options for prisoners who have been released from prison with employment skills needed in everyday living through educational opportunities, counseling, and addiction treatments.\textsuperscript{158} This is true particularly in areas where incarceration has disproportionately impacted minorities mainly young black men and individuals with low levels of education.\textsuperscript{159} Programs that train inmates to overcome obstacles when re-entering their communities can service as developing resources to help connect individual families maintain stability, find support, and success in the community after incarceration. In as

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid
\textsuperscript{158} Li, What Makes Re-entry into Communities Challenges? https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicate/2018/03/prisons-to-communities
much as families, and churches can play a leading role in the lives of former prisoners by helping them to transition back into their communities.

Mashek, Cannady, Tangney 2007 argue that as individuals take on the identities and outlook of a close friends they also identify with and take on the things that may be happening in the community.\textsuperscript{160} Other researchers examined their beliefs with families,\textsuperscript{161} and in the real environment.\textsuperscript{162} Community connectedness was certainly in play when faith leaders spoke to the policeman on behalf of one boy that engaged in criminal activities. The police officer tried to assist the boy since he had strong ties in the community. He wanted to help deflect the boy’s behavior after his arrest. Strong links in the community appeared to be more beneficial than weaker ones, both in terms of the individual’s mental and emotional behavior and the individual’s interaction with the community. This was a decent neighborhood and intricately connected but these influencers decided to commit unwarranted crimes for their own financial gain. Those connected to a criminal community may show higher levels of antisocial behavior and are less likely to engage in positive community activities. It may have been that the older boys felt this was a better opportunity for committing these crimes. The older boys influence over those participating in wrongful acts may have suggested these criminal activities. Individuals who had strong connections to criminal communities may adopt attitudes, beliefs, and values of the neighborhood, and engage in disruptive behaviors modeled by other members of the criminal community. This

A type of behavior could develop into a pattern of mental and emotional processes embracing associations with criminal peers, leading to engaging in more criminal behavior.\textsuperscript{163}

According to Baumeister and Leary (1995) the need to belong to a group is powerful and motivating, there are basic needs that drive people to structure, continue, and prevent the dissolution of social bonds under most conditions. This theory is based on the broader social connectedness literature expressing constructive interactions with mental and emotional outcome,\textsuperscript{164} and fulfillment of the need to belong\textsuperscript{165} through community links. Perhaps either the community at large or the criminal community would show a connection toward a positive outlook where the individual realizes his own ability in coping with the normal standards of life. If individuals experience low levels of togetherness in both communities, they may experience high levels of mental health symptoms as well. In a cross-sectional study using the same sample of offenders as Baumeister and Leary, the individuals who were highly connected to both the community at large and the criminal community upon incarceration experienced the highest levels of mental and emotional distress of low confidence, but higher depression.\textsuperscript{166} It may be possible that those who are highly connected to both communities may experience more mental health symptoms as a result of belonging to two communities that hold often conflicting beliefs and values. It is possible that forms of connectedness to the two types of communities interact in importance ways.


The logical situation in connecting prisoners to their families and communities would be to assist with prisoners recently released from prisons. The challenges are far too many for prisoners to accomplish without support at least at the time of release. Without the assistance from families, friends, churches, and communities it may be too difficult for prisoners to survive in the real world. Rehabilitation programs are great resources but without proper awareness of these recourses the prisoners will more than likely be homeless. Prisons today serves as a punishment by removing individuals from the society at large, but it does not always provide opportunities for released prisoners’ success upon restoring them back into the community. The only way that prisoners can endure the negativity when released is that they secure a dedicated support system to help them cope with all the challenges they may face in the community. Prisoners need assistance until they can manage the typical essentials of life: housing, and employment prior to their release, and connections to resources when they return to various communities. Kairos’ non-profit organizations have assisted released prisoners but there is still a great need for developing programs for further accommodations towards prisoners released.
CHAPTER IV

Jesus’ Empathy Stories

The Professor of psychology and neuroscience Robert J. Thompson teaches the difference between empathy and sympathy stating that empathy is feeling the same emotion as another person and sympathy involves feeling pity for another person’s suffering. Empathy is the acknowledgement of differences grounded in self-awareness, by which one responds with affection without taking on the same attitude but by judging the importance. Thompson explains that empathy is a motivated behavior engaged in a cognitive process, whereas sympathy implies pity outwardly expressed with a desire to aim in comfort.\(^\text{167}\) As faith leaders listen closely to prisoners’ stories, they can make a direct connection that allows the possibility for a greater appreciation between what they experience and what the prisoners may have experienced. The cognitive process describes that different people experience different opinions and feelings in response to the same situations.

Feeling sympathy for someone else can lead to sorrow caused by an individual’s misfortune.\(^\text{168}\) Prisoners will sometimes do whatever they can to gain trust and use various tactics to control the individual’s perceptions and reactions of them. A person who tries this attempt usually does so by blinding people from seeing them as they really are. They will create and connect to others in a shared rapport to further their success in building a personal relationship for communication.\(^\text{169}\) The stories articulated are not invented by the prisoners’ imagination for sympathy, but sometimes emotions can sidetrack others allowing the prisoners to move forward.


\(^{169}\) Ibid.
with an ulterior motivative only to help themselves. A behavior of this sort will cause harm to all parties if the prisoners tend to push forward exploiting their connections and plans. Their intention is to involve others to help in a choice between two equally undesirable alternatives. The reality at this point would be when one cannot separate themselves emotionally from another person’s issues, sympathy becomes pity. This can blind side people from seeing the situation in a way not influenced by personal feelings and opinions but in a way based on facts. Empathy can be the difficult as prisoners try to change bad behaviors, especially in the context of incarceration, expressed as a negative influence in churches and communities. Conversely, empathy is an effective behavior that can help other individuals comprehend unemotional feelings and allow them the ability to act on processing such effects.

There are times when people may overreact by getting emotional especially when dealing with prisoners but when this happens the individuals may be highly emotional and cannot think clearly. People may also be holding on to their beliefs that will not let them clearly see the overall viewpoints of what the prisoners may have experienced. One suggestion could be to faith leaders to listen to the prisoner’s stories allowing them to heart them voice their truths. Faith leaders should be able to interact with an awareness of the differences in various situations and engage with these prisoners to build new relationships. Engaging prisoner’s experiences can help leaders weigh the facts strictly on what they value as worthy because prisoners want to open up to people who could listen to them tell their stories. Faith leaders can evaluate what they learn, think, and validate it against what they hear from prisoners telling their stories. Faith leaders who allow prisoners the opportunities to reflect can help other individuals make personal connections and bring them into


171 Ibid.
equal participation with social groups. Thompson explains the approach to foster empathy by engaging information about beliefs and values to enhance a particular attitude toward a broader way to see different situations objectively.\textsuperscript{172}

Biblically there is a great insight drawn regarding work with prisoners and families. God’s love leads all people to compassion or empathy for one another but sometimes Christians miss opportunities because they lack the empathy to perceive the needs of others. The Bible states that we should, “Love the Lord with hearts, souls, minds, and love neighbors as individuals’ love themselves” (Matthew 22:37-39). The Bible regularly directs attention to acts of empathy with love and these emotions shared when Christians families, churches, and communities gather through good and troubled times. The Bible also encourages Christians to show compassion to others in unity of minds and hearts (1 Peter 3:8). Love is shown by increasing empathy to understand each other. Christians can show love because God is the greatest empathizer. The Psalms teach us how God intimately understands his people, comforts them through their struggles and emotions where all people can take their burdens to the Lord knowing that God cares for them (1 Peter 5:7). This study documents personal stories that relate to Jesus’ empathy towards various groups of people. It explores the behaviors of marginalized people and those who fail to show empathy and love determined by their understanding of situations. Jesus’ emotional experiences and interests aimed toward the disenfranchised expressed Jesus’ love for all people especially those alienated by others. Jesus’ empathy unveils a reflection on how this study will reveal the scope and focus of his empathy towards all people and implore others to follow his example. These stories are occasions of Jesus exhibiting empathy for disenfranchised people everywhere he traveled on earth. Jesus’s stories of empathy were excellent illustrations of heartfelt compassion.

reflected in the struggles of people’s everyday lives. Jesus’ actions gave those whom he encountered a chance to confirm transformation that could impact their behaviors because Jesus expressed love. The focus of Jesus’s stories could provide opportunities to integrate positive communication with faith leaders through the voices of prisoners’ experiences. A relationship of this nature could improve how individuals connect with each other and how humanity serves through compassion, care, and love. I hope that these stories will be powerful enough to show others a pathway to integrity, where faith leaders and others can reevaluate their own lives. People who really listen to their hearts and minds, looking at their mistakes with a clear purpose, can become empowered to share love and forgiveness to others.

A Man Stricken with Palsy

This story includes an attempt to engage the theological and biblical context relating to the compassion Jesus exhibited to other people to encourage transformation. Faith leaders can express how Jesus’ narratives of empathy address thoughts that go beyond empathy. Jesus’ stories divinely manifested empathy by thoughts and emotions that established a way of life through passion and love for his people. Jesus’ empathy stories express divine representations of God’s grace bestowed upon mankind to do something on behalf of others to influence their opinions and actions. Jesus forgives sins and heals a man stricken with palsy which is an excellent example of Jesus’ empathy for his people (Mark 2:1-12) The man was unable to support himself and had to depend on the care and compassion of others for basic necessities of daily living. The man had a progressive disease so extreme he was unable to walk. It took four men to bring him to Jesus. There was a tremendous amount of faith not only to him but to his friends who did not give up on carrying him to Jesus. They broke through the roof and lowered the man in front of Jesus because they believed Jesus had the power to heal the man. Jesus acknowledges their faith and tells the man to walk, the man
never doubted for a moment that he could do what Jesus told him to do, he obeyed the voice of Jesus and was able to walk. Unless faith leaders develop relationships, unite, and truly support each other, they will miss the mark of a shared community action for the good that is the essence in Mark 2:12. This story is a notable example that amazed the people, they praised God, realized that this power was from God, and they glorified him.

**Suffer the Little Children**

The story, “Suffer the little children come unto me” is another great illustration of how Jesus showed compassion for children. The disciples felt that the people were wasting Jesus’ time by bringing young children to Jesus, but the kingdom includes people who have accepted Jesus like little children. This narrative teaches an important message when the disciples wanted to send the little children away. Jesus told the disciples not to hinder the little children, but to direct them, bless them with compassion, and protect them from others. Jesus expressed empathy for children because they are valuable, resilience, humble, open to ideas, and vulnerabilities. Jesus is equally accessible to all individuals especially those regarded as insignificant. All people should practice following the example of Jesus by loving and showing compassion for others. Rather than letting difficult circumstances overcome them they should be able to find a way to accept rejected people and continue moving toward more significant goals. People should have the humbleness and total dependence on God that the little children have and receive the kingdom freely as God’s gift. A little child is humble, trusting, and quick to forgive when they feel hurt. This childlike faith can start by taking the children to Sunday school, vacation bible school, church, praying, and teaching them about the Lord. Children are innocent, honest, trusting, and unwavering which is what God wants all people to acquire and to lead by example.
People cannot earn the gifts God gives, they do not deserve the gifts, but they can receive them through the grace of God by faith (Luke 18:15-17). The disciples thought this narrative of scripture to people like the disciples was negative because the young children may be a disruption to Jesus’ teaching. Yet Jesus embraces the children and blesses them just as all people should be as little children unto God. Little children raised in the church are the future generation; they can avoid difficulties in life and learn a great deal by following Jesus at an early age. This passage is critical for the study because children need guidance in the initial stages of their lives. When they mature, they may wander away, but they will come back to their early training. The Bible says, train up a child in the ways he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6). Children need instructions, and they need to communicate with both parents even if one is serving a prison sentence and separated from them. The study can provide a way for prisoners to encourage, bond, and share decisions with their children and help deflect repeated patterns in the event that may transpire.

**A widow Grieves the Death of her Son**

The Bible is full of stories told by Jesus demonstrating the compassion for sick, blind, and rejected people. Jesus was on his way to a town called Nain when he met a funeral procession. He saw a widow’s pain, felt her deep sorrow; then he learned that the deceased was her only son. Jesus knew what it was like for someone to feel hopeless and alone because his own mother was alone when Jesus entrusted her to John who took her into his home (John 19:27). Jesus had great love and compassion for this grieving woman by healing her pain; Jesus touched the coffin, spoke a word, brought the son back to life, and delivered him to his mother. Everyone was amazed at these miracles and praised God (Luke 7:11-17). Jesus was always sensitive to others’ experiences and showed compassion to their stories. Jesus healed diseases to alleviate sufferings, brought hope,
and preached to save the people, not only bringing salvation, but he is salvation.\textsuperscript{173} There are words of assurance in the Bible and people should not stress over problems because Jesus is always available for us (Isaiah 41:10). A historical point of view is an essential reason for studying prisoners sharing empathy with others. Jesus demonstrated the best examples of empathy in extending mercy to people. He because he understood the difficulties they go through in life; he taught people to humble themselves and seek the interest of others.

