A Practical Guide for a New 21st Century Prison Outreach Ministry Model - Mass Incarceration, Criminal Reform and Reentry-The Role and Response of Churches and Para-Church Organizations

Robert G. Danage
Southern Methodist University, robertdanage@mhd.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.smu.edu/theology_ministry_etds

Part of the Practical Theology Commons, and the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholar.smu.edu/theology_ministry_etds/19

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Perkins Thesis and Dissertations at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry Projects and Theses by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit http://digitalrepository.smu.edu.
A Practical Guide for a New 21st Century
Prison Outreach Ministry Program Model

Mass Incarceration, Criminal Justice Reform, and Reentry

The Role and Response of Churches and Para-Church Organizations

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of
Perkins School of Theology
Southern Methodist University

In
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the degree of
Doctor of Ministry

By

Chaplain Robert G. Danage

Date
April 15, 2022
ABSTRACT

The numbers are staggering and shocking. The United States of America leads all nations in having more people incarcerated in its federal and state prisons, jails, and detention centers. This thesis project is the lived experience of having had a ringside seat of human depravity and the effects of mass incarceration. Over the past 30 years, I have been on the front lines serving the inside behind the impenetrable menacing walls of our nation’s federal prison system (DOJ-FBOP), State prison system in Texas (TDCJ) as well as inside of a Naval Brig doing ministry as a Chaplain. This project aims to put forth a new 21st-century prison outreach model for churches and para-church organizations to reimagine how to do prison outreach ministry in addressing mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.
I dedicate this work to my wife, Karen A. Danage. She not only joined me in holy matrimony in May of 1985 after we first met in August 1982 on the campus of Oral Roberts University but also joined me as a public servant for the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons in September of 1991. I served as a chaplain, and Karen started her career as a corrections officer. Over the past 30 years, she has held various positions of increasing responsibilities within the Federal Bureau of Prisons, including Senior Officer Specialist and Human Resource Assistant at various federal prisons. In September 1995, Karen served as a Human Resource Employee Benefits Specialist in the Central Office of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. She held this same position in the Consolidated Services Center in Grand Prairie, Texas. After a distinguished career in the Bureau of Prisons, Karen retired in 2015. She has stood by my side as she and I have been on the front lines of prison ministry in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Today First Lady Karen Danage continues her prison outreach ministry with me in our Non-Profit Faith Without Walls Prison Ministry. She is the author of two books, Girlfriends and Destiny - One Hundred Original Inspirational Sayings.

To our three beautiful children: Maurice is an Administrator with the Youngstown Independent School District. Deyon served our nation as a U.S. Army Veteran and is currently seeking a career in law enforcement to become a Sheriff. His goal is to become an FBI Agent or U.S. Marshall.
Kayla, our precious daughter, is an aspiring nursing student at the University of Texas at Arlington. (UTA). Kayla maintains a 3.85 GPA. She also works as a Patient Care Technician (PCT) alongside me at Methodist Midlothian Medical Center. Along with Karen, the children are my inspiration and motivation. They can tell you firsthand what it is like to live with someone whose purpose, passion, and mission is doing prison ministry. I could not have written this thesis project and done chaplaincy ministry without them being by my side. I owe them an eternal debt of gratitude. Finally, I dedicate this work to my late beloved parents, Grover and Elaine A. Danage. They have passed on to be with our Lord, but they continue to live through my work and ministry. I wish they were here to see what they birth in me and my loving siblings: Lynn, Patricia, Cheryl, Loretta, and Avery. They are wise, strong, compassionate, hardworking, and committed Christians. I will always be grateful for them. They are the ones who nurtured the call and encouraged me to dream big. Many relatives, friends, pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, coaches, professors, colleagues, and co-workers, current and past, have supported this vision and sacred work. They know who they are, and I cherish their love, support, admiration, correction, encouragement, and insight. I especially admire their love for God and His Church.

God be the Glory for what Jesus has done and is doing by the Holy Spirit!
Contents

ABSTRACT 2
Acknowledgments 3
Contents 5
Introduction 8
Chapter One 12
My Call To The Federal Prison Chaplaincy Ministry
Chapter Two 24
The Advent of the American Penal System Prisons: An American Historical Overview
Timeline of the Rise of the Modern American Prison System
Chapter Three 38
Mass Incarceration, Criminal Justice Reform and Reentry- Its Causes and Effect: Misdemeanors, Plea Bargains, the Criminalization of Drugs, Namely Marijuana, Crack Cocaine, and Conspiracy Charges
Mass Incarceration- The impact of Misdemeanors
Mass Incarceration- The War on Drugs
Chapter Four 52
Mass Incarceration In The Federal Bureau Of Prisons
Its Impact on Communities of Color-Race, Ethnicity, And Gender
Mass Incarceration- Women in Prison
Chapter Five 77
Mass Incarceration-The Answer to a New Economic Transformation in America
Mass Incarceration - A political weapon of mass destruction
Chapter Six 93
Mass Incarceration, Criminal Justice Reform and Reentry -Its Impact on Those Inside of Them. A Day In Inside the Life of A Prison: What Goes On Inside Of Them and What They Do To
People (Rapes, Sexual Assaults, Homicides, and Suicides, Prions, Riots, Hostages, Beatings, Gambling, Drugs)

Sexual Assaults, Physical Beatings, and Verbal Attacks

Communicable Diseases

Homicides

Suicides

Depression, Guilt, Anger, Psychosis, Mental Health

Gambling

Special Housing Unit

Chapter Seven

Prison Riots and Hostages

Chapter Seven 115

Mass Incarceration, Criminal Justice Reform, and Reentry

Early Reformers in this movement included exceptional individuals: Theologians, Politicians, and activists who experienced incarcerated and their contributions to this movement:

Elizabeth Frey

Mahatma “great soul” Gandhi

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dorothy Day

Nelson Mandela

Martin Luther King Jr.