**The Samaritan Woman**

Lastly, Jesus sat down on Jacob’s well to rest from his journey when entering the city, a Samaritan woman rejected from the community came to draw water. Jews, did not associate with Samaritans but Jesus spoke to this woman while the disciples went out to buy food, Jesus asked for a drink? Then he offered the woman living water, a gift of the Holy Spirit, eternal life, and salvation if she repented. The woman was aware of the Jewish tradition and knew of the promised Messiah, but Jesus reminded her that worship takes place in the heart. The will of true Christians was to do what God commanded. Jesus told the woman that salvation came through him while hiding his identity from others because it was not time to reveal this information. When the disciples returned, they marveled because they felt that Jesus was too good to communicate with this woman. Jesus treated the woman equally with the men and lifted her true position by their side. This showed Jesus’ heart for all people and welcome to all people in the kingdom of God. Women were the last at the cross, first at the sepulcher, and they received the baptism of the Spirit in (Acts 8:15-17). In Christ there is no male or female (Galatians 3:28). Jesus was interested in the spirit, not the flesh because the spirit does not know genders. A unique analysis presented in this parable aimed at determining how Jesus used the connection between the Samaritan Woman’s

\textsuperscript{173} John Berton, Salvation, November 25, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1002/0780470670606.1203
identity and the Jewish laws to propose an innovative approach to moral behavior (Luke 10:15-37). In fact, the nature of this story seeks to interpret the significance of the narrative featured in an unusual and natural manner. This woman’s struggles with rejection in the community was a great illustration of how acceptance relationships can never meet the expected desires. A well that does not yield a significant amount of water can sometime deter people from God’s blessings of living a healthy life. The water Jesus offered was not ordinary water, but it comes from God and lasts forever. This disregarded woman was living in shame, despised by Jews as a social outcast. Jesus intimately understands his people and encourages all to love with empathy in a way that comforts and fosters compassion with others. The truth of the matter is that Jesus’ teaching about people applies both to the way a person thinks and acts towards other people and their attitude and behavior towards themselves. Jesus understood the meaning of love in this story as he demonstrated the importance of loving one’s enemies and including them by showing approval when dealing with those rejected. Jesus’s empathy demonstrated toward the Samaritan woman who had a different background, revealed his true humanity and deity that he was the Son of God. He invited the woman to experience eternal life. The Samaritan woman was so excited that she left her waterpot behind and carried Jesus’ Words like a missionary in a hostile land. The woman wanted all men to see a man who told her all about her life,” then she posed the question, “Is this not the Christ?” (John 4:5-29). Jesus wants people today to show compassion for others because he knew they were just as precious in his sight as were anyone else. This story is a powerful example of God’s love, truth, redemption, and acceptance of a woman who had a face-to-face encounter with Jesus and received eternal salvation. As the prisoners transform their own thoughts, they could understand the feelings of others’ point of view, acknowledge trust in the process, build relationships, and bring healing towards themselves and their families. This amazing story showed
Jesus’ passion for all people not just a select group, and it confirms feeling what others feel. The woman believed Jesus and ran off to tell her story to others. The woman made an impact because other Samaritans believed in Jesus when she voiced her testimony. Paul encouraged Christians to “Rejoice with people when they are glad, and weep with others when they are sad” in (Romans 12:15).

Personal Stories of Nine Prisoners

Daniel’s Personal Story Expressing Empathy

Adopted at the early age of eight-years-old, Daniel experienced a volatile childhood. When he turned 17, his adopted mother died suddenly, and Daniel had a challenging time and was unable to function because of his grief. Daniel felt saddened and turned to drugs and alcohol to block out the pain and developed a severe addiction. His addiction led him to stealing and abusing people emotionally and physically over the years. In 2014 at age 23 Daniel was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for robbery and possession of a weapon. When he entered prison, he thought about taking his own life because he felt guilt, shame, and despair; he believed that he could not have a positive future incarcerated. He had been disappointed so many times in his life that he could not trust anyone. A fellow inmate told Daniel about the Khulisa Grief Program and suggested that he might receive support that could motivate him if he participated in the program. Daniel attended the Khulisa Program to help regain his confidence. He actually enjoyed the facilitators who created engaging conversations on topics without judging or criticizing others. The participants valued and listened to Daniel tell his story, and he felt accepted by the group. Daniel was satisfied with the group accepting standards for respecting him and his moral behavior. He knew that he was a decent
person who showed empathy and concern for others; the facilitators saw Daniel’s potentials which allowed him to take back his voice and the opportunity to speak loud and clear.174

Alex Rajan Nila’s Personal Story Expressing Empathy

Alex’s mother moved to England from Poland when he was 3 years old, after his parents separated. At age 11 his teachers noticed that Alex was troubled, had issues with other children, and was unable to manage his emotions. Alex’s mother was also struggling with tolerating his challenging situation at home as he became aggressive with his younger siblings. At age 14 Alex was a student at Rokeby Secondary School in Northeast London. His mother enrolled him in the Khulisa’s Face It Rehabilitation Program. Alex became acquainted with distinct levels of violence including physical, emotional, and verbal violence while participating in the program, and he decided to use the skills taught in the rehabilitation program in his daily living. Alex realized and learned that the behavior he thought was a normal way to react was perceived by other people as violent.175

Johnny Dwight Whited’s Personal Confession Expressing Sympathy

Christopher Alvin Dailey’s story was usual, a 26-year-old man reported missing April 26, 1995, in Huntsville, Alabama. Dailey’s body was near an abandoned road in a remote area discovered by two boys who were collecting leaves. It appeared to be a single gunshot wound to Christopher’s head. His car submerged nearby in the Tennessee River displayed a large rock tied to the accelerator. Detectives also found Christopher’s personal items in the car and identified his body four miles away. The announcement of Christopher missing came one day after last seen in a meeting for the Huntsville Hilton Hotel where he worked. The investigators searched intensively to find Christopher’s killer, but they struggled to find any leads. The investigators did not have access to surveillance footage or cell phone data that police rely on today. In fact, they never found any suspects in the case because there were no clues as to who could have murdered this young man. Decatur Police Sergeant John Bradford referred to the case as a “Rel Whodunit Case.” The case was frequently revisited by investigators hoping to find added information that would reveal a suspect in Christopher’s death, but nothing ever emerged. The case remained unsolved for twenty-five-years. Investigators frequently revisited the case hoping to find added information or leads that would reveal a suspect in Christopher’s death. Over the years nothing else ever emerged and the case never officially closed, yet the case quickly fell into the doomed category of cold cases and remained unsolved for twenty-five-years.

On November 18, 2020, the violent crime Detective Sean Mukaddam answered a bizarre phone call of a person confessing to the murder of Christopher Daily. At first Mukaddam thought
it was a prank as the caller told him he wanted to confess to a murder he committed years ago. Detective Mukaddam was skeptical when he asked for more details. The caller claimed he could not remember exactly when he had committed the murder, but he thought it was in the 80’s. It was not often that the police receive confessions and had to work backwards to narrow down the location and date to match the crime the killer described twenty-five-years prior. Detective Mukaddam reviewed the caller asking questions about the case that only someone involved could answer. He received credible detailed information and believed that the caller was confessing to the murder. The caller was 53-year-old Johnny Dwight Whited who agreed to meet with Detective Mukaddam, and from the parole car he directed him to the murder scene getting out of the vehicle and walking to the exact spot where Christopher’s car had been partially submerged. Johnny Whited described the incident and how the vehicle entered the river. Detective Mukaddam was officially convinced that Johnny Whited had committed the crime. He was 28 at the time of Christopher’s death which was his explanation for not remembering the exact year he murdered Christopher Dailey.

As the investigation continued Detective Mukaddam believed that Whited expressed his remorse for this crime and was ashamed about what he had done. Detective Mukaddam could see that this crime had been weighing on Whited for a long time, and he wanted to get it off of his chest. Whited revealed that he was terminally ill, and it was his illness that sparked his confession decades after the crime. Mukaddam thought that he should have come forward years ago. The media stated that his illness was stage four cancer, but Whited did not clarify his diagnosis. Whited confessed to the crime at that point was charged with homicide in Christopher’s death and sentenced 17-20 years in prison. Whited expressed his deep distress; he was sorrowful and wished he had never murdered Christopher. He blamed it on his state of mind at the time and revealed that
he had consistently engaged in drugs and had been arrested throughout his life. He may have felt pity for Christopher’s family and wanted to confess for what he had done. Christopher’s family finally had answers. Like other families they had thought they would never know what truly happened to their loved one, yet closure and justice did not turn out as they expected.176

**Quezon Lopez’s Personal Story Expressing Sympathy**

Quezon Lopez was married with children, he was a faithful member of the Roman Catholic Church, completed one year of college, and was an insurance supervisor. It was Lopez wife’s (Marife) birthday on the day he committed the crime. He was suspicious of his wife cheating on him and decided to confront her when she jokingly said, “Yes,” just so he would stop asking questions. He knew she said, “Yes,” to stop him from continuously asking if she had cheated then he went out drinking. Lopez was frustrated and doubted his wife; he destroyed everything in the house and was arrested. His wife forgave him after his release from jail, but he still could not tolerate the thought of his wife with someone else. He went out drinking again, and this time when he returned his wife was in the kitchen doing chores. He became extremely enraged only later remembering that blood covered his hands. In a state of shock, Lopez stabbed his wife 29 times. He thought the crime he committed was a show on television, in novels, or on the radio, but what happened was real. Confused he did not remember what he had done. His wife was 51 years old and had been incredibly supportive. They had five children: sons Parkle (30-years-old, married), Leonard (28, single), and

Michelangelo (26-years-old, married); daughters Roma Angelica Mae (23-years-old, married), and Donna Septrina (20-years-old, single).

Lopez stated that the Family Visitation Program of the Bureau helped him deal with his troubles, it gave him strength to endure prison life. It gave him comfort in sharing with his family members that despite his prison sentence, he could still be a father to his children. He also thought that his family would forgive him, but Leonard was the only one who visited him. Roma Angelica Mae called one Christmas, but his other children and family did not want to see him. He expressed regrets to his children and family to let them know that he had changed. After reflecting behind prison walls, he realized that he was not the same person who murderer his children’s mother. He tried to convince them that he had changed and wanted to rebuild a relationship with them. He displayed remorse and sympathy from his prison cell, and he wanted to make his situation better. His family refused to communicate with him. Lopez’s situation increased given the severity of his crime; the children abandoned him because they had lost their mother by his crime and him during incarceration.

Scholars have argued reasons regarding the underlying cause in the story of Quezon Lopez, who murdered his wife, with distinct questions. First, was there a reason behind his actions? Why was he motivated to act? And what was the reason that explains his actions. Lopez murdered his wife because he believed she was unfaithful. Lopez could not justify his crime, but it could have

been based on his emotional state which described his negative and undesirable behavior. The other reason was the explanation why Lopez believed that she was unfaithful. It could have been Lopez’s motivating reason for what he believed. These reasons are issues of diverse kinds, where the undesirable behavior created as an independent fact and the opposite issue was the motivating reason that explained Lopez’s mental state for what he believed.180

Lopez may have favored his reason for acting was reasonable and felt he had a right to do what he did. There have been complicated questions discussed many times concerning the explanations why scholars have disagreed about reasonings of mental and emotional evidences to determine if they were real or just ideas of diverse and independent existence.181 Several scholars have different opinions, John Mackie, argues that facts are not moral, if they were they would have to be both objective and motivating to the individuals who are aware of them.182 Darwall 1983, Smith 1994, and Scanlon 1998, contend that reasons and facts are a part of the entire entities, and both are true.183 While Dancy rejects those reasons that could be true because they represent the reasons that are ways of the real world.184 These scholars believe that the issues are complicated and certainly need assessing more carefully to discover what is reasonable and practical. Underlying issues do not necessarily link to one set of rules. The account of any given circumstance can explain and justify the person’s actions in question.

It may be that Lopez did not truly have a reason for murdering his wife, but he believed she was unfaithful, and for him to react violently. He felt that she damaged his character, and he needed to rectify his status with her death. Even if he did not have a reason that favored his actions, he had a motivating reason for his actions based on a false claim. Smith 1994 and Dancy 2000, both express that this belief is normative. Scholars talk about objective and subjective reasons, where Lopez could have had a subjective reason to murder his wife. According to Williams 1979, whether a person has a reason to act depends on the facts and not on the person’s beliefs. Williams believes that certain cases of ignorance and misunderstandings help to bring out a perceived false thought. The question still remains: did Lopez have a good reason to murder his wife? The objective answer would depend on the facts. Lopez had no favorable reason to murder his wife. The perspective by contrast was that Lopez’s perspective involved a reasonable false claim that he should react to what he believed. If Lopez felt that he was rational and acted accordingly even if he did not know all the pertinent facts, he did what he believed was reasonable from his judgment. Yet there are still certain cases where people can justify their reactions even if there are conclusive reasons against it. They could justify the action, but they do not know the reasons why they committed the act. This may support the evidence that show the reasons people depend on their perspectives at the initial emotional state of the incident. This motive can be related to the young boys committing criminal activities in the neighborhood because their behaviors were not rational but controlled by social pressures. They did not consider the consequences and should have made better choices before they confirmed their decision. When a

person acts in ignorance, they do so because they feel they have to, whereby rationality and justification are similar. There are reasons that may prove to be right in doing something even if there are doubts and questions against committing the act. These reasons may justify their action even if the individual does not know the reason, he/she is committing a wrongful act. Austin noted there must be a difference between a justification and an excuse. When people are accused of wrongdoing, they may offer proof, which aims to show that in fact the thing done was right because there was a reason for doing it. At this point they can turn to motives and reasons.\textsuperscript{188} Scholars suggest that there are two kinds of reasons called normative (expressing judgment) and motivating (action) and explanatory (explaining the reason). As mentioned beforehand a person’s favored actions, his motivations, and his explanations could be one of three reasons defended by various authors.\textsuperscript{189}

These motivates explain the action motivated the same, in any case motivating and explanatory have different labors for the same reason for intended actions. There are various explanations regarding motivating and explanatory reason of diverse kinds. Darwall 1983 and Dancy 2000, offer the view that the same reason can answer the questions about motivating and justification even if they are not able to see the difference between the questions, nor if they oppose recognizing two kinds of reasons making them true for both motivating and explanatory.\textsuperscript{190} At times the same reason answers two questions about motivating and explanation. On the other hand, a reason that motivates the action can always explain it, but a reason that explains the action is not


\textsuperscript{190} S. Darwall, Impartial Reason. https://www.philpapers.org/rec/DARIR
always the reason that motivates it. Jealousy in Lopez’s case could have been the reason he murdered his wife but that was not the reason that motivated him to act violently. The explanation referring to Lopez’s jealousy could not rationalize his actions, and it did not explain his actions stated by scholars showing the existence of truth or by evidence.\textsuperscript{191} This information provides assist the chart in the conclusion that supports Scholars argument concerning various reasons why individuals’ react violently in uncontrollable anger when they believe something is true without evidence. It will also validate the scholars disagreements on why individuals’ reasons are different and unique based on their emotional and mental state of mind at the time they commit a crime.

**Louis Reed’s Personal Story Expressing Restoration**

Louis Reed went to a house he owned in a white suburb of Waterbury, Connecticut, to repair a broken dishwasher with his uncle. When he arrived at his destination and before he could enter his property, a white man drove by and made a comment about a “Black Lives Matter” garment Louis was wearing. Shortly afterwards a Waterbury Police Officer was knocking at the door and other parole cars were driving up. Louis opened the door, and immediately went through the protocol without thought that was natural for Black people. He put his hands in the air, obeyed authority, and stayed calm which was Louis’ experience when interacting with the police. After he spoke to the police, he attempted to close the door when the officer lunged for his neck, slammed him to the floor, and hand cuffed him. Louis screamed for the tenant to record the incident because he thought the officer was going to shoot him. His white tenants and his uncle affirmed that Louis owned the property, but the

officers intentionally disregard that fact and applied steady force to get him into the back of the cruiser. Louis was voiceless and believes that white Americans view people of color as if they do not exist or that they are a threat to society. He felt that he was a threat because he felt acknowledged only if white supremacy granted permission to him at a prestigious status. Louis believed that as a former prisoner, he felt disrespected and treated less than human. Louis did not feel he had rights that whites people regard as worthy. He was defenseless even though he worked for CNN Host Van Jones at a nationally leading social justice organization and with major influencers; it did not protect him from police brutality or an illegal arrest on his own property. Louis complained about the prison treatment of an officer who gave him a pair of socks with holes in them the officer told him to make his own socks if he did not like them. Louis decided to do just that (signatureReed.com). Louis prepared himself in prison to fail by way to success.  

There is little research on the emotional impact of individual’s wrongful accusations, yet these types of situations seem to occur continuously. Samantha Brooks reported that 1/3 participants blamed themselves for the accusation and struggled between wanting to fight the allegations and wanting to isolate themselves due to shame. Plumridge and Sebba also found that participants reported feelings of shame, blame, guilt, and experienced feelings guilty due to feeling guilty until proven innocent. Wrong accusations and convictions can leave individuals unable to function in their normal work environment and in social activities. Burnett reported:

192 Louis Reed, I was Almost a #BlackLivesMatter Hashtag, October 27, 2020, edited by Alfreda Reese. https://louisreed.medium.com/i-was-almost-a-blacklivesmatter-hashtag8cf6b75131


195 Ibid, 9
cases of partners and families of the accused experiencing anxiety and depression, and Grounds,196 reported depression in the wives of those accused. Families affected by the disgrace associated with shame are involved,197 which could lead to antisocial activities or criminal behavior for the children of the wrongfully accused.198 Wrongful convictions disrupt the children’s lives, and the spouses often feel unable to meet the needs of their children.

Arrested and falsely accused Louis’ abusive treatment caused hardship and negative consequences for him and his family.199 As a result Louis experienced psychological and significant setbacks in his relationships with others. His entire attitudes towards the justice system disrupted his life: finances, employment, stressful experiences in custody and difficulty in adjustments. Louis loss faith in the criminal justice system and trust in the police officers as a result of his abusive and dehumanizing experience.200 Shamed and embarrassed Louis decided to use his experience in prison to transform others once released. Louis’ intolerance of injustice, and mistrust in the fairness of the authority figures helped moved him to devise a plan of action once released. Louis’ emotional state of mind from these awful consequences of wrongful accusations appeared to seriously affect his life even after his release from prison. Louis felt that his mental state of mind and the humiliation of wrongful arrest attributed to his apprehension, conviction, and imprisonment, without evidence of any wrongdoings caused a loss in his dignity. This situation causes depression disorders while in prison and even after release from prison.

A plan of action to improve public opinions of wrongful convictions can explore better methods to address these types of situations. Further research will give attention to impede

197 Ibid, 13
198 Ibid, 13
199 Ibid, 9
200 Ibid, 17
allegations, to minimize the pain and stress for those accused, and to assist in the inability to fully clear the wrongly accused person’s names. This information will aim in understanding better what constitutes an effective support in terms of allowing wrongfully accused individuals to absolve the blame for a fault of wrongdoing and to develop a support system for each other. These challenges for the persons wrongfully accused can cause issues for family members and those in the community at-large. Louis transformed his entire life while in prison based on the disrespect he encountered. Louis utilized this displeased treatment of false allegations to strive towards achieving a way to success and to bring about change for those devalued, rejected, and forgotten.

**Micah Farley’s Personal Story Expressing Restoration**

The Farley’s were married at an early age and began their journey in faith and never turned back. They had three children, Jared, Denae, and Micah who were home schooled. They had no televisions, music, alcohol, or drugs, and their friends raised their children in the same manner. They thought they were good parents, but Micah was completely different. When Micah was nine, the principal and teachers wanted to meet with his parents because his behavior was troubling. Expelled from school at thirteen Micah began engaging in drugs, taking authority over his parents, and refusing to obey his parents. He started stealing and bonded with friends who were disobedient. He passed out from drug overdoses; his heart stopped three times ‘and he was unconscious for 36 hours. His parents signed him up for rehabilitation, but he refused to attend. He committed various wrongful acts

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going in and out of jail and was finally incarcerated. After released from prison, he met a young lady and dated for five years but repeated the pattern of drug abuse and overdosed again. His parents gave up hope to just let him die. Suddenly God raised up faithful people who did not give up on him they met with Micah and prayed but they also ran out of hope for him after he overdosed eight times. The last few times he overdosed he was pronounced dead, but God allowed him a second chance to get his life in order. He realized he needed to change and when he was released from the hospital he contacted a rehabilitation program. This appeared to be the greatest blessings for Micah and his family. He accepted Christ and turned his life around and began to be effective in the lives of others while he was in the program. He graduated and participated in various leadership positions, led others to Christ, and encouraged them to have faith and hope for the future.  

**Amy James’ Personal Story Expressing Reconciliation**

Amy James turned to drugs and alcohol which led to a criminal conviction and a lengthy prison sentence in addition to experiencing personal and emotional challenges in her life. Amy was a resident, at a community center providing support accommodations for people who showed weaknesses and were susceptible to physical or emotional attacks in Newham, East London. In 2015 her support workers suggested that she attend the Khulisa’s Silence the Violence Rehabilitation Program. When she interviewed with the facilitators, she was uncertain about participating in the program, but she did enjoy their innovative ways for introducing solutions and realized she enjoyed expressing herself through art. The program improved her thinking so intensely that she was determined to reconsider

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various situations that confronted her life. After released from prison, Amy did not have the support needed to reenter into society and found herself homeless. Previously she had experienced an aggressive behavior where she exerted hostile power that violated herself and the rights of others. Her support workers convinced her to take part in the Khulisa’s Silence the Violence Program which was an intensive 5-day behavior transformation group program that used art and drama to assist participants to explore the underlying causes of their negative or violent behavior. Amy agreed with them and believed that she could benefit from being able to talk about her past experiences so that she could control her future by developing a healthy lifestyle.

Amy joined the program but was still unsure and reluctant to share her personal story. While participating in the creative activities, she gained confidence; she was able to express her thoughts and emotions through her artwork. This observation was unimaginable and empowering as she recognized her talents. It was liberating and Amy began to unburden herself of the guilt and shame she had been carrying for years. Now she found other means of coping with her violent behavior. A lightbulb moment for her was understanding the physiological responses she encountered before she got angry; she thought about positive ways to deflect her actions.

Transformed after participating in the Khulisa’s Silence the Violence Rehabilitation Program, Amy knew she had to establish a natural and positive process to manage her situation. Her self-esteem and confidence also developed during the program, helping her to restore friendly relationships and ways to enhance her own life. When Amy met with her facilitators, she was able to express her appreciation for all that she had learned in the program and identified her aspirations in a lifelong journey for the future. She remembered how genuinely grateful she felt celebrating an opportunity to share her personal story with others to help them along the way by transforming
the negatives into positives. Amy wanted to choose a career in youth work and live independently as she identified fresh goals for her future.203

**Julius Jones’ Personal Story Expressing Reconciliation**

In 1999 the announcement for Julius Jones affirmed a conviction of first-degree murder and a death sentence for killing an Edmond businessperson named Paul Howell, shot in front of his children during a carjacking. Jones has been in prison for the past 23 years and has maintained his innocence to this crime. He has appealed to the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board for a disposition of leniency in his case. The board voted 3-1 to move the case to a phase to lessen the sentence and pass it on to the Governor for a final decision regarding Jones’ destiny. The hearing scheduled in Jones’ case was moved repeatedly over the years. A coalition of ministers, supporters, and the community-at-large are still joining together for prayers and reflection to address the key role faith leaders play in the Justice for Julius Case.

The Reverence Keith Jossell, spiritual advisor for Julius Jones serves as the Justice for Julius Coalition’s National Prayer Forum Director, where prayers, worship, and praise takes place every Tuesday evening in support of Jones’ case. Reverence Jossell has served with a group of Oklahoma faith leaders hosting a series of activities leading up to Jones’ Pardon and Parole Board Commutation Hearing and have covered Jones with effectual fervent prayers. These prayers for death row prisoner Julius Jones have inspired numerous people from all over the United States and

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203 Khulisa, Amy James Case Study, (2017-2020): 02071832647, edited by Alfreda Reese. [https://www.khulisa.co.uk.case-studies/schools](https://www.khulisa.co.uk.case-studies/schools)
abroad. People from average lay organizations, missionaries, musicians, preachers, celebrities, and star athletes have called in to support the quest for Jones’ release from prison.

Reverence James Olson is president and co-founder of Catalyst Missions Group, and his organization is supporting the justice group by coordinating a series of national screenings of the movie “Just Mercy,” and virtual panel discussions about justice-related topics. Reverend Olson joined the group and enlightened other evangelical ministers to participate in the Justice for Julius Movement. He also hopes that those who are apprehensive can engage in the movement for the sake of saving Julius Jones’ life and support the request for leniency. Individual’s witness has made presentations in support of Jones’ commutation request for the hearing at Oklahoma First Church of Nazarene, in support of Jones’ leniency application. Helen Prejean established the organization, and she is a well-known anti-death activist and author. This is a nonprofit organization focused on death penalty advocacy and education.204

Gross describes the rate of innocent criminal defendants as not simply unknown, but they are unable to identify these death-sentenced defendants because there is no method to determine the accuracy of criminal convictions. The study does indicate there are a high percentage of false convictions that cause exonerations and are listed under a small section of cases where the defendants are sentenced to death row. In this concept the data of defendants designated as false convictions on death sentences are governed by threat of exoneration.205 Julius Jones has been in prison for the past 23-years in Oklahoma, but the prisoner’s case was resentenced to life in prison without parole. It is significant to mention the distinctive differences between the death penalty and capital punishment. The death penalty is the sentence tracked in court for various cases

205 Samuel R. Gross, Barbara Obrien, Chen Hu, and Edward H. Kennedy, Rate of False Conviction of Criminal defendants who are Sentenced to death. April 28, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1306417111
commuted to life imprisonment or withdrawn when presented with additional evidence. A capital punishment judgment is not a sentence, but the act conducted on the sentenced. The death penalty is legal in 32 states. It is more expensive than imprisonment due to failed executions. Life in prison has become debatable where legal battles over execution of the death penalty is more dominant. Neither of these penalties is legal in all 50 states, but life without parole is illegal in Alaska though the life sentence is 99 years long. The laws New York Time 2011, laws states that moral and ethical arguments reviews pros and cons of religious documents, while the arguments of influential viewed opinions by facts and death penalty prisoners is 1.2 million more that prisoner in the general population.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons and each state oversee holding prisoners on death row or awaiting sentencing. There may not be a cause to use the life without parole sentence, all states and the federal governments have used life sentences with a chance of parole, but the inmates may not always receive parole. At the end of 1987, the federal criminal code did not allow for the likelihood of parole, yet the parole system is still in operation to serve prisoners with long-term sentences from offenses prior to 1987. The types of crimes in the penalty section can also carry a sentence of life imprisonment. Prison life for prisoners depends on the severity and the nature of the crime committed and determines the level of security prison placement and where the prisoners stay will vary.

https://scholarlycommons.susque.edu/vol7/issu1/4
207 Ibid, 46
208 Ibid, 50
The state appeal is the first stage of the direct appeal required by the state. Arguments are allowed on both sides and presented to the court, at this point the panel of judges can affirm or reverse the conviction or the death sentence. In Jones’ case stage one, was anticipated for February 2021, but it was pushed down to March 2021. The process was delayed again from March 2021 to May 2021, to allow the pardon and parole board to revise the process making it better for Jones allowing ten minutes for the defense, and ten minutes for the prosecution. The revised process would then allow thirty minutes to one hour for the defense and prosecution allowing time to authorize this new plan by May 2021. In May, the pardon and parole board pushed the date down to August 2022 with a recommendation that clemency had to be approved by the governor. The governor rejected the decision twice by the pardon and parole board. They administer the clemency process. The hearing had to take place forty days before the execution process begins but there was not an execution date in place. This case has gone back and forth for years. At this point the governor ordered a stay of execution for Jones’ case where Jones is sentenced to life in prison and will not have an opportunity to present his case before the pardon and parole board. The only course of action for Jones is that of mercy by the governor. The people who were against the death penalty have been dismissed from their positions and now House Bill 3903 has been proposed to resentence defendants to life without parole. Faith leaders have delayed the bill for this session, but it could be scheduled and presented in another bill with supplementary language and pass on the floor.