Chuck Colson

Chapter Eight 129

Mass Incarceration, Criminal Justice Reform, and Reentry

Prisons and The Social Order And Response

Chapter Nine 143

Mass Incarceration, Criminal Justice Reform, and Reentry? The Role and Responsibility of The Church

Chapter Ten 155

Mass Incarceration, Criminal Justice Reform, and Reentry – Crime and Punishment


The Law

Criminals

The Courts

Chapter Eleven 168

Race, Recidivism, Reform, and Reentry
Ubuntu: The Indigenous Ethos of Restorative Justice

Chapter Twelve 174

Reentry, Reintegration, Restoration, Reconciliation, and Responsibility

Bibliography 189

Appendix A 195

Appendix B

Introduction
Mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, and recidivism are significant issues affecting America’s culture, social institutions, and structures. Important to emphasize is that these issues have also infiltrated and impacted churches of all denominations and para-church organizations. The most conservative statistics suggest that these issues will continue unforeseeably affecting our secular and sacred institutions. Incidents involving police misconduct that resulted in numerous deaths exacerbate these matters; they, too, impact churches of all denominations. George Floyd, Brianna Taylor, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, and Freddie Gray, to name a few, died because of police brutality. Jacob Blake, also a victim of police brutality, was paralyzed. Mass shootings in our houses of worship, grocery stores, malls, and schools are now common in America. In addition, racial injustice has gained momentum in the mainstream media, organizations, and individuals in these affected communities due to its negative consequences. This project aims to present a new twenty-first-century prison ministry program model for inmates in prison, ex-offenders (returning citizens), and their family members by exploring the role and response of churches and para-church organizations in doing something about mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.

To achieve the project’s objective, I extensively draw upon my more than thirty years of ministry experience as a practitioner. During my time in the ministry, I served as a staff chaplain, department head-supervisory chaplain, and regional chaplaincy administrator for the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). I also served as a Chaplain in the United States Navy Reserves (USNR) for ten years. While serving as a navy reserve chaplain, I did some chaplaincy ministry at the U.S. Naval Air Station Pensacola Brig - Correctional Center in Pensacola, Florida.
Additionally, I served as the Reentry Chaplain for the Texas Department of Corrections and Criminal Justice (TDCJ)-Probation and Parole Division in Tyler, Texas. Currently, I am the manager of the Pastoral Services Department at Methodist Midlothian Medical Center. It is one of the six hospitals operating with the Methodist Health System in Dallas, Texas. Within each of our medical centers, we occasionally provide medical services to current inmates from various correctional institutions with the Dallas, Fort Worth Motorplex. Additionally, ex-offenders (returning citizens) who reside in the community use these medical centers for healthcare needs. They face unique challenges, especially accessing affordable health care upon their release into society. The incarceration experience poses unique mental, physical, spiritual, and psycho-social dynamics that impact their overall health.

I am the Founder, President, and CEO of Faith Without Walls Prison Outreach ministry (FWWP), a 501.3© Non-Profit Faith-Based, Federal Offenders Reentry Initiative (FORI). This prison outreach ministry provides transitional programs and services for offenders, ex-offenders (returning citizens), and family members. Some of the programs and services offered by (FWWP) include anger management, conflict resolution, employment, job training services, financial management and budgeting, counseling, and crisis intervention. We also offer parenting skills, religious education, spiritual direction, drug treatment, substance abuse, righting the wrong-victim impact services, and dressing for success. Faith Without Walls Prison Outreach ministry also provides training, consultation, and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies, community organizations, colleges and universities, the courts, schools, businesses, and local, state, and federal government agencies on criminal justice issues.
Throughout this thesis project, I share the real stories and experiences of countless individuals and family members of current and former inmates who have spent decades in prisons. These descriptions will also include stories and experiences of those who work in them, current and retired law enforcement officials. These stories and experiences are a matter of public record. Finally, I will share my personal experiences of how mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry have impacted me, some family members, relatives, and close friends.

This thesis project will present a concise history of crime and punishment, an American overview of the advent of prisons and mass incarceration regarding the large number of individuals locked up in our nation’s jails, prisons, and detention centers. A particular emphasis is on mass incarceration's impact on communities of color. In addition, I will discuss the causes and effects of mass incarceration, its relationship to race and gender, and the biblical mandate for prison ministry. I will also present a practical guide for a new twenty-first-century prison ministry model for churches and para-church faith-based organizations. The model also serves as a resource guide for churches and secular organizations. The proposed model may enable churches and non-church organizations to develop, enhance, and implement new and improved effective prison ministry initiatives for the twenty-first century. The model may include using the proposed model to develop prison strategies that are impactful, relevant, and transformative for crime prevention, reducing recidivism, and methods to successfully transition ex-offenders- (returning citizens) back into society. All scriptural citations in this thesis project will be from the King James Version (KJV) translation of the Bible. Scripture verses cited in this thesis project are for practical application as to how they may motivate and inspire persons of faith, churches, and para-church organizations to do something about the problems of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.
Scriptures cited and used by direct referenced sources will maintain the authors noted biblical quotations, which may not be from the King James Version (KJV). “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction for instruction in righteousness that the Man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

This thesis project is my personal story based on my more than thirty years of correctional professional experiences as a chaplain in mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. What this looks like inside the federal bureau of prisons system. The devastating effects it has outside in communities across America, especially in communities of color.

1 2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)
Here in this first chapter, I introduce some significant personal and professional events which impacted and paved the way for me to embrace and pursue the ministry call to federal prison chaplaincy. These events are what shaped my life and work experiences beginning from my childhood through a most rewarding, exciting, yet challenging, and demanding ministry assignment. These stories and the people involved were actual occurrences that are compelling and transformative. They are personal and private. They are also a part of the public record.

On August 31, 1988, I got hired by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to work for the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Consequently, this was the start of my federal prison chaplaincy ministry. Since 1988, I have had the opportunity to serve in different correctional agencies and witnessed the worst human depravity of individuals serving time in American prisons, jails, and detention centers for over thirty years. During my service time, I was on the front lines addressing issues related to mass incarceration, the need for criminal justice reforms, and reentry initiatives. For over thirty years, I ministered within and outside prisons, jails, and detention centers, primarily federal, state and county facilities. I have witnessed an up-close and personal view of the impact on incarcerated individuals in these facilities, their families, and the communities affected, especially communities of color.

As a Staff Chaplain and Supervisory Department head Chaplain, I served in nine federal prisons throughout the country. I also served in the position of Regional Chaplaincy Administrator for the Federal Bureau of Prisons in the Mid-Atlantic region, which comprised twenty-five federal prisons covering the following states: Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio,
Michigan, Indiana, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Indiana. In this role, I traveled extensively to recruit, staff, train, and develop chaplains. I also provided technical assistance and support to field institution chaplains and corrections officials who served in these institutions and administrative offices.

I was also the Bureau's lead chaplain on the Crisis Management Support Team (CMST). I provided pastoral care, critical incident stress management, and debriefings to the Bureau of Prisons staff and their families in this position. I also offered the same services to inmates and their families impacted by critical incidents and natural disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, hostage situations, staff and inmate suicides, homicides, and prison riots.

I was also the lead chaplain on the Bureau's execution protocol team. I served as the chaplain for the first three federal inmates executed since 1963 by lethal injection during their stay in the Special Management Unit (SMU) at the United States Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana. These individuals were Timothy McVeigh, Juan Raul Garza, and Louis Jones. Serving as the lead chaplain on the Bureau's execution protocol team was the most challenging and demanding ministry assignment I ever had as a federal prison chaplain. As a team member, my primary role entailed providing pastoral care, spiritual support, critical incident stress management, and debriefing to individuals recommended and selected to serve on the execution protocol team during the pre-and post-execution phases. Along with the Bureau's chief psychologist, we interviewed staff members throughout the agency to be selected to effectuate the death penalty.

I also provided pastoral care, critical incident stress, and debriefing to the condemned offenders' family members and those present who witnessed their executions. I was one of the last Bureau of Prisons staff to see and speak with Timothy McVeigh, Juan Raul Garza, and Louis Jones before they got executed.
They each asked to be ministered to through prayer, bible study, pastoral care, spiritual support, and clergy visitation. One of these individuals asked for a Roman Catholic priest to administer the sacrament of the anointing, previously referred to as "last rites." He also requested Holy Communion, which I facilitated. Another asked for forgiveness and was remorseful for the pain and grief he caused his family and victims. One recited the verse, "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but hath not given me over unto death." After which, he sang the hymn "Jesus, Keep Me near the Cross, repeating the chorus, "In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever 'til my raptured soul finds rest." The elements used to execute these inmates by lethal injection were (sodium thiopental, pancuronium bromide, and potassium). They are no longer being used and are now outlawed. Most states have placed a moratorium on executions or halted them together. However, the Bureau of Prisons now uses pentobarbital in the lethal injection protocol and has since executed twelve additional federal prisoners utilizing this deadly injection drug.

The most recent executions occurred in December 2020. It included five African American males. The irony was troubling because former President Donald J. Trump asked for the death penalty for the Central Park Five. They were eventually found innocent of this capital crime and released from prison after serving many years. The first female executed in sixty-seven years in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Lisa Montgomery, occurred on January 13, 2021. Her execution was seven days before President Trump left office. I was Lisa Montgomery's Chaplain for ten years at the Federal Medical Center Carswell administrative high-security unit in Fort Worth, Texas. She faithfully attended chapel service, was baptized, and committed to Jesus Christ before her execution. Since taking office as president of the United States, Joseph R.

2 Psalm 118:8 (KJV)
Biden has placed a moratorium on all federal executions through his Department of Justice under Attorney General Merrick Garland as of July 2021.

The Law and Prison—My Testimony

"Except for the grace of God, there I would also be."

I grew up in a single-parent household in a public housing project called the Highland Homes, located in a small Midwestern urban town in northeastern Ohio, Trumbull County. I was a confused, misguided, and angry black male in my early teens. The likelihood of me being a high school dropout, alcoholic, drug addict, or drug dealer was my reality. Also, I often heard that I would probably become a convicted felon with the likelihood of spending most of my youth in a juvenile justice center. I would be in a state or federal correctional facility when I became an adult. Unfortunately, this was the fate of many of my childhood friends and several incarcerated family members. For instance, my first cousin, Courtney, was imprisoned for ten years and did time in two federal prisons. The two prisons were the Federal Correctional Institution Milan, in Milan, Michigan, and The Federal Correctional Institution Beckley, in Beckley, West Virginia. As a chaplain administrator for the mid-Atlantic region of the Bureau of Prisons, I would often visit and minister to him during my travels. In addition, a close childhood friend with whom we both grew up together and who would eventually marry one of my sisters, James "Boot" Moore, served time in different state prisons. Other childhood friends and family members who went to prison included Johnny Roy and Dale (Dusty) Mitchell, Darnell (Suade) Slate, Anthony Morgan, and Steve Chaney.

As young teenagers growing up in the projects, they would often do things that resulted in their going to the Boys Industrial School, a juvenile correctional facility in Ohio we called the B. They continued engaging in a life of crime and would eventually wind up in the Trumbull County Jail and go to one of the thirty state prisons in Ohio.
Some of these individuals are still in prison to this very day. David Jenkins was one of the most
gifted and talented basketball players. He was indeed the "LeBron James" of our time among his
peers regarding his basketball skills and athletic acumen. Many believe, including me, that had he
not gone to prison, he would have been drafted straight into the National Basketball
Association (NBA) right out of high school. David got sentenced to state prison in 2006. He was
recently denied parole for his fifteen years to life sentence by the Ohio State Parole Board in
January of 2021. His next chance for a parole hearing is in 2028.

I have another cousin convicted of a homicide in Washington, D.C., who is now serving
prison time at the Federal Correctional Institution Cumberland. FCI Cumberland is the only
federal prison in Maryland and was a part of the massive prison build-up resulting from the now-
maligned 1994 crime bill. (I discuss the 1994 crime bill in a subsequent chapter here in this
thesis Project.) I served as the regional chaplaincy administrator when the Federal Correctional
Institution Cumberland opened. Although I have since retired, I find opportunities to talk with
him through his family members and his chaplain to address his spiritual and family needs. The
objective is to ensure that he reintegrates into society as a law-abiding person, as is currently the
case with Cousin Courtney. Like the friends mentioned above, relatives, and family members, I,
too, had some brief encounters with the law that could have easily resulted in my going to jail or
prison. However, I did not get incarcerated because one of the police officers who arrested me
was sympathetic and compassionate.

Officer Populous once said, "Young man, I will let you go this time." He was well-known, well-
liked, and highly respected in the "hood" he patrolled. He had "street cred" and was the epitome
of good common sense community policing. Officer Populous knew us, kids.
He played basketball with us, came to our youth football games, and showed up at the local Boys and Girls Club when we would play midnight basketball. He knew our parents, pastors, teachers, and even our vacation bible school teachers. So, we all listened when he spoke, like E. F. Hutton. Also, the drugs I used and sold had not become politicized to become (federal drug crimes) in what decades later would become the so-called war on drugs. (I say more about the war on drugs, a major contributing factor in the massive prison explosion.)