Stage two of the state appeal allows all parties to file briefs from the original judge to the highest court in the state where new evidence and misconduct is conveyed and reviewed.²¹⁰ Pending added information concerning a federal issue the United States District Court will then

review the state case. On the other hand, if it is a federal death penalty case, the court that would 
receive the federal direct appeal. After the United States District Court, the United States Court of 
Appeals can petition for relief, and cases not granted permission, like direct appeal this petition 
can bring in issues from the preceding appeals for review. The United States Supreme Court is 
higher than the United States Court of Appeals and does not accept all cases. 
(Capitalpunishmentincontext.org 2015). The president or governor’s pardon could commute the 
sentence from death to life without parole, it depends on the executive involvement whether the 
prisoner is a state or federal inmate.

The death penalty is well disciplined, and the appeals process operated with strict timelines 
and deadlines that if misused, ends the process. There is a process for life in prison that allows for 
certain appeals made, and there are also deadlines for these directorial appeals like in the death 
penalty process (Cornell Law 2015). This process differs from state to state, and prisoners have 
legal opportunities once in prison. Their choices are limited, but the prisoners can continue the 
cycle of appeals.211 It is possible for state inmates to move to the federal appeals system after 
exhausting the state system if there is a federal issue involved. Most scholars indicate that the 
incarceration population is large in the United States but what is not well-known is data on how 
these people remain on death row or are resentenced to life in prison. This information is vital 
when comparing the cost of expensive living conditions and increasing resistance to the death 
penalty from chemical manufacturers overseas or higher cost pending lawsuits.212 McFarland 
states that there is more life sentence to death row with or without parole, than those sentenced to

University Political ” Political Review: 2016, Vo. 7, Articles 4, 53
212 Ibid, 58
death row, both sufficient to draw general developments and conclusions from the changes in life imprisonment figures.

Diane Downs’ Story Expressing Non-transformational Behavior

Diane Downs grew up in a conservative home in Phoenix, Arizona. She started dating Steve at the age of thirteen despite her parents’ wishes. After graduation, she joined the Navy and went to the Pacific Coast Bible School in California. Diane and Steve separated because Diane started dating different men, getting in trouble, and was expelled from school as a result of her promiscuous behavior. Diane and Steve reunited and decided to get married; shortly thereafter they experienced difficulties with financial issues and Diane’s infidelity made matters worse. Diane had her first child (Christie) a second child (Cheryl Lynn), then Steve decided to get a vasectomy. They moved to Mesa, Arizona where Diane met new coworkers, got pregnant, and had an abortion. Not long before she had another outsider affair and conceived a third child (Steven Daniel). Steve stayed with her for the sake of the children but later decided to get a divorce. The children were solely Diane’s responsibility which added increased pressure on her for their care. She became a surrogate which required a psychiatric evaluation that she failed because she was diagnosed as psychotic yet accepted as a surrogate mother and gave birth to a baby girl (Jennifer). Diane met the love of her life (Robert) who thought that their relationship was toxic and ended their association because he did not like children. Diane was devastated and began to resent her children when Robert ended their connection. Diane moved to Oregon and left her children with her mother and their father or home.
alone. Christie oversaw the youngest children and one day Cheryl told a neighbor she was afraid of her mother.

One night Diane and her children stayed late visiting friends, on the way home Cheryl fell asleep in the front seat with Diane and the other two children were sleeping in the back seat when Diane decided to go down a rural scenic route home. Diane said, there was a man in the road flagging her down, she pulled over in the middle of the night with her children in the car.” She got out to talk to the man, and he demanded her car keys. Diane pretended to throw the keys in bushes; while the man was searching, with her children seriously wounded, she jumped in the car and drove off wildly to the hospital. Upon her arrival, the doctors told her that Cheryl was dead, at this time she seemed relieved. The doctors also told Diane that Daniel’s wound to his spine left him paralyzed, Christie was still alive, but she had a stroke and was in and out of consciousness and was unable to communicate. Still Diane did not seem to be concerned. The hospital staff was astonished that Diane was not devastated about her children’s conditions. Diane did not show any emotions, was not upset, and did not attempt to assist the children’s in the hospital. She was more concerned that her new car had blood on the passenger side door while her children were suffering.

Diane was the only witness, but the police had mixed feelings about how the night unfolded. They did not find the man Diane described but they found bullet castings on the ground. Diane lied about the man, but the investigators interviewed a witness who was driving behind Diane that night who stated that, “She was driving so slow he drove around her.” Still confused about what happened that night the police and hospital staff thought that most mothers would barely be able to function trying to describe the incident. They asked Diane to act out what happened? In doing so Diane looked like she was having fun primping her hair getting ready for the cameras. At the end of the interview, she banged her arm, and the investigators believed she
was going to say that her arm hurt worse than when she shot herself staging the incident. Seeing her mood and behavior in this reenactment the investigators did not have sufficient evidence that she had committed a crime. Therefore, Diane continued living life as normal and speaking at interviews where she did not seem emotional but showed disgusting smirks while reliving everything over and over.

People started criticizing the case especially when the investigators found blood outside of the passage door which did not make sense with Diane’s story, that a man shot her children on the driver side of the car. She also stated that she did not own a handgun, but her husband confirmed that she did, and the police found bullet cartridge marks that matched the castings found at the crime scene. The investigators also found Diane’s diaries that had entries about Robert and believed that it was possible that she shot her children because they were holding her back from finding true love. Diane lied so many times she got confused and the police could not confirm the case. The investigators decided to have Christie work with a therapist who instructed her to print the name of the person who hurt her on a piece of paper and throw it in a fire. Hopefully one day Christie would be comfortable enough to let the therapist read the paper where she wrote her mother. Arrested and charged with one count of murder, two counts of attempted murder, and criminal assault Diane was on her way to prison At the time of the trial, she was pregnant again and tried to use the charges as sympathy for better treatment and a better outcome on her case. She believed that she was going to get away with this crime because she enjoyed the spotlight attention like the case did not matter to her.\footnote{Kendell Rae, \textit{I Really don’t Have Words – Diane Downs’ Case. June 11, 2021}, edited by Alfreda Reese. \url{https://www.facebook.com/KendallPlace/videos/492479268734970/?is_lookaside=1}}
Pastoral Care

The needs for released prisoners, their families, and communities are challenging. At times prisoners’ released could return within years after they are freed due to violations of parole. In research with juvenile delinquents, Eugene Hausman found a positive correlation between time spent with a Chaplain and positive living situations one year after discharge (2004). In addition, youth who received ongoing supportive pastoral counseling are less likely to be re-arrested when they are discharged and return to the community. Yet there are only a few comments on what pastoral counseling actually involves or why it works. The important things that faith leaders’ can do from the start is to consider the needs of prisoners returning to their physical, social, spiritual, and emotional environments. Released prisoners will need housing, employment, food, transportation, personal care items, and strong friendships with Christian’s believers to support, provide spiritual guidance, and give them a chance to begin healthy lives. Prisoners may also need skills preparation and training, medical attention, and rehabilitation programs. These basic needs can assist with recovering from dehumanization in prison over a lengthy sentence which takes time and continuous support from family and friends. This type of support can be effective in restoring, healing, and vitalizing for those released from prison. Faith leaders and others will have to be committed to the cause of Christ and demonstrate Christ’s love toward those lost and forgotten while in prison. The Urban Institute’s Study explores the pathway of prisoners to reintegrate into society. By examining the factors that contribute to successful reentry and to understand the reentry

216 Prison Fellowship, Needs of Ex-Prisoners. 2022. [https://www.prisonfellowship.org](https://www.prisonfellowship.org)
experiences of returning prisoners to their families, friends, churches, and their communities is essential.  

Chaplain Emily R. Brault developed skills for prisoners to actively listen and hear their own feelings allowing them to reflect their inner lives clarifying the deepest thoughts of their souls. She used an approach for prisoners who did not have an agenda to support, serve, or care in ways that make sense to the individuals on their levels. Although there was a need for specific instructions on crisis and grief, the greater need could help inmates develop and nurture a view different from their criminal activities that landed them in prison. The accomplishment can actively engage their belief patterns in ways that support healthy growth and transformation. Most importantly Chaplains considered pastoral counseling as a primary task in their field. Chaplains provide social work in other ways such as through various faith volunteers for ceremonies, groups leaders, and representing a beacon light for the prisoners. Brault began by exploring the environment of pastoral care and counseling in prison to understand the needs and practices in collaborating with a criminal justice population. How well could a chaplain effectively integrate spirituality and treatment towards rehabilitation and positive outcomes? Getting the inmates to engage in religion positively and what demonstrated negative outcomes.

Pastoral providers offer links to attitudes and beliefs, D. L. Peck (1987) suggests that in the prison environment, religious conviction itself functions as corrections in terms of attitudes and behaviors of inmates such as how to treat others, and how to respond to difficult times without

typical criminal attitudes and behaviors. Religion can give meaning and purpose to life, provide moral and ethical guidelines, allow prisoners to transcend reality and connect to their circumstance and help others adapt to the stress of prison life. A healthy religious orientation in prison supports an optimistic view and provides resources of God and community.

Inmates housed in limited spaces while confined and intricately connected to prison communities, rely on religious services available as the primary alternative in order to function effectively behind prison walls. More importantly sometimes Christians offer programs with restricted services for a multi-faith environment such as Buddhists’ or Native American inmates. More research needs to address these particular areas in prison that does not afford a range of experiences and perspectives that other traditions may have to offer. Faith leaders could do more to welcome released prisoners back into churches and communities by expressing compassion, healing, and forgiveness. As well Pastoral Care volunteers could be more active in approaches to counseling and care for prisoners similar to the program Emily Brault introduced to those who need support that make sense and that helps prisoners respond to their own needs individually.

**Faith, Forgiveness, and Healing**

Love is essential in the lives of God’s people for treatment with respect, by loving, caring, and kindness, for helping other people in need. Jesus’ story in the New Testament states, ‘For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick, and you

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looked after me, I was in prison, and you came to visit me,’ (Mathews 25:35-36). God’s foreknowledge accepted the grace that Jesus provided for his people from the foundation of the world to save his people and extending the right-hand blessing throughout for all who desired. Sustaining God’s people physically or mentally regardless of how small the service, Jesus considers it accomplished for him. God is pleased with those who help others who cannot help themselves. These stories express loving neighbors as oneself is not a principle that people understand; it is receiving a reward by storing up in heaven for the good things done for others empowers the one who is acting in love.

Prisoners who participate in the Kairos Prison Ministry while incarcerated can share in making changes in their own lives and could impact the lives of their family members (myKairos.org). Upon release incarcerated individuals could become productive citizens and unite in communities by shifting their focus from wrongful acts to accomplishing aspirations that are Christ centered. The Kairos Faith-based Program also assists prisoners, and their families, with connections in communities to help restore social bonds that will support prisoners of a successful reentry process.222 Engaging in programs like Kairos and other rehabilitation programs can improve stress related issues after the prisoners’ release and allow them a chance to lead healthy lifestyles. When and if inmates accept Christ as their personal Savior, it can serve as managing strategies for those trying to turn their lives around for the good, seek forgiveness, and make amends for the wrong committed toward the ones they victimized.223 These programs serve as good examples for prisoners to make better choices, in accepting Christ, and shifting from negative

activities and former desires to commit crimes.\textsuperscript{224} They can ease feelings of depression, guilt, and shame, and they can also be released from the burdens of anxiety to be able to voice their experiences and share with others inside and outside of prison. Various Faith-based Programs such as Prison Fellowship, Inner Change, and Chaplains, along with family members are essential for engaging a purpose for prisoners’ growth to help them convert. These ministries also provide opportunities for prisoners to start afresh in a Christian setting as well as a plan of action to achieve an overall goal, to maintain carefree lifestyles trusting that God will provide. Prison Fellowship walks with prisoners through the distinct stages of their experiences.\textsuperscript{225} Kairos Prison Ministry is authorized to bring Christ’s love and forgiveness to all prisoners, their families and those who collaborated with them, and to assist in the transition of becoming a productive citizen.\textsuperscript{226}

When prisoners transform in prison it may mean that the prisoners are changing directions from their negative habits of repeating undesirable patterns. On the other hand research on spiritual conversion suggests little change in personality traits during the process, and there may be a profound shift in midlevel personality domains such as what the individuals’ feel is important and what may provide them with focus and direction in life, and faith in themselves.\textsuperscript{227} In as much, incarcerated individuals’ who convert in prison can feel confident in remaining devoted to Christian groups, they can perhaps be more likely successful in the communities after their release by applying God’s teachings when they discover new spiritual insights about everyday life.