As I reflect on my life, ministry formation, religious identity, vocation, and call to ministry, I can see how the Holy Spirit of God prepared and developed me for such a challenging but significant specialized ministry assignment as a federal prison chaplain. Like so many young black males of this era, the common challenges and experiences of disillusionment, despair, and being raised in a poor urban community by a single parent were the social seeds that often led to crime and incarceration. These realities and vicissitudes are not excuses or justifications for such misdeeds. However, such conditions made me and others like me vulnerable and susceptible to crime and potential imprisonment. The false belief and social stereotypes perpetuated in the media and other social institutions gave me the misguided and harmful impression that very few options exist in life. I participated in petty crimes, such as theft and the use and selling of drugs, namely marijuana and amphetamines, which, for my generation back then, we called black beauties, reds, purple microdot, LSD, and others.

The arrest of two female cousins, Linda and Fran, became another troubling experience I encountered and drew from regarding my call into the federal prison chaplaincy ministry. They were convicted in the 1970s and served prison time at the Women Reformatory Prison in Chillicothe, Ohio. The older cousin, Linda, had three young children when she started her prison sentence.
My late beloved mother became the surrogate mother for her children when she went to prison. I still have painful yet fond memories of how my mother sacrificed to ensure that Linda's kids were provided for and cared for while she was in prison. My mother would send money to Linda and Fran while in prison. She would trade her food stamps for cash to send them to buy things from the prison commissary. As a family, we were all impacted by the incarceration of Linda and Fran. However, each of the aforementioned lived experiences profoundly influenced my life and shaped my calling.

As I reflect on my life, I can see the underpinning of how the Holy Spirit of God was sovereignly working. God softened my tender heart and opened my eyes to the realities of what crime and incarceration do to individuals and the effects on family members and their communities. Such overwhelming experiences of having close family members and childhood friends incarcerated played a vital role in my prison chaplaincy ministry calling, formation, identity, and service. Decades later, only by God’s grace would I find myself serving in these correctional facilities not as a convicted felon but as a humble servant as a federal prison chaplain! When I would address inmates during admissions and orientation sessions upon their arrival in federal prison, I would share my plight as they were processed to begin serving their sentences. I would say to the inmates, the only difference between you and me is that I did not get caught, and grace and I received mercy when I did. Plus, nobody told (snitched) on me as part of their plea bargain. (I will say more about this law enforcement tactic called plea-bargain in a subsequent chapter.)

These experiences also gave me the sensitivity, skillsets, tact, compassion, and wisdom to effectively serve this population with grace and dignity. Micah 6:8 says, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and
walk humbly with your God."³ The above scripture spoken by prophet Micah forms the core foundation of what I address throughout this thesis project. These words were also spoken over me forty years ago as hands were laid upon me by the senior pastor and elders of the church where I served as an associate pastor. At the time, I was ordained and commissioned to embark on my ministry's sacred and special mission calling in a federal prison institutional setting. The late evangelist and revivalist Oral Roberts was also president and founder of Oral Roberts University. I attended seminary and earned my Master of Divinity degree from ORU. President Roberts always engaged and inspired us to expect miracles. He would often say to all students, staff, faculty, and administrators that God told him to raise a generation of students to go into every man's world with the message of faith, hope, love, salvation, healing, restoration, and reconciliation. This prophetic utterance meant having the distinct privilege and honor of serving God from 1988 until 2015 as a staff chaplain, supervisory chaplain, and regional chaplaincy administrator in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Now, as the founder, president, and CEO of Faith without Walls Prison Outreach Ministry, my lived and work experiences in these roles give me a unique perspective, insight, knowledge, and understanding of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.

I have witnessed firsthand up close and personal how it has destroyed many individuals, their families, and their communities. I also know the requirements necessary for successful reentry and transition into society. They also impacted the churches they once attended, served, and baptized. Many of them have family members who are active in many of these congregations to this very day.

³ Micah 6:8 (NKJV)
A stark and vivid example of this reality occurred in 1992 while serving as the supervisory chaplain at the Federal Correctional Institution Marianna, located in Marianna, Florida. An African American male inmate had been down (prison lingo inmates use when talking about their sentence) for thirty years since age eighteen. He had served prison time at several federal penitentiaries over the years on a thirty-five-year bit (prison lingo used by inmates when describing the length of their sentence). He was a distinguished and dignified man who carried himself sufficiently on the outside. He was also highly respected by all inmates and staff in the prison facility. Although he had converted to another faith (Islam) during his incarceration experience, he regularly attended the Protestant worship service held in the prison chapel to hear me preach and listen to our choir. One day, after a Sunday worship service, he asked to meet with me for pastoral care and counseling. I told him to put in a (Cop-out), an official bureau of prisons document that inmates must complete when requesting something from prison staff. (See Appendix A) Once I received his cop-out, I told him I would schedule a meeting by placing him on the (Call-out) official Bureau of Prisons prison document. (See Appendix B) These official documents permit inmates to be at a specific location inside the prison on a designated day and time. He said, Chaplain, Thanks, but this is urgent, and I need to see you as soon as possible. I indicated that I would schedule to see him the following Monday.

On the scheduled day, the gentleman showed up in my office wearing his clean, starchy, pressed brown khaki uniform (official prison clothing). He took off his Kufi (Muslim headdress) and started crying as he sat down. I was taken aback by these sudden tears. The brother began to share what was bothering him and why it was so urgent that he needed to see me for some pastoral care and counseling. He said, chaplain, I am forty-eight years old and have been in federal prison since eighteen.
Over the past thirty years, I have been locked up and have spent time at numerous national correctional institutions and prisons. I came here to this facility to finish the final years of my thirty-five-year prison sentence. I am an African American male, a high school dropout with a criminal record. I have no marketable skills that would lend themselves to any semblance of becoming successful once I leave prison. When I first came to prison, I was a Christian but later converted to Islam. However, throughout my entire incarceration, I have availed myself of several programs while in prison to improve myself. For example, I obtained my GED [General Educational Development Diploma], completed RDAP [Residential Drug Treatment Program], and received my heating and air conditioning certification while working in the Facilities Department. I will go home soon, chaplain, as a free man on the streets. I am scared of what could occur to me as a convicted felon. I am unsure if I can make it out there in the free world. As tears streamed down his chiseled face, I became moved with compassion by his honest expression and contrition. After listening to him, I saw a tiny young black boy on the inside crying out for love, help, guidance, assurance, affirmation, and mercy. He continued, Chaplain, you are the first and only man I have ever allowed to see me cry, although I cried almost every night since my incarceration. Man of God, he blurted out with a loud, anxious shout! I am hurting badly on the inside and in a lot of pain! He concluded his conversation by telling me how he grew up in the church, had been baptized, and attended Sunday and Vacation Bible School. Then he said, Chaplain, in all the years I have been incarcerated, I have never received a simple letter or a short visit from anyone in my home church. The senior pastor, associate pastors, deacons, or elders have never visited me while in prison. No Sunday school teacher, trustee, choir director, or praise and worship leader ever came to see me while in prison.
He continued, not even the chairmen of the deacon board, the chair of the women's auxiliary, or even the First Lady. He continued chaplain; my parents, grandparents, and a host of other family members and friends are tithe-paying members of this church and faithfully attend this church to this very day. He said it was my expectation, chaplain, that the pastors, the deacons, the elders, or somebody would occasionally inquire of me as they looked over at the congregation seeing my family. I hoped at least, from time to time, someone would examine how I was faring and when I would be coming home. You would even think, he continued, that perhaps someone would even consider asking what the church could do to help facilitate my successful reentry home upon my release. He continued, asking, shouldn’t the church also be concerned for the safety and welfare of everyone in the neighborhood? I said yes! He concluded, chaplain, you would think the pastor would implement some meaningful, relevant prison outreach ministry programs and services that could assist people like me in successfully transitioning back into the community.

We need programs and services that can assist us in getting much-needed mental health and substance abuse (drug and alcohol) counseling. We need programs that can aid and assist in helping people like me reconnect with our children, help us find meaningful job that pays a living wage, obtain housing, etc. Chaplain, I am in no way, shape, or form asking for or expecting a free handout. Still, people like me are looking for a hand-up so that we can give it our best shot at living a crime-free life, make a successful transition back into our communities, and reconnect with our families, our churches, or communities. Since churches like my old church do not have programs like these for people like me, people like me continue to engage in criminal activities and recidivate. If a church fails to do so, the implication is that they could care less if a congregation member becomes a crime victim or arrested.
Please pray for me, chaplain. I am terrified. Hearing this and seeing his torment caused light to come into my spirit and mind. His cry was a compelling and desperate plea for the church and other faith-based organizations to get involved and reimagine how to do prison outreach ministry, criminal justice reform, and reentry for the twenty-first century.

Over the past thirty years, during my service as a federal prison chaplain, I heard countless stories like this and other similar stories from male and female inmates inside federal prisons. Simply put, they are all asking what the church's role is. They all stirred in my heartfelt compassion and desire to speak about the experiences that individuals have in jail. These experiences also inspired me to create a new twenty-first-century prison outreach ministry model that churches can use to organize, plan, and implement effective programs and services for prison outreach. Coupled with my academic work, professional expertise, and years of practical chaplaincy ministry training, I bring fresh, firsthand knowledge, understanding, and skillsets of what works in prisons and the needs of offenders and their family members when they return to society. The following chapters discuss aspects and features of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry, emphasizing the federal Bureau of prisons.
In this chapter, I briefly highlight historical facts regarding American criminal justice and the American penal system, namely, the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The American criminal justice system consists of three major distinct and separate components; the police or law enforcement agencies, the courts, and the corrections or penal system. I have interfaced with all three criminal justice and penal systems components during my tenure with the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Much of my focus will treat the federal bureau of prisons in this chapter and throughout this thesis project. Modern American criminal justice and penal systems have undergone numerous evolutionary changes since the first settlers crossed the Atlantic. Its origins in the English common law got written into a series of procedures and decisions holding that crimes against an individual are crimes against the State. Accordingly, during this period in early colonial America, individuals convicted of crimes were often subjected to physical torture and mental torment akin to the nations where the earlier settlers came. Historical documents from the aphfo-museum suggest “that those responsible for executing justice levied profane and ungodly things to the bodies of individuals convicted of crimes.”

---

4 [https://aphfomuseum.stocks.(Stocks and Pillory), 1.](https://aphfomuseum.stocks.(Stocks and Pillory), 1.)
For example, "Convicted criminals were often placed in wooden stocks with iron chains around their legs, arms, and necks."\(^5\) "Harsh and brutal public beatings or whippings were also commonplace."\(^6\) During this time, the societal attitude, belief, and penal philosophy were that this type of suffering and public humiliation would somehow curtail or mitigate any criminal activity. Religion also played a prominent role in jurisprudence in early American society. According to The History & Development of the U.S. Criminal Justice System, "before any formal rules, laws, and institutions established in the United States, Americans relied on religion and sin to shape society and its behaviors."\(^7\) In addition, "many colonial crime codes were defined in biblical terms, making profanity, blasphemy, and sacrileges of the Sabbath highly punishable."\(^8\) "There was no regular or integrated justice system. Each colony developed its unique codes, laws, punishments, sanctions, procedures, and courts."\(^9\) During this period, justice could be meted out to any local citizen. They had all the arrest rights akin to what is now known as the police, for example, during the southern antebellum period. These slave patrols were organized groups with the dubious task of searching for runaway slaves, illegal gatherings, and contraband also used to instill fear and terror to dispel any notion of a slave revolt."\(^10\) This brutal and inhumane public display of torture and mutilation of the body as a form of punishment during the colonial period soon vanished. Along with this, the American criminal justice and penal system's focus began to switch to hard labor and solitary confinement inside prison facilities as punishment.

\(^{5}\) Ibid., 1.  
\(^{6}\) Ibid., 1.  
\(^{7}\) https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-history-development-of-the-us-criminal-justice-system.htm  
Crime and punishment in colonial America (American History Online), 1.  
\(^{8}\) Ibid., 1.  
\(^{9}\) Ibid., 1.  
For example, "The Pennsylvania penal system originating in 1682 under the leadership of William Penn was, according to a historical overview of inmate labor in Pennsylvania, one of the first prison systems to suggest the replacement of torture and mutilation as punishment for crimes with hard labor in houses of corrections."\textsuperscript{11}

The Advent of the Modern American State and Federal Penal System Prisons: An Historical Overview

Prisons, jails, and detention centers are ordinary worldwide and exist in every nation. However, according to the most reputable recent reports on crime statistics, the United States of America leads most major industrialized countries in this regard. Although prisons have existed for a long time and are as old as human civilization, long-term incarceration inside jails, prisons, and detention centers as a method of legal punishment is a relatively modern idea, stemming from the late eighteenth century. According to various sources, including an online article entitled, Oldest Prisons in America, "The Walnut Street State Prison, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was built in 1773 and is considered one of the earliest prisons operating in the United States. Accordingly, “The Newgate State Prison in New York began its operations in 1797."\textsuperscript{12} The article says, “The infamous Eastern State Penitentiary, also located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, began its construction in 1822 and opened in 1829."\textsuperscript{13} Although these three state prisons mentioned above primarily housed individuals convicted of crimes committed in their respective States, individuals convicted of federal crimes also got placed in the above and other state prisons.