\textsuperscript{224} B. J. Van der Walt, Sharing an Integral Christian Worldview with a Younger Generation: Why and how Should it be done and Received in die Skriflig?. (2017): 51 (1), 1-11.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15427617rhd0302&3_6
Visitation in prison from family and friends can be effective in the lives of prisoners because being able to connect with loved ones is significant for increasing hope. Bonding with communities outside the prison can create a sense of loyalty, and this association can be a favorable outcome for building trust. Visitation for prisoners can also help them to develop positive relationships, hold them accountable for growth, and actively encourage reconciliation through forgiveness. Visits from family members and friends are important but visits from the Christian communities can be most needed to assist prisoners with the guilt, shame, and embarrassment. The prisoners may feel isolated and faith leaders who strongly support prisoners in prison can help them find a way to transform their lives and inspire them to look forward to a better future when released. Jesus’ empathy stories are the ultimate goal for expressing how to live loving and caring for others and allowing the Holy Spirit to intentionally become involved in an inconvenient situation to improve unwarranted issues. This can only happen when individuals accept God’s grace, God’s mercy, and when true transformation takes place in social reintegration to deflect prisoners from repeated criminal patterns.
<table>
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<th>Daniel</th>
<th>Johnny Whited</th>
<th>Louis Reed</th>
<th>Amy James</th>
<th>Diane Downs</th>
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<td>Quezon Lopez</td>
<td>Micah Farley</td>
<td>Julius Jones</td>
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Empathy Group I – Daniel and Alex Rajan Nila

The Empathy Group – included prisoners expressing compassion for those they victimized and the ability to act on processing the effects.

Daniel experienced a volatile childhood, grieved when his mother died, was unable to function, and became addicted to drugs and alcohol. His behavior led to stealing, abuse physically, emotionally and a prison sentence for five years charged with robbery and possession of a weapon. Daniel knew he was a decent person but thought of suicide from the pain, guilt, and shame he felt. He attended the Khulisa Grief Rehabilitation Program where the participants listened and valued his story without judgment. He regained his confidence and showed empathy and concern for others which empowered him to take back his own voice and speak loud and clear.

Alex’s parents separated when he was 3-year-old, his teachers noticed that he was troubled and had issues with other children. His mother also struggled with his behavior, and he had challenges with his younger siblings. Alex’s mother enrolled him the Khulisa’s Face It Rehabilitation Program. He has been introduced to various levels of violence that Alex learned to use daily, he realized that his behavior was not normal, became aware and sensitive to experiencing the feelings, and thoughts of others. Alex learned to overcome his issues and expressed empathy towards his siblings and the other children. He became more confident, demonstrated awareness of his feelings for others, made better choices, and had thoughts of working on his negative emotions. Both Daniel and Alex were able to express empathy and share in the sufferings of others and as a result of the Khulisa Programs that directed them to a positive and healthy lifestyle.


Sympathy Group II – Johnny Dwight Whited and Quezon Lopez

The Sympathy Group – included prisoners feeling pity and sorrow for those they victimized.

Johnny phoned the police department after 25-years of silence confessing to the murder of Christopher Alvin Daily. Detective Mukaddam was skeptical but asked for additional details. The detective received more credible information and believed that the caller was confessing to a murder. The detective noticed that the crimes had been weighing on Johnny for a while, and he wanted to confess because he was ashamed of murdering Christopher. Johnny stated that he was terminally ill which sparked his confession, but he did not clarify his diagnosis. Johnny charged with Christopher’s death expressed his sorrow, his deep distress, and he wished he had not committed this crime. Johnny blamed his situation on his state of mind at the time of the incident, revealing that he had engaged in drugs consistently and was arrested throughout his life. The detective thought Johnny may have also felt pity for Christopher’s family and wanted to confess his criminal activity. Christopher’s family had answers about the crime, but closure did not turn out as they expected.230

Quezon murdered his wife charged with homicide and sentenced 12-17-years in prison. Lopez believed his wife was unfaithful, and he could not tolerate the thought of her infidelity. He became enraged and stabbed his wife 29 times. They had 5 children, and Lopez stated that the family visitation program in prison helped him deal with his troubles because it gave him strength to cope with prison life. He was regretful and tried to convince his children and family that he had changed. Lopez displayed remorse, sympathy, and a desire wanted to rebuild a relationship with his family. They refused to communicate with him. His situation got worse when his family

abandoned him, as they were feeling the loss of their mother through his crime and their father through imprisonment. Both Johnny and Quezon expressed sympathy for the crimes they committed, expressed sympathy for their victims’ families and displayed behaviors towards compassion as well.

Restoration Group III – Louis Reed and Micah Farley

The Restoration Group – included prisoners who were able to unite with families, churches, and communities forgiven, and they were able to rebuild relationships.

Louis prepared himself for success by way of his suffering situation from behind the walls. One day Louis drove to his rental house in the suburb of Connecticut to repair a dishwasher. A white man passing by saw his garment and made a comment about his Black Lives Matter shirt. Shortly after a Waterbury Police officer knocked on the door as other parole car were driving up. Louis opened the door, spoke to the officer, and attempted to close the door when the office attacked, hand cuffed, and forced him in the cruiser. Even though Louis worked for CNN Host Van Jones at a national social justice organization with major influencers, this connection could not protect him from police brutality and illegal arrests on his own property. Louis was voiceless, defenseless, felt disrespected as a former prisoner, and treated less than human. Louis experience in prison turned his life around because he engaged in a wealth of opportunities in government criminal justice, policy advocacy, and public health programs after he was released from prison. He worked hard to release prisoner and provide opportunities to support those devalued and rejected because of their bad choices. Louis believed in empathy and desired to embrace hope in

uniting people. Louis’ family, friend and the community accepted and restored him in seeking and partnering with leaders who strived for justice reform.\(^{232}\)

**Micah’s** story was exceptional. His behavior was troubling at an early age that led to his dismissal from school’ he was disobedient, and he bonded with the wrong crowd. As he grew older, his unruly behavior led to stealing, going in and out of jail, engaging in drugs, getting arrested, and finally being incarcerated. Micah’s parents and his girlfriend had given up on him. Other Christian faith leaders met with him and prayed, but they too ran out of hope after he overdosed eight times. His heart stopped three times and he was unconscious for 36 hours. After Micah’s release from prison, he revealed that his aggressive behavior and drug addiction was too big for him. His emotional state suggested bad traits of non-transformational emotions towards those he victimized. Micah also realized that he needed help which his family or friends could provide. Micah’s issues were too big for him but not for God who allowed him another chance to get his life in order. He checked himself in the *Team Challenge Rehabilitation Program* which transformed and fulfilled the life that he was trying to overcome. Micah’s desire to accept the love of God to forgive was the only thing that could turn his suffering situation around. God was the only one who could change Micah’s circumstance as he moved through non-transformation restoration, and finally reconciliation over time where his entire trajectory of life transformed.\(^{233}\)

Both **Louis** and **Micah** were compassionate uniting with family, friends, and the community striving for a better quality of life.

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\(^{232}\) Louis Reed, I was Almost a #BlackLivesMatter Hashtag. October 27, 2020, edited by Alfreda Reese. [https://louisreed.medium.com/i-was-almost-a-blacklivesmatter-hashtag8cf6b75131](https://louisreed.medium.com/i-was-almost-a-blacklivesmatter-hashtag8cf6b75131)

Reconciliation Group IV – Amy James and Julius Jones

The Reconciliation Group – included prisoners who received God’s grace, forgiven for their crimes, accepted, and able to reconnect with families, friends, churches, and communities.

Amy’s story led to a lengthy prison sentence when she turned to drugs and alcohol after experiencing personal and emotional challenges in her life. Amy experienced aggressive behaviors and exerted hostile power that violated herself and the rights of others. Amy’s support workers suggested that she attend the Khulisa’s Silence the Violence Rehabilitation Program, but she was uncertain about participating. She interviewed with the facilitators and enjoyed the innovative solutions to violence by way of expressing herself through art to help explore the underlying causes of her negative and violent behavior. She decided to reconsider various situations that affected her life and believed that she could benefit from being able to voice her past experiences and control her future in developing a better quality of life. Amy gained confidence and expressed her thoughts and emotions through her artwork. Empowered with confidence Amy realized her talents and began to relieve herself of the guilt and shame in coping with her aggressive behavior and thought about positive methods to dramatically transform her actions. Her self-esteem enhanced as she developed personal skills from the program because it helped her restore friendly relationships and ways to better her life. Amy has made great progress toward her goals securing living arrangements, employment after being homeless. She identified herself as a valuable friend, an Expert Advisory Panel accepted her in a national charity, and she used her homeless experience to create policies and practices to united young people in her community.  

Julius, convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death for killing an Edmond businessperson shot during a carjacking. Julius has been in prison for the past 23 years. Yet he

maintains his innocence to this crime and has appealed to the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board for leniency in his case. Prayers for Julius Jones have inspired innumerable people from all over the United States and abroad. People from average laypeople, to preachers, celebrities and star athletes have called in to support the quest for Jones’ release from prison. Reverend James Olson is president and co-founder of the Catalyst Missions Group, and his organization is supporting the Justice group by coordinating a series of national screenings of the movie “Just Mercy,” and virtual panel discussions about justice related topics. Reverend Olson also hopes that those who are apprehensive can engage in the movement for the sake of saving Julius Jones’ life and support the request at the hearing at Oklahoma Churches in support of Jones’ leniency application. Julius has received community support and the community-at-large are still joining together for prayers and reflections to address the key role faith leaders play in the Justice for Julius Case. The Reverend Keith Jossell is the spiritual advisor for Julius Jones and serves as the Justice for Julius Coalition’s National Prayer forum Director, where prayers, worship, and praise takes place weekly in support of Jones’ case. Reverend Jossell has served with faith leaders across the United States hosting a series of activities leading up to Jones’ commutation hearing and have covered Jones with effectual fervent prayers. Julius’ community is rooted in faith leaders and celebrities in support of Jones’ case, and Julius has been received forgiven, accepted, and has united with families, churches, and communities in Oklahoma and abroad.

Non-Transformation Group V – Diane Downs

The Non-Transformation Group – included prisoners repeating crimes, lacking empathic minds, hearts, and change in behavior toward those they victimized, and were not successful in connecting with families, friends, churches, or communities.

Diane Downs’ story was unsettling and difficult to understand. Diane grew up in a conservative home in Arizona and started dating when she was thirteen against her parents will, getting in trouble as a result of her promiscuous behavior. She married Steve and had her first child (Christie), a second child (Cheryl Lynn), then she started dating a coworker got pregnant and had an abortion. She had another outside affair and conceived a third child (Steven Daniel). Diane’s husband decided to divorce her then she became a surrogate which required a psychiatric evaluation that she failed. However, accepted as a surrogate mother and gave birth to a baby girl (Jennifer). Then she met a man she fell in love with (Robert) who believed that their involvement was toxic and ended their relationship because he did not like children. Diane was devastated, resented her children, and consistently left them home alone at times. Christie had to care for the younger children and Cheryl was afraid of her mother. Diane took the children to visit friends; they stayed late and on the way home Diane drove down a rural route where she claimed she saw a man and pulled over in the middle of the night to talk with him. Diane claimed the man shot all three of her children and wounded her as well she then drove to the hospital. When she arrived, the doctors reported that Cheryl was dead, Daniel paralyzed, and Christie had a stroke and was in and out of consciousness unable to communicate. Diane seemed relieved and did not assist the children or show any emotions as to her children’s sufferings after she heard the news.
Diane was the only witness reporting the details, but the police had mixed feelings as to how the night unfolded. Diane continued to report what happened to the investigators, but they did not find the man she described and still did not have proof of what actually took place that night. Diane reenacted the crime scene over and over; as she made ready for the cameras, she continued to live normally and displayed no emotions as to what happened with her children. Diane was disingenuous with the investigators about what happened that night, and they did not have concrete evidence to convict her. Criticized by the media, Diane’s husband confirmed that she owned a gun. The investigators found bullet castings that matched her gun, and diaries with entries about Robert, who believed that she shot her children. Diane had been dishonest the entire time and was confused herself. Finally, the investigators decided to have Christie work with a therapist hoping that she would eventually have the courage to tell who actually shot her and her siblings, and she finally revealed the truth. Diane was pregnant again at the time of her trial and tried to use this as an attempt to lessen her blame, for others to show sympathy for her acquittal, and believed it would free her from the criminal charges by a way of not guilty.236

Diane’s experience was unsuccessful because she lacked compassion; she did not show signs of regret, sorrow, pity, or change in her behavior towards those she harmed. Diane has lost contact with reality and experienced a range of extreme symptoms. She was not successful in connection with families, friends, churches, or communities. None of these issues seemed to be matters of concern to her; she was only interested in herself and what she wanted.

Key Points in Observing Prisoners Personal Stories

Daniel and Alex were both placed in the empathy group, where they felt other people’s emotions in sharing their thoughts which helped them build connections with them and actually related to their feelings. Daniel’s drugs and alcohol led to his violent behavior of abusing other people physically and emotionally. Troubled from an early age Alex was unable to manage his emotions that resulted in violence physically, emotionally, and verbally. Yet Daniel and Alex both displayed aggressive behaviors, and they expressed guilt, shame, and embarrassment for their violent emotions. Both Daniel and Alex expressed heartfelt empathy for those they harmed and transformed their behaviors to connect with others.

Johnny and Quezon were both placed in the sympathy group, Johnny felt humiliation and became critically distressed and ashamed of the crimes he committed that he considered his actions were beneath his moral standards. A person who expressed embarrassment with unfamiliar people sometimes realize they made a terrible mistake. Johnny felt ashamed and burdened by his negative emotions for over 25-years and was disappointed, sorry, deeply distressed, and ashamed about what he had done. Quezon murdered his wife because he thought she had been unfaithful. He expressed compassion when he asked his family for forgiveness; they refused to communicate with him, and he may have felt sympathy because he was remorseful and regretted his criminal activity.

Louis was placed in the restoration group, falsely accused, embarrassed and defenseless. He spent 14-years in prison but during his sentence he prepared himself from failure of incarceration to a way of success. Louis partnered with CNN Host Van Jones and other influencers to helped released prisoners and afforded opportunities to support those rejected and degraded because they made mistakes. Louis’ experience in prison turned his life around because he engaged in a wealth of opportunities in criminal justice, and public health programs after he was released.
from prison. Louis believed in empathy and desired to embrace hope in uniting people. Louis was restored and partnered with leaders striving for justice reforms.