\textsuperscript{11} https://www.cor.pa.gov/A Historical Overview of Inmate Labor in Pennsylvania), 1. 
\textsuperscript{12} https://www.oldest.org/structurews/prisons-us/ 1. 
\textsuperscript{13} https://www.smithsonianag.com/history/eastern-state-penitentiary-a-prison-with-a past14274660/ 2.
As a result of overcrowding and budgetary strains on state coffers, it became apparent that there was a need to construct and operate federal prisons. In 1870 Congress established the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and created a position referred to as the general agent, the superintendent of prisons over time. Today, that person is named Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. During my thirty-year tenure with the agency, I served under five different Directors. The person appointed to this position oversees all federal prisons, inmates, and staff. In 1891, on the 3rd day of March, Congress passed a law authorizing the building of three federal penitentiaries. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) purchased a former military prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and in 1895 the United States Penitentiary Fort Leavenworth became the first federal penal institution. Other federal prisons soon followed by opening the United States Penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1902 and the McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary in Washington, State, in 1907. I have been to all three of these federal penitentiaries doing ministry as a federal prison chaplain and regional chaplaincy administrator. However, it wasn't until 1930 that the federal bureau of prisons was created and established by Congress to house federal inmates, professionalize the prison service, and ensure consistent and centralized administration.

All bureau of prisons personnel must attend one week of annual training regardless of their position. Additionally, there are various educational and training requirements that a given employee in a management position must also participate in annually. It is customary that the history of the bureau of prisons, its vision and mission statement, and core values are covered quite extensively in these training sessions. As a federal prison chaplain supervisor and regional administrator, I also interacted with high-ranking bureau of prisons officials, including historians, throughout my career.
Because of these positions, I also had access to documents in the bureau of prisons archives, which enabled me to become quite familiar with the history of this federal penal system after serving in it for thirty-plus years.

Many politicians, activists, humanitarians, and concerned citizens believed that creating and operating state and federal standardized prison systems was crucial given the torrid history of how individuals convicted of crimes got treated. Society's rejection of the public spectacle of physical punishment and torture demised, which was the case during the bygone colonial period. Prison facilities got established to punish offenders and make a gallant attempt to improve criminals' criminalistic behavior and mentality through various programs and treatments, including religious education and spiritual formation. By their very nature and design, correctional facilities were considered a much better and more humane alternative to public capital punishment, torture, mutilation, or humiliation. This change in penal philosophy resulting from the loud outcries of public sentiment marked the beginning of a new shift in corrections that no longer focused on the physical torture and mutilation of the body to focus on reforming criminals so they could return to society as upright citizens.

Before this time, the punishment system was mainly capricious with little rehabilitative or redemptive value. Penalties and sanctions imposed upon offenders depended primarily on the impulses and inclinations of the civil officer or even a lay judge. This new corrections theory had a much different approach to dealing with convicted criminals. Instead of punishment for past crimes, incarceration would be an opportunity to correct the offender and deter them from committing future crimes. This new concept of penology is foundational to restoring and rehabilitating criminal behavior.
With this, the new penal philosophy corrections officers got charged with the deliberate intent of creating and implementing programs geared toward reform and rehabilitation. As this new penal philosophy of rehabilitation and reform swept across the nation and the world, there was a doing away with the old barbaric ways of executing justice. However, this new penal philosophy soon became a victim of its success. It revealed many apparent flaws in its implementation over the years, as it became subject to that day's political and economic climate. For example, today, most federal prisons, especially their detention centers, punish convicted felons and manage recalcitrant groups. To a large degree, these correction facilities also serve as holding cells where offenders get detained before their trial, to execute their court orders, or until their fines get settled. This practice is most egregious regarding detaining individuals who violate immigration and specific federal drug laws. (I say more about this reality in chapter three of this thesis project.)

Prisons today, especially within the Federal Bureau of Prisons, have become more comprehensive, use various corrective techniques, and offer many inmate management programs and services geared towards the smooth, orderly running of the institution and inmate release preparation for reentry into society. To fulfill this mission, embedded within the culture of the Federal Bureau of prisons is the belief that individuals sentenced to federal prison are strongly encouraged to participate in these programs and services for institutional adjustment and psychological and social adjustment. Upon entry into all federal correctional facilities, regardless of their security level, all federal inmates must receive a mental health evaluation by a licensed psychologist. If necessary, they get evaluated by a psychiatrist. A federal judge even mandates some to receive substance abuse treatment for drugs and alcohol.
These services get provided by licensed drug and alcohol treatment professionals. Implementing such programs and services also changed how federal prisoners are viewed and treated. In addition, this correctional penal philosophy also introduced a shift in language accompanied by new inmate management and treatment model for the individuals incarcerated inside federal prisons. For example, convicted felons incarcerated are no longer referred to as prisoners or convicts. At least in the federal prison system, they are now referred to as inmates or clients. Additionally, staff working in these facilities are correctional workers or correctional professionals. Those who watch and patrol the goings-on of inmates are no longer called guards but are called correctional officers. The Federal Bureau of prison staff also consists of representatives from various professions, including medical and dental, recreational, religious, and chaplain. Also, there are food service staff, counselors and case management staff, and a host of specified professionals representing various professional disciplines in the federal bureau of prisons.