**Micah** was placed in the restoration group, his drug addiction led him to stealing, disobedience, bonding with the wrong crowd, in and out of jail, overdosed eight times, and other violent crimes. Micah developed an aggressive behavior, and his parents and Christian leaders gave up on him when his heart stopped three times they lost hope for him to recover because they believed his destructive life would end. God allowed Micah a second chance when he checked himself in the *Team Challenge Rehabilitation Program* and turned his life around. Micah realized he needed help and accepted the Lord who was they only one who could fulfill the void in his life, and he found freedom in God to live a healthy lifestyle. God became his closest friend where he found peace, joy, and happiness in his transformed life more than ever before. He also made a difference in the lives of others by encouraging them in God’s grace and inspired hope in their future.

**Amy** and **Julius** were both placed in the reconciliation group, Amy engaged in drugs and alcohol which led to a criminal conviction and a long-term prison sentence. Amy became physically and emotionally violent attacking others. She decided to participate in a violence Rehabilitation Program where she enjoyed expressing herself through art to solve the challenges she faced in life. The program helped Amy realize that the behaviors she displayed were hostile and violated herself and the rights of others. She participated in the program to explore the underlying causes of her negative and violent behavior. She also felt guilt and shame about her negative behavior toward other people and established a positive process to help her restore friendly relationships and a way to enhance her own life to the fullest quality. Both Micah and Amy displayed aggressive behaviors but after participating in the rehabilitation program they
celebrated the opportunities to share their stories with others and inspiring them along the way in transforming negatives into positive behaviors.

Julius was placed in the reconciliation group, claiming false accusations and maintains his innocence to the crime of Paul Howell’s death to date. He appealed to the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board for leniency in his case. The hearing scheduled for Jones’ case moved repeatedly over the years, and he was not able to tell his story until this year. Prisoners incarcerated for long-term sentences need to at least be able to voice their stories so that others will listen and really hear what they have to say. The governor granted Julius a commutation hearing, but he is still on death row. Julius has a faith group rooted in his community where people all over these United States and abroad are supporting his case from laypeople, to celebrities, and athletes engages in the quest for Julius’ release from prison.

Diane was placed in the non-transformation group, charged with one count of murder, two counts of attempted murder, and criminal assault. Yet she still tried to use the charges as sympathy for mercy because she was pregnant and thought she could get away with the crimes she committed.

Analysis of Prisoners’ Personal Stories

People who experience guilt, shame, and embarrassment sometimes, after reflecting, go through a process of observation where they take a good look at themselves to improve their behaviors. They may spend time reflecting on themselves especially when they are alone.237

https://doi.org/10.1080/02699939108411053
Thinking about guilt or shame, they felt uncertain in their own abilities to relate to others. Scholars who have investigated studies on behaviors influencing beliefs. Themselves. These embarrassing situations indicated by inappropriate actions that may cause these individuals to react could affect how they view themselves and how they think others perceive them as well. Research shows variations of extending self-conscious feelings that values and expresses norms regarding the emotions, and how they are experienced these emotions.

Scholars have investigated, studied, and cited evidence in support of their reasons as to why people commit crimes based on the individuals’ behaviors and actions. For instance, in the Lopez story, there was reasons for his belief and what caused him to act. Perhaps because of his mental and emotional state of mind when he committed the crime. These scholars had conflicting underlying causes for people’s actions in critical or unusual situations. It may be that the scholars believed individuals’ actions were real or distinct independent existence. John Mackie argued against this viewpoint because he believed the reasons were not moral, but were personal and purposeful, other scholars disagreed that both were true. Yet Dancy rejects those reasons could be true because they were a part of the world views. I believe people who commit crimes and their reasons for acting are based on what they believe when the incident took place, however,

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what they believe may lack proof. I believe that checking the evidence in order to find facts would be a better solution to the situation before acting on false beliefs that may cost a lifetime of distress, extreme anxiety, heartaches, and suffering, before committing crimes resulting in long-term incarcerations.
CONCLUSION
Luke 4:18

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,”

The fulfillment of this scripture is from the passage of Isaiah 61:1, where Jesus expressed what his mission on earth was going to entail. Jesus brought the gospel to the poor, devalued, and those rejected by the world. Jesus healed the brokenhearted, proclaimed liberty to the captives, and opened the prisons to them that were bounded.

It was obvious that my brother made bad choices throughout his life. Yet he was brought-up-well, and it is only in this season that I have been able to turn this matter over to the Lord and found affirmation to alter the pain. I have experienced hurt from the loss of my brother for so many years. I know that healing can takes time, but nothing is too impossible for God’s grace and mercy. My brother loved and cared deeply for family and friends; the friends he bonded and participated in criminal activities, is what triggered his behavior. My brother regularly communicated through phone calls and letters when he was in prison, and after released his visits, were warm, caring and he never left without saying, “I love you!” He had a loving, kind, caring spirit, and always functioned well with other prisoners and the guards in work release programs. He used his time in prison to study and educate himself by reading and delighting in a wealth of information. He bonded with a prisoner who robbed a bank and studied the law books, found a loophole in his case, and consulted with his lawyer. The case was dropped, and the prisoner was released. This prisoner paid my brother, and he used the money to purchase leather and cow hides to make purses, wallets, belts, caps, key rings; and he even made a pair of sandals for my son when he was four years old.
After his release from prison, he managed to find employment at a mechanics shop and learned how to install engines in cars.

Somehow along his journey, he changed especially when he engaged in drugs. He struggled when these substances consumed his entire life. This situation was too big for my brother because he could not control this problem by himself. The final stages of his imprisonment were charges on drugs. God allowed favor on him, but he could not fulfill the void in his life and continuously turned back to drugs. However, I knew in my heart that only God could change his suffering situation but what I am most thankful for his last days when he asked for forgiveness and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. It has been seven long years of painful memories but in this writing, I felt the freedom to release the grief, heal, and cherish the loving kindness and gentle caring spirit of my brother’s memories. He spent his life living the best that he knew how struggling with his circumstances and never had an opportunity to tell his story. I am the voice crying out in communities to let people know that prisoners who made bad choices, who are devalued, and forgotten in prisons, should have a second chance to be welcomed back into society after release to live a wholesome life.

Discussions of bad behaviors that lead to wrongful outcomes need further explanation as to how there are assorted reasons of motivating a person to perform an action as a favor and to justify the action that guides the individual’s emotional state. These issues are of great concerns are focused on individuals’ reasons for acting. For instance, when influenced by outsiders the reason in their view is to achieve favor for that person by reacting in a certain way. In the case the individual agrees to perform the favor thinking that it was the right thing to do even if there were doubts about the plans resulting in grave consequences. Jesus told stories about love and compassion that brought awareness to those around him as examples for all people to follow.
Jesus’s empathy stories expressed divine representations of God’s grace recommending man to do something on behalf of others to influence their opinions and actions. Jesus showed his empathetic mind and heart when he forgave sins and healed a man stricken with palsy at birth as an illustration of his sensitivity for his people. (Mark 2:1-12). Jesus told his disciples not to hinder the little children but to encourage them and protect them from others. Jesus expressed empathy for little children; they are valuable, resilience, humble, open to ideas. Parents can learn from their children’s weaknesses by loving and showing kindness for others. When Jesus saw the death and grief of a widow woman’s only son. Jesus brought him back to life. Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well but was rejected because Jews prohibited the community to deal with Samaritans. Jesus spoke to her despite the disciple’s disapproval, told her all about herself, and offered her living water as a gift of the Holy Spirit, eternal life, and salvation. The woman believed Jesus and ran off to tell her story making an impact on others who believed in Jesus when she voiced her testimony.

Prisoners who expressed empathy and compassion for those they victimized after reflecting on their guilt and shame may be able to transform their behaviors in restoring and living a healthy life. This is essential in managing ways to resolve specific disagreements in relationships that must be consciously studied and analyzed to understand the emotional and mental behaviors that leads to reactions for those who commit crimes. These individuals may realize that they have done something unacceptable and feel guilty after they have had time to reflect on their wrongful activities. They may not understand why they made these bad choices and could not deal with their own personal feelings based on what others thought about them. Shame is more overwhelming and lingers longer than guilt; for instance, when a person feels guilty for hurting others, it may be easier to be aware of the issue and act toward achieving a resolution instead of blaming someone.
else. When individuals’ aggressively harm others physically, mentally, or verbally, it causes sadness. Sometimes violent behaviors cause the person to immediately react to their emotions without thinking. Also, aggressive patterns can sometimes challenge social beliefs when displayed in the home and teaches children that violence is acceptable within the family to control others or to gain respect.

**Empathy Group I** – expressing empathy for those they victimized and the ability to act on processing the effects.

**Consequences of Daniel’s Empathy Story**

Daniel’s confidences and self-esteem enhanced by others in the group encouraged and showed love toward his views without judgment. He was more assertive in controlling his destiny that he applied for jobs within the prison obtaining more trusted roles working with others. He was also able to recognize his ability to understand and share his thoughts and feelings. Upon completing the Khulisa Program, Daniel was able to identify and improve his emotional state and to manage his behavior. He was able to deal with conflicts in a positive manner by reflecting on the impact of his actions in relations to his future goals.

**Consequences of Alex Rajan Nila’s Empathy Story**

After participating in the program Alex’s facilitator, parents, and teachers felt that he was able to identify his own challenges in class, manage them by overcoming the obstacles, focusing on what the teachers were saying. He expressed empathy towards others, especially addressing the difficulties he presented for his younger siblings realizing that they did not understand why he was so cruel. Acknowledging empathy allowed him to relate to them improving and strengthening their relationships developing relationships with others. Alex was more confident about his potentials.

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245 Khulisa, Daniel Empathy Case Study, (2017-2020), 02071832647, edited by Alfreda Reese
[https://www.khulisa.co.uk/case-studies/community/](https://www.khulisa.co.uk/case-studies/community/)
and considered going to a university after high school. He identified his future in pursuing a dream of becoming a sports coach. He focused on his lessons at school and demonstrated his awareness in consequential thinking including his feelings and the feelings of others. He adjusted more on his newfound goals to intentionally make choices and decisions with the positive results. He intends to manage any potential conflicts and work towards deflecting the thoughts of acting on any negative emotions.246

**Sympathy Group II** – expressing guilt, shame, and remorse but may not have been successful in reconnecting with families depending on their circumstances or accepted in their families and others they victimized.

**Consequences of Johnny Dwight Whited’s Sympathy Story**

What is often most crucial when prisoners’ stories find a solution is that families receive answers as to why tragedy happened to their loved ones. According to Detective Mukaddam, closure that Whited provided was part of his motive for calling in his confession. However, Whited refused to discuss his motive, but he did reveal that he did not know Christopher Dailey before he murdered him. He expressed remorse for his actions and after reflecting, he wished he had never committed this crime. The missing motive still frustrates the family but details about the murder revealed that Whited had consistence drug related arrests throughout his life. His arrest included drugs in his system three weeks after discovery of Christopher’s body. It was unclear if Whited patterns of drug offenses were in any way related to murdering Christopher Daily. Hence perhaps

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246 Khulisa, Alex’s Empathy Case Study (2017-2020), 02071832647, edited by Alfreda Reese, [https://www.khulisa.co.uk/case-studies/community/](https://www.khulisa.co.uk/case-studies/community/)
more details revealed at the trial will hopefully provide more answers and closure for Christopher Dailey’s family about the crime.247

**Consequences of Quezon Lopez’s Sympathy Story**

Upon completing parole, the support of the family ties is successful only during incarceration because the bond with family could help to motivate Lopez to change yet his family did not visit him.248 The children and family did not have power over their father’s bad choice, but they took control over their own lifestyles. They acknowledged what had happened in considering family relationships and decided to move forward considering their own self-awareness for deflecting a pattern of crimes. Lopez tried to show his family that he had changed, he wanted to bond with them and unite even though incarcerated. Lopez wanted them to welcome him back into the family to express his sympathy and to show his family that he felt remorseful about his circumstances. He wanted to repair the relationships with his family, but it was beyond his control. The children felt deprived by the terrible passion crime against on their mother, deprived by their father’s incarceration; and the father felt his crime caused him to loss his children. Lopez’s crime of passion and his imprisonment made an unpleasant situation worse with the family. The children did not visit their incarcerated father and treated him like a stranger.249


It is obvious that scholars have conflicting views concerning the underlying causes of people’s action. What people are thinking and how they perceive their circumstances at the time the ordeal takes place must take consideration. They react according to whether they feel their actions were right or wrong due to the complex position they find themselves involved in. They may justify their actions depending totally on what they believe when they make their decision to react. Hence scholars disagree on what is real; each case based on proof still may not result in a solid conclusion. Still unanswered questions carefully need evaluation to understand any underlying causes of an individual’s state of mind at the time of the incidents. These accounts depend on how people feel they should react, their motivation for the reactions, and the reasons they believe may justify what they plan to do. Lopez may have favored his reason for acting the way he did because to him his actions were reasonable; therefore, he felt he had a right to do what he did. There have been many complicated questions concerning the reasons why scholars have argued about these facts trying to decide if they are real or just ideas of definite and impartial existence. Several scholars have different viewpoints. John Mackie, argues that facts are not right, if they were they would have to be both real and provide a reason to the individuals who are conscious of them. Darwall, Smith, and Scanlon, contend that reasons and facts are a part of the reality and both are true. While Dancy rejects those reasons that could be true because they represent the way the world is and reasons are ways of the real world. These scholars believe that the issues are complicated and certainly need to be examined more carefully to discover what

is reasonable and practical. Underlying issues may not link to one set of rules, but the account of any given circumstance explained and justified by the persons in question should provide answers. Therefore, there may be much to consider based on the emotional and mental state of the person who commits the crime at the time of the incident. It may be that Lopez did not truly have a reason for murdering his wife but in his mind, he believed she had been unfaithful. To Lopez it was reasonable and motivated him to react violently. He felt certain that she had damaged his character, and he needed to rectify his status with her death from his perspective. Even if Lopez did not actually have a reason that favored his actions, he had a motivating reason for his actions based on a false claim. Smith 1994 and Dancy 2000, both expresses that this belief is normative.

Restoration Group III – expressing compassionate emotions, forgiven, accepted in families, churches, communities, and were able to heal.

Consequences of Louis Reed’s Restoration Story Louis laid the foundation to address a bipartisan criminal justice reform, now all that remains is the groundwork that has to be set in place with legislation and executive action to accomplish his endeavors. He has brought a wealth of experiences in government criminal justice expertise, policy advocacy, and public health after released from prison. Louis worked hard to connect with motivational influencers to free 20,000 individuals from federal prison striving effectively to close prison doors and open doors of opportunities. His goal is to transform prison policies to support prisoners’ whose lives diminished because they made bad choices that they wished they could turn back by converting miracles from mistakes. He did this by partnering and seeking leaders who believed in empathy and who desired to embrace hope in uniting people. Louis genuinely engaged people who would not give up but who would rise to the occasion in appreciation and admiration for justice reform. Louis Reed’s

254 Ibid.
experience in prison turned his life around. What was meant for evil, God turned it around for the good. He was repairing a dishwasher in his own property when violently attacked, and this confrontation landed him in prison. Caught off guard was Louis totally shocked about the treatment by the officers. While in prison he compared the threat of immoral behavior to something positive to help promote social acceptance and friendship. His goal was to strive forward and never look back at his past.

“He could infect the world with love, reconciliation, redemption, and grace. Restoration justice can heal a nation that is so divided. Assaulted and falsely arrested but, he still believed in overcoming darkness with light. He still believed those in this generation are re- framers of a new America. He believed we can build a bridge of empathy over the stagnant waters of apathy in this country. He still believed in human decency. He believes that all people should call each other up to their better selves because to doubt is to give up, and to give up is to die.”

Consequences of Micah Farley’s Restoration Story Micah revealed that his drug addiction was too big for him and that he could not recover along. Micah admitted that he had to transform his life, or he was going to die. The last few times he overdosed and was pronounced dead twice, but God allowed him a second chance to get his life in order. He realized he needed to change and after released from the hospital he decided to contact a rehabilitation program and check in to receive help in his situation. This was the greatest blessing for Micah and his family. He accepted Jesus Christ the true God turned his life around, and he began to have influence in the lives of others while he was in the program. He graduated and participated in various leadership positions, led others to Christ; and encouraged them to have faith and hope for the future. Micah stated that his message was simple; he felt lost, and God gave him directions, he was hopeless, and God gave him hope. Micah Farley’s girlfriend met the Lord through him and his patents. She

255 Louis Reed, I was Almost a #BlackLivesMatter Hashtag, October 27, 2020, edited by Alfreda Reese. https://louisreed.medium.com/i-was-almost-a-blacklivesmatter-hashtag8cf6b75131
watched the Lord work miracles in Micah’s life to change him. He was not the same. Jesus was his best friend he found peace, happiness, and joy at heart in his transformed life more than ever before. Micah’s experience in the Teen Challenge Program completely fulfilled his life, and the void he was trying to overcome became fulfilled. He spent a year in this program where his heart was draw to the Lord, and he helped his family strive to be even better. His parents prayed that the Lord would return their son to them, and God gave more than they could ask. Micah knows that if anyone is struggling with an addiction, they can find freedom in God and live a healthy life outside of an addiction from their troubled circumstances. Micah has been an inspiration to others by restoring relationships with his family and their families. He married his girlfriend, and they are raising a son (Josiah) and living a comfortable life.\textsuperscript{256}

\textbf{Reconciliation Group IV} – Received God’s grace, forgiveness for their crimes, accepted with families, friends, churches, and communities in rebuilding relationships.

\textbf{Consequences of Amy James’ Reconciliation Story}

Amy has made great progress towards the goals she set for herself in securing accommodations for independent living arrangements. She secured employment as a Volunteer Co-Ordinator for low-cost sociable lodging, managed the volunteers, and all administration of the volunteering program. She applied to complete a diploma in a course in Helping, Mentoring Communities, and applied to be on the Youth Volunteering Team. Amy’s friends accepted her into an Expert Advisory Panel for a national charity and used her homeless experience to create policy and practice, as well as to support young people in her local community.\textsuperscript{257}

\textbf{Consequences of Julius Jones’ Reconciliation Story}

\textsuperscript{256} Jeffrey Bates, Prodigal - Micah’s Story, 13:55, (Jan. 15, 2016), edited by Alfreda Reese Video.search.yahoo.com
\textsuperscript{257} Khulisa, Amy James Case Study, (2017-2020), 02071832647, edited by Alfreda Reese, https://www.khulisa.co.uk.case-studies/schools
The day before Julius’ execution was set, the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit asserted that Julius’ execution could not take place before he participated in a federal lawsuit alongside other Oklahoma death row prisoners. The federal trial is set for February 2022 in Oklahoma which challenges the state’s lethal injection processes as an unconstitutional and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment. This order allegedly should prevent the state from conducting the execution until the federal district court addresses the credible expert criticism it identified in Oklahoma’s execution procedures. Reviewed by the court at the trial as well, the Attorney General’s office vowed to appeal the decision to the United States Supreme Court in the hope that they will vacate the stay so that justice will be served for the people of Oklahoma to include families of the victims of these dreadful crimes.

This controversial issue of Jones has attracted a great deal of public attention and high-profile celebrities advocates like Kim Kardashian and star athletes. The appeal for Julius had rescheduled each time just before his execution date and he has not been able to voice his story, to speak his truth, or for others to hear. Julius’ life is still pinning uncertainty of awaiting a resolution. Madeline Jones-Davis supports the campaign for Julius Jones and states that, “Jones has always had roots in the faith community because there are several ministers who are part of the campaign.” These ministers believe and agree that Jesus cares about Justice, faith leaders, and Christians must care as well. There is reference to Micah 6:8 – “The Lord require us to do justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with God.” Coupled with Mark 12:30-31 – “Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And with all thy

strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

**Non-transformation Group V** – expressing non-transformation repeated offenders who did not show empathetic minds, hearts, or change in behaviors towards victims, and were not successful in communicating or reconnecting with families, friends, churches, or communities.

**Consequences of Diane Downs’ Non-transformation Story**

The lawyers were concerned because Christie was extremely emotional and traumatized and not able to manage the pressure told the court that her mother stopped the car and got something from the truck. She remembered her mother leaning in the car shooting, Cheryl first, Danny, Christie, and then she shot herself, and drove slowly to the hospital. Diane was guilty but she still tried to convince everyone that she was innocent. Before sentencing she was pregnant again and gave birth to a baby girl (Amy Elizabeth) who was adopted and renamed (Rebecca). Diane’s exam by the psychiatrist confirmed that she was narcissistic and had antisocial personality disorders. Diane escaped prison and is considered. The authorities found a clipboard of a map and an address where they found Diane and transferred her to a maximum-security prison. Diane was charged with one count of murder Cheryl, 2 counts of attempted murder Christie and Danny, and criminal assault. Diane’s youngest daughter Becky was living a great life but as she matured she felt lost and thought because she was related to Diane she would follow her mother’s pattern. Becky turned to drugs, dropped out of school, and ran away from her foster parents. She then reached out to Diane in prison, confused and trying to process Diane’s situation, later she became sound and healthy. Becky concluded that because she was biologically related to Diane, she decided she did not have to be like her mother. She decided to avoid the cycle by not imitating her mother’s pattern. Becky changed the flow of her life by working hard, getting her life in order, and
was a great mother to her son (Chris). She received a degree in psychology and worked as a behavior health coordinator for children. There was also a happy conclusion for Diane’s other children (Christie and Danny). They were both adopted by one of the prosecutors in Diane’s case. (Fred Hugi). Tragically Danny became paralyzed from the waist down and Christie has a speech impediment. They lived a peaceful life with their family, and they stay out of the media.²⁵⁹

## Chart 2 - Analysis of Nine Personal Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Guilt</th>
<th>Shame</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Embarrass</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>Sympathy</th>
<th>Restore</th>
<th>Reconcile</th>
<th>Non-Transformation</th>
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<td>Physical</td>
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<td>Emotional Aggressive</td>
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<td>Physical</td>
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<td>Emotion</td>
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<td>Quezon</td>
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<td>Amy</td>
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### Possible crossover of prisoners emotional and mental state of mind at the time of the crimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prisoneers</th>
<th>Crossover</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel, Louis, Micah, &amp; Amy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex, &amp; Lopez</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Empathy** – Daniel’s guilt, shame, and aggressive behavior transformed from a volatile childhood to confidence when he shared his thoughts and feelings. His peers showed him love when he told his personal story without judgment. Daniel was restored, reconciled, and was able to identify and control his emotions positively toward future endeavors.

**Empathy** – Alex’s was troubled but after participating in a rehabilitation program, his facilitators and parents felt he was able to cope with his challenges of emotional abuse. When he expressed empathy towards others, it allowed him to improve and focused on his future goals for by making decisions that afforded him positive results and a way to deflect negative emotions.

**Sympathy** – Johnny Dwight Whited – expressed sympathy indicating the crime he committed. He felt remorseful for Christopher Daily’s family and wanted to bring closure to what he had done after twenty-five years. Whited refused to discuss his motive, but he did reveal that he did not know Christopher Dailey before he murdered him. When a person acts in ignorance, they do so because they feel they must but there are reasons that justify doing something even if there are conclusive reasons against committing the act. These reasons are justified if the individual does not know the reason he committed a wrongful act. Austin noted there must be a difference between a justification and an excuse and when people accused of wrongdoing, they may offer a justification, which aims to show that what they did was right because there was a reason for doing it. Whited revealed having consistence drug related arrests throughout his life and abused the substance. Scholars suggest that a person’s favored actions, his motivations, and his explanations are three reasons defended by various authors.²⁶⁰

Motivating and explanatory have different labors for the same reason for intended actions. There is more than one interpretation regarding motivating and explanatory reason of diverse kinds. Darwall 1983 and Dancy 2000, offer the view that the same reason can answer the questions about motivating and justification even if they are not able to see the difference between the questions, nor if they oppose recognizing two kinds of reasons making them true for both motivating and explanatory. (25) At times the same reason answers two questions about motivating and explanation. On the other hand, a reason that motivates the action can always explain it, but a reason that explains the action is not always the reason that motivates it.

**Sympathy – Lopez’s** story was particularly unique because various scholars studied and investigated his case. Their answers to reasons for why these individuals’ committed the crimes are still questionable. Scholars discussed reasonings on mental and emotional states time and time again trying to determine whether they are real or abstract. John Mackie argue that the details are not moral which would be accurate and motivating to the person who should be aware of them. S. Darwall contends that reasons and facts are both true. Other scholars rejected the reasons because they could be true and are characteristics of the real world. Lopez may have favored his reason for acting the way he did because to him his actions were reasonable, and he felt he had the right to commit the crime. Scholars also believe that the issues are complicated and

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needs investigating further to discover what was reasonable and practical. The cause of underlying causes of crimes may be different depending on the individual’s state of mind with any situation experience and justified by the person in question. Scholars talk about a personal reason and a purpose for executing a crime. Lopez could have had a personal reason for murdering his wife.\textsuperscript{266} According to Williams 1979, the reason for acting depends on the facts and not on the person’s beliefs. Williams believes that ignorance and misunderstandings sometimes bring on a perceived false thought. Still did Lopez have a reason to murder his wife? The answer depends on the facts, which Lopez had no evidence to murder his wife but by contrast his perspective involved a reasonable false claim that he should react to what he believed. If Lopez felt that he was rational and acted accordingly even if he did not know all the pertinent facts, he did what he believed was reasonable from his judgment. Yet there are still certain cases where people justify their reactions when there are conclusive reasons against it. They feel justified because they do not know the reasons why they committed the act. This may support the evidence that show the reasons people have depended on their perspectives at the initial emotional state of the incident.\textsuperscript{267} Jealousy in Lopez’s case was not the reason that motivated him to act violently. The explanation referring to Lopez’s jealousy thus far was not rationalized by his actions, but it did not explain his actions stated by scholars showing the existence of truth or by evidence.\textsuperscript{268}

I am continuously drawn back to Quezon Lopez’s story because it brings to mind logical disagreements about questions that are inconsistent. What was the reason for his actions, why was he motivated to act, and what explains his reason for actions?\textsuperscript{269} Did Lopez believed she was

\textsuperscript{266} M. Schroeder Having Reasons, Philosophical Studies. (2008): 139:57-71,  
\textsuperscript{267} B. A O. Williams, Internal and External Reasons, reprinted in his, Moral Luck, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 10-113. \url{https://plato.standard.edu/entries/reasons-just-vs-expl/}  
\textsuperscript{268} Marie Alvarez, Reasons for Action: Justification, Motivation, Explanation, edited by Alfreda Reese. \url{https://plato.standard.edu/entries/reasons-just-vs-expl/}  
\textsuperscript{269} Ibid.
unfaithful which described his negative and undesirable behavior? Not reasonable this crime could have been based on his emotional state. The other reason may have been his explanation why he believed she was unfaithful and his actions on his claim of infidelity. His motivating reason could have been because he believed it. These reasons may be treatments of motivating and explaining separately and issues of diverse kinds, where the undesirable behavior created an independent fact. Additionally, the opposite issue was the motivating reason that explains Lopez’s mental state for what he believed.