Regardless of one's position or professional title, you are a correctional worker first in the federal bureau of prisons. Another example of this shift in culture regarding implementing this new correctional penal philosophy within the federal bureau of prisons can be seen in how inmates get treated if they violate institutional rules and regulations. They are no longer automatically placed in what used to be called the hole or solitary confinement cells. Instead, they get interviewed and counseled and, if warranted, are confined in the federal bureau of prisons special housing units (SHU) or special management units (SMU).
As I reflect upon these correctional concepts on penology, inmate management, and prison operations, I concede that they have some merit, especially concerning the operating of prisons and managing the inmate population, both of which I have practiced and seen work in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. We call prison facilities correctional institutions or penitentiaries because the state or federal government is trying to correct behavior, teach morals and values, develop social skills, educate, reform the mind, and transform the souls of broken people. I share a different view as a chaplain who has provided pastoral care, spiritual support, counseling, crisis management, and ministry to thousands of inmates in the federal bureau of prisons for over thirty years. These concepts and management techniques don't get at the heart of the matter concerning individuals’ real, lasting change like federal offenders. My professional opinion, religious conviction, and firmly held belief are that this occurs during the developmental years of the offender when they were children. Therefore, my professional opinion, pastoral theology, and sincerely held faith conviction is that this is the primary responsibility of the family and the church and not the government, especially the U.S. Department of Justice federal bureau of prisons. There is a false misconception that prisons change people. They don't. Instead, I believe that the real, lasting change of incarcerated individuals comes from a transformed heart and a renewed mind which is the divine sovereign work and grace that the Spirit of God does. These correctional institutions make them, if anything, the convicted felon more hardened, broken, angrier, and bitter. The proverbial thought that prisons only make one a better and more sophisticated criminal has much truth. No matter how nice they look, Federal prisons are dark, evil places on the inside; they are very predatory, and all manner of evil takes place.
If one is to survive this traumatic experience, it becomes easy and, in many cases, essential for the inmate to become a better criminal. It is genuinely about the survival of the fittest. Only the strong will survive inside these correctional institutions if they are lucky. The incarceration experience, if one survives, makes broken people. Inmates turn into human monsters. They become cunning, crafty, and killing machines, especially inside federal penitentiaries and supermaxim federal prisons. (In a subsequent chapter here in this thesis project, I will discuss and describe in more detail what prisons do to people)

As a federal prison chaplain and a person of Christian faith, I believe a real, lasting transformative change for incarcerated individuals comes from the inside out and not from the outside inside. Prisons may deter or mitigate crime or bad behavior, but they will never reform or transform the offender. My sincere religious and spiritual belief, which has also been my lived and worked experience as a chaplain in the federal bureau of prisons, is that moral, ethical, and spiritual transformation is the family's responsibility. It is also one of the primary responsibilities of the church and the people of God, which call people to repent from such sinful behavior and offers healing, forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation. Our kindergarten teachers understood this truism when they taught us the following nursery rhymes: "Humpty Dumpty sat on the Wall (inside the prison walls). Humpty Dumpty had a great fall (the depraved soul of humanity.) All of the king's horses (i.e., prisons, government, and social institutions) and all of the king's men (psychologist, social workers, and therapist) could not put Humpty Dumpty back together again"; "Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. Jack fell and broke his crown, and Jill came tumbling after. Jack got up, and home did trot as fast as he could caper, to old Dame Dob, who patched his nob, with vinegar and brown paper."14

14 https://allnurseryrhymes.com>humpty-dumpty
Jesus, the master of all teachers, embodied this truism by addressing the issue of transformation when He told Nicodemus, "Most assuredly, I say unto you unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom; of God."15 When we as a nation get serious about tackling this pandemic of mass incarceration, for me, the secular and the sacred must cooperate in dealing with offenders, ex-offenders (returning citizens), and their families to call an end to mass incarceration, enact real criminal justice reform, and implement meaningful reentry programs and address issues of racial injustice and police brutality. The church and para-church organizations play an essential role in this noble endeavor.

I end this chapter with a list of some nodal events that have taken place since the establishment of American Criminal Justice, the American Penal System, and the formation of the federal bureau of prisons. These references are from an article from; A Handbook for Jewish Communities Fighting Mass Incarceration -Timeline of the Rise of the Modern American Prison System. I mention them to show how many public laws, statutes, policies, and national and international events have created this current mass incarceration problem over a slow but steady period. They are the foundation for and contributed to the results of prison overcrowding, mass incarceration, and the explosion of prison construction often referred to as the prison industry complex:

http://www./nap.edu/catalog/18613/the-growtrh-of-incarceration-in-the united-states-exploring causes. Chapter 4 of the National Academies report.

[ In 1866, convict leasing—the practice of leasing out incarcerated people (usually Black men) to work for private individuals—began.

In 1914, Congress passed the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act restricting the sale of opiates and cocaine, launching the country's "first war on drugs."

15 John 3: 3 (NKJV)
In 1927, the first federal women's prison opened in Alderson, West Virginia. I once served at this prison from 1993 to 2001 as the regional chaplain administrator.

In 1928, Alabama became the last State to outlaw convict leasing

In 1943, the "Zoot Suit Riots" occurred in Los Angeles and Detroit, two examples of racial violence that broke out during and after WW2; this led to calls for increased national attention to police brutality and misconduct. Before WW2, most criminal justice policy in the United States was in the hand of local or state authorities.

In 1955, the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill began with the closing of mental hospitals and reducing overall state care for people with serious mental illness. Jails and prisons eventually take up the slack.

In the 1960s, the United States and most Western countries experienced increased crime. From 1962-to 1972, the annual number of homicides more than doubled. The homicide rate among Blacks had been several times higher than whites since at least the 1930s.

In 1964, the Goldwater campaign used explicitly racial language to discuss crime. Conservatives conflate riots, street crime, and police activism.

In 1965, Johnson created the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, with support from left and right. The Office of Law Enforcement Assistance provides funding and programs to expand and improve state and local criminal justice systems.

In 1968, Johnson called for a "war on crime" in the war on poverty and other root causes. The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act passed Congress, but with significant modifications from conservatives that gave most funding control to states. Johnson considered a veto, but the assignation of Robert F. Kennedy dissuaded him.

1971: Nixon declared war on drugs
1973: New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller enacted the strictest drug laws in the nation, punishing possession of even small amounts of drugs with fifteen years to life.

1970s mid-1980s: General increased incarceration for lower-level felonies.

The late 1970s: Reported drug use peaks and begins to fall.

1982: Reagan recommitted to the war on drugs.

1983: the Supreme Court affirmed that people could not be incarcerated for failing to pay debts.

1983: Corrections Corporation of America, the first and most significant contemporary private prison corporation, was funded.


1985: The Reagan administration hired staff to publicize the emergence of crack cocaine.

1985-1992: This was the heyday of the war on drugs.

*1987: I began my federal chaplaincy career.

The early 1990s: The national homicide rate was well below 1970s rates.

From the early 1990s onward: There were longer prison sentences primarily due to three strikes and truth in sentencing laws.

1993: Washington State passed Initiative 593, the nation's first three-strikes law. California followed in 1994 with the nation's most challenging and most used three-strike Law.

1994: Clinton signed Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement, the most significant crime bill in history, which then-Senator Joe Biden sponsored. Among its provisions were $9.7 billion for prisons, funding for 10,000 new police officers, and the system of Byrne grants. This act also banned incarcerated people from receiving Pell grants for college. Additionally, it gave
the DOJ the power to sue police departments for civil rights infractions. The Violence against Women Act is a part of the bill.