Lopez thought his action was right, but the reasons did not express what related to his mental and emotional state, which was his painful belief of his wife’s infidelity. Jealousy was an indication of his reason, but it was not the motivating reason. On the other hand, the explaining and motivating reasons may have differed even if the reason explained his action and referred to what motivated him to act because he believed she was unfaithful. This argument explains why he acted, but because believing her infidelity was not the real reason, he committed the crime. The reason in his mind favored harm to punish her for what he thought was infidelity. This reason was significant because it was what Lopez believed without having any knowledge of truth. His wife was not disloyal, and the punishment could not have been what explained his actions and the issue could not explain the situation to prove the explanation of this controversial situation.

S. Darwall’s comments on punishment disagrees with Dancy and Michael Smith. Darwall notes that Dancy says that reasons are punishment if a person chooses to favor their actions, but the motives are combinations of mental states, of believing and desiring. Dancy says this explains

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https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reasons-just-vs-expl/
the way a person acts. Smith refers to the reasons that explain the person’s actions. Motivated by what he thought was right, Lopez acted on what he believed were his reasons because it defended his character whereby murdering his wife was the only solution. If he had decided to not murder his wife as the only end to his problem in defending his status, he would not have murdered her despite his reputation or her betrayal. Scholars note that acceptance of explanatory reasons are mental states but not distinguished from motivating reasons and motivating reasons are mental states, too. These psychological views indicate that underlying causes are inconclusive and requires more research to identify individual’s emotional behaviors for better results in critical or unusual situations. Returning to opportunities for monitoring and communicating more ways to help young children at an early age is essential in deflecting repeated patterns of crimes even if they are vulnerable to family violence or to social groups.

**Restoration – Louis’** story was allegedly based on a claim that landed him in prison for almost fourteen-years. He expressed shame and embarrassment, yet he transformed his life in prison for the good of the people by carefully laying a foundation to address a bipartisan criminal justice reform. He brought a wealth of experiences in government justice after his release from prison. Louis connected with motivational influencers to free individuals from federal prisons and transformed polices to support inmates’ devalued lives because they made bad decisions. His goal was to seek a leader who believed in empathy and those who desired hope in uniting people who embraced justice reform.

Louis connected to reality while serving in prison when he became interested in the Bible, studying, and deciding unapologetically to turn his life over to Jesus Christ,. He gained a great deal of knowledge and transformed his mind and heart. He remembered and realized a quote stated

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272 Ibid.
by criminal Justice advocate Glenn Martin and agreed with Martin that the people who are, “Closest to the problems are usually closest to the solutions, but they are furthest away from the power and resources.” Presently, he is working on efforts to remove prisoners from prison giving them second chances and opportunities to come home, restore healthy lives and contribute to their families, churches, and communities.273

**Restoration – Micah** displayed physical, emotional, and aggressive behavior toward others from an early age. Micah realized that his behavior was out of control after participating in a rehabilitation program, he accepted Christ and revealed his loss, and God gave him directions, he was hopeless, and God gave him hope. Micah was not the same God had fulfilled the void in his life and made him whole again and became an inspiration to others by restoring relationships with his family, friends, church, and community.

**Reconciliation – Amy’s** story after enrolling in a rehabilitation program exhibited great progress towards her future. She knew she had to establish a positive process to manage her guilt, shame, and aggressive behavior where she violated herself and the rights of others. Amy secured housing and applied for employment, accepted by an Advisory Panel into a national charity and used her experience to create policies and practices and supported young people in her community.

**Reconciliation Julius** – For the past 23-years Julius has been in prison illegally for a crime he claims his innocence. His case has attracted public attention across these United States and abroad. Because his community is rooted in faith leaders, a coalition of ministers, supporters, and the community at-large are joining together for prayer and reflection to address the key role faith leaders play in the Justice for Julius Case. Julius is presently in prison but people from laypeople, missionaries, musicians, preachers, celebrities, and star athletes have forgiven him and calls in to

support the quest for Julius’ release from prison. Julius expressed empathy and sympathy for the victim’s family.

**Non-transformation – Diane** displayed aggressive emotions at an early age when she started dating against her parents’ wishes. Throughout her life she was troubled and seemed to think only about herself and the things she wanted. She was unfaithful to her husband and got pregnant. When the love of her life ended their relationship, she staged a scheme to murder her children. Diane’s examination by a psychiatrist and diagnosis confirmed that she was narcissistic and had antisocial personality disorders. She did not show sympathy, an empathetic mind, heart, or a change in her behavior for her children and appeared relieved when the doctor reported their critical conditions. The detectives questioned Diane about the night she critically wounded her children, but she deceived the investigators hoping to gain personal advantages. Diane was not successful in communicating or reconnecting with families, friends, churches, or communities. This study explored incarcerated individuals’ emotional behaviors at the time they committed criminal activities. The prisoners’ personal information made effective use in gathering purposively selected published stories. An observational approach availed further understanding of nine stories placed in five distinctive emotional groups to analyze reasons for committing crimes at the initial state of mind.

Although I hope that the lives of prisoners will transform and restore them back into society after a process of rehabilitation, there are still those who may not experience a successful outcome. There are rehabilitation programs offered in prison that can assist prisoners with various underlying factors that led them to prison. As well as programs to improve their confidence in leading a healthy and productive crime-free life upon release. Mark Leech the editor of Prison Oracle welcomed Sir Martin Narey’s comments of expecting offenders to reform after thrown into
prisons with poor opportunities, drugs, alcohol, violence, and gang members. These offenders suffered in an impossible situation experiencing abuse and filthy conditions over a period of time.\textsuperscript{274} The inmates tend to remain defiant due to a lack of respect, low self-esteem, or they display an aggressive behavior to harm others mentally, physical, emotionally, and verbally. They show no empathy, sympathy, they do not care about the ones they victimize, and were not successful uniting with families, churches, or communities. These prisoners may not want to change by choice because of the inability to provide for themselves and their families. They must strive to change, repent, and turn their lives over to Christ as their personal Savior who is the only one that can fill the emptiness or void, they may be experiencing in order to live a wholesome life.

This study is not a first recording of prisoners, but it explores in detail an attempt to ask families, faith leaders, churches, and communities to genuinely look closely and carefully at a view of imprisonment from the eyes of the prisoners. Possibly appealing to readers to help draw others into gaining an inside assessment of incarcerated individuals’ choices of bad behaviors in a unique way. It is definitely a request for faith leaders and others to play a more active role with prisoners by administering love, wisdom, hope, and restoring prisoners to a full and healthy lifestyle after their release. This is an attempt to challenge families, faith leaders and communities to provide better services for the prisoners and to do what God instructed us to do to help those devalued. Faith leaders’ awareness can bring about change not just in conversations but by taking actions to partnering with organizations for assisting families, churches, and communities. Providing prisoners with educational skills and job placements as a start making it possible for inmates to survive after release. Clergy can use their influence to connect churches and communities with resources, seek volunteers to help with firsthand workshops, and design trainings to shape inmates

\textsuperscript{274} Diane Taylor, Prisons and Probation UK Criminal Justice, News. Oct. 29, 2019, 02.00 EDT.  
https://www.theguardian.com
thinking while working together managing resolutions. Allowing the prisoners an opportunity to
tell their stories and finding people who will assist them in bonding, trusting, and rebuilding
relationships towards learning human behaviors and qualities to bring change. The time is now
that faith leaders need to be conscious enough to move to action on behalf of the prisoners by being
real in our endeavors and strategically intentional in our approach towards transformation. Clergy
can be a great inspiration to prisoners in a heartfelt manner when they give the prisoners a chance
to reconnect with the society at large. I believe we can do so much more to transform the lives of
those devalued and forgotten. I also believe that when allowing the inmates opportunities to share
their subjective experiences with those who desire to be effective, it could be the beginning of new
and accepting endeavors. Jesus’ stories of empathy were examples and instructions for all people
to follow because Jesus was always sensitive to others’ experiences (Matthew 9:36). Jesus showed
compassion for sinners, healed, and forgave them for their bad choices. God is the greatest
empathizer because he first loved us, (1 John 4:36) and we must be able to show our love. For
those who claim to engage in prison ministry, this study may be of interest in dealing with these
prisoners. An awareness for understanding is vital in finding out more about the prisoners’
emotions in communicating with their families and building better relationships. The information
is crucial for connecting families, churches, and communities in assisting prisoners to
communicate the effects of crimes with their children and for uncovering stories throughout future
generations. Incarcerated parents can encourage their children in hopes of preventing them from
doing something deliberately unnecessary causing extreme consequences. Such as unforeseen
repercussions that may result in unwarranted and inappropriate actions that usually disrupt the
family system.
The significance of the study is to unite prisoners with the aspirations of gradually restoring them back into churches, communities and developing a personal relationship with the Lord. I pray that I can be the voice for those devalued prisoners who may want to regain their dignity. I want to be the voice crying out to faith leaders and others to listen to the prisoners’ stories with compassion, hear their experiences, and move in actions toward accepting them. I also want to be a willing servant providing support to assisting them in achieving good choices despite their bad choices because fear and doubt may consume their lives when they feel lost and forgotten. I realize that inmates may be angry because they feel a void, they desire comfort, and freedom in fulfilling their confined lives. Only God can calm their physical, mental, aggressive behaviors, and bring peace to those prisoners. Even as I am writing about the acceptance of prisoners and allowing them a chance to voice their stories, I believe that God can do what no man can do but the prisoners must have a desire to transform their lives. I hope that clergy will assist in the journey to restore the inmates back to a full and healthy lifestyle by loving, forgiving, and welcoming them back into churches and in the communities.

**Group I** – prisoners in the Empathy Group expressed compassion for those they victimized and acted in their ability on processing the effects. Both Daniel and Alex displayed guilt, shame, and aggressive behaviors towards those they abused. After participating in rehabilitation programs, they were able to recognize the abilities to share their thoughts and feelings. They both expressed empathy and strengthened their relationships with others. However, their emotional and mental state of minds were questionable. They both were able to control their behaviors in a positive manner and work towards healthy lives for the future.

**Group II** – prisoners who felt pity, sorrow, or remorse for those they victimized. In the Sympathy Group Johnny explained that he did not know Christopher Dailey before he murdered
him, but he expressed guilt, shame, and remorse for his actions and wished he had never committed the crime and actually wanted to confess to the murder. Lopez also expressed sympathy for his crime and tried to reunite with his family feeling remorseful after reflecting behind prison walls. He wanted to repair his relationship with his family, but his children refused to associate with him because they lost their mother to Lopez’s crime and their father to imprisonment. They decided to live wholesome lives for their future endeavors.

Group III – prisoners who were able to unite with families, churches, communities, forgiven, able to heal, and rebuild relationships to achieve success after release. In the Restoration Group both Louis and Micah restored their lives back into society and assisted others in life changing experiences. Louis declared his innocence when after his false arrest while repairing a dishwasher in his own property. He changed a disheartening experience of shame, embarrassment, and humiliation into a positive quest to reformed others. After spending fourteen-years in prison, his goal was to support devalued inmates because they made bad choices in life. His desire was to infect the world with love, restoration, liberation, and mercy in living a well transformed life. Micah displayed physical, emotional, aggressive behavior, and felt guilt, and shame for his bad choices. After entering a rehabilitation program his whole life changed. Micah’s addiction to drugs was too big for him because he could not fulfill the void in his life. When he accepted Christ God allowed him a second chance to get his life in order. Micah found peace and freedom in God and is now living a healthy life outside of his troubled circumstances restoring relationships with family and friends.

Group IV – prisoners who received God’s grace, forgiveness for their crimes, accepted, and they were able to reconnect with families. In the Reconciliation Group both Amy and Julius reconciled their behaviors, forgiven by communities, and connected with friends. Amy’s changed
her physical, emotional, and aggressive behavior from guilt and shame to take control over her life. Amy restored her life back into the community and transformed to live well by sharing her experiences with others. Although Julius is still in prison on death row and has been for the past twenty-three-years, faith groups in his community support him and keeps him covered in a religious setting with spiritual leaders and faithful crowds across these United States. They visit him regularly and are committed to fighting for his case at the federal trial. He has expressed sympathy for the victims’ family and still contends that he is innocent of this crime.

**Group V** – prisoners who repeated crimes, lack empathic minds and hearts, showed no change in their behaviors towards those they victimized, and were not successful in connecting with families, friends, or society at-large. In the Non-transformation Group Diane’s unsettled and disturbed problems started from an early age where she was not able to change her behavior throughout her life. She was consistently disingenuous about her crimes and did not feel guilt, shame, or sympathy. Nor did she attempt to comfort her children after shooting them and wounding herself. She was a repeat offender and was only concerned about what she wanted in life. Diane is in maximum security prison; she still contends that she is innocence and is going to get away with her crimes, she enjoys the spotlight attention like the crimes did not matter to her. The inmates’ bad choices brought their sufferings, but it also uncovered who they were to self and others. These bad decisions may have helped them rebuild their lives, which is how God teaches through sinful experiences perfectly designed for them to learn what God wanted them to see.

Each group regards results as inconclusive because there was not a true prediction for the prisoners’ state of mind at the initial time of the incident. More detailed investigations in research is essential to explored further understanding of the reasons for committing such dreadful crimes. I hope that prisoners with children released from prison can provide an analysis in detail to identify
additional mental and emotional behaviors at the original state of the incident. More research can assist over time for an understanding of the prisoners’ crimes motives. Each crime committed is uniquely different and needs more answers to question depending on the nature of the incident at the initial point of action. There was no proof of predicted resolutions to these stories and in the non-transformation group. Diane’s story displayed no personal feelings or concerns for others and there were no indications of what her mental state was when she committed the crimes. Therefore, this study has consequences that appear inconclusive. The calling of Jesus is twofold as an ethical calling to society to hear and embrace the stories of prisoners while encouraging prisoners to embrace a future of being heard and transformed.
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