1996: Clinton signed welfare reform, increasing obstacles for people convicted of drugs felonies to access to a social safety net, and immigration reform, which increased deportation for non-citizens convicted of past and current crimes

2001: The 9/11 attack prompted the War on Terror, which is increasingly used as justification for intrusive policing in the name of homeland security.

2002: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was formed.

2004: In the State of the Union Address, George W. Bush called for more investments in reentry.

2006: George W. Bush signed the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, severely increasing penalties and restraining sex offenders.

2008: New York passed the special housing unit (SHU) exclusion law, beginning to limit who can be placed in solitary confinement. George W. Bush signed a second act, which increased federal funding for reentry programs.

2010: The Federal Fair Sentencing Act reduced the 100 to1 disparity between crack and powder cocaine to eighteen to one.

2011: California instituted public safety "realignment" to reduce the state prison population under a Supreme Court order to reduce overcrowding. California shifted responsibility for non-violent, non-serious, and nonsexual offenses from state prisons to local jails and probation.

2012: California passed Proposition 36, reforming the Three Strikes and you're Out Law.
2013: Edward Snowden revealed the extent of U.S. phone surveillance. Eighty-seven percent of wiretaps are used in cases where "drug offenses" are the most severe suspected crime.

2014: The Obama Administration reversed its policy on asylum seekers, deciding that ICE will detain all arriving Central American families, even those judges fleeing a "credible threat" who will likely be granted asylum. California voters pass Proposition 47, which reclassifies many non-serious non-violent property and drug crimes as misdemeanors."16]

This brief historical overview only gives one a glimpse of what has become one of the largest systems within the American criminal justice system, which is its prison system. The Federal Bureau of Prisons is likewise one of the largest U.S. Department of Justice systems. Since its inception as a result of congressional legislative approval in 1930, it has experienced unprecedented significant growth over the past forty years. In chapter three of this thesis project, I address some of the causes and effects of this exceptional and unsustainable growth.

CHAPTER THREE
MASS INCARCERATION, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, AND REENTRY—ITS CAUSES AND EFFECTS

"A dramatic increase in offender populations accompanied changes in sentencing and correctional philosophy; this increase was unprecedented and followed a period of relative stability. From 1930 to 1975." 17

In Chapter Three of this thesis project, I discuss some of the significant factors that have contributed to the dramatic, unprecedented growth of the American penal system, emphasizing the development of the federal prison system over the past forty years.

"Go to jail, go directly to jail. Do not pass go, do not collect $200.00.” These words are from one of the most popular board games in America. It is called Monopoly, created by Milton Bradley. Nearly every American has played this game; if not, they know someone who has. Annual sales of this game are in the millions of dollars. When playing this game, an individual tries to avoid landing on the spot, which mandates going to jail. However, if you were fortunate to obtain the coveted get-out-of-jail-free card, you can play the game with some ease and not fear going to jail. Millions of people are locked up in federal and state prisons, jails, and detention centers; however, mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry are not games. Incarceration is a real-life situation for these individuals and their loved ones, especially for the poor and minorities.

Also, there are no get-out-of-jail-free cards, especially for those sentenced to serve prison time in
the federal prison system, because the possibility of being paroled is no longer an option. It was
abolished in 1985 under the Ragan administration and authorized by Congress.

The United States of America is home to the world's largest prison population per capita.
According to the U.S. Department of Justice - Office of Justice Programs, which published a
report in June 2020 called The States of Incarceration: The Global Context, “The United States
incarcerates 693 people for every 100,000 residents, which is more than any other country." In
fact, according to this report, "America's incarceration rate is five times more than most countries
in the world." John Pfaff, a staff writer for Democracy Journal, says, "The United States holds
five percent of the world's population and twenty-five percent of the world's prisoners." The
Prison Policy Initiative, a non-profit organization for the de-carceration, published an article by
Wendy Sawyer and Peter Wagner entitled Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020. It states, "It
is estimated that The American Criminal Justice system holds almost 2.3 million people." Furthermore, the report says, “1,833 state prisons, 110 federal prisons, 1,772 juvenile
correctional facilities, 3,134 local jails, 218 immigration detention facilities, and 80 Indian
County Jails." In addition, the report concludes "that of those incarcerated, 1,291,000 people
were in state prisons, 631,000 in local jails, 226,000 and federal prisons, 44,000 in youth
correctional facilities, 42,000 in immigration detention camps, 22,000 in involuntary
commitment, 1,100 in territorial prisons, 2,500 in Indian County jails, and 1,300 in United States
military prisons."
In his breathtaking revealing book, Locked In –The True Cause of Mass Incarceration and How to Achieve Real Reform, John F. Pfaff claims that "America has the dubious distinction of having the world's highest incarceration rate." Pfaff contends, “is four to eight times higher than those in other developing nations, including our northern border Canadian neighbors and neighbors across the Atlantic, like England and Germany.” Pfaff further states, "Even autocratic regimes like Russia and Cuba have fewer people incarcerated in their prisons." For example, according to the Prison Policy Initiative, "in comparison with other countries with similar percentages of immigrants, Germany has an incarceration rate of 76 per 1000,000 population (as of 2014), Italy is 85 per 100,000 (as of 2015), and Saudi Arabia is 161 per 100,000 (as of 2013)." Furthermore, Pfaff states, “Comparing other countries with a zero-tolerance policy for illegal drugs, the rate of Russia's incarceration rate is 455 per 100,000(as of 2015), Kazakhstan is 275 per 100,000 (as of 2015), Singapore is 220 per 100,000 (as of 2014), and Sweden is 60 per 100,000 (as of 2014).”

Additionally, according to 2022 published report, provided by The Sentencing Project "the top 10 states with the highest prison population in the country are Texas -154,479, California-122,417, and Florida-96,009, Georgia -54,314, Ohio-50,338, Pennsylvania 45,485, New York 43,951, Arizona 40,951, Illinois 38,259 and Michigan 38,053.” Many, including myself, believe that the exponential prison boom created the prison industrial complex in the federal bureau of prisons and many state prisons over the past forty years. According to Marc Lamont

---

25 Ibid., 3.
26 Ibid., 3.
29 worldprisonpopulationreview.com/ 19 (sentencing project.org)
Hill, the term prison industrial complex (PIC) refers to "the overlapping interest of government and industry that use surveillance, political, imprisonment as solutions to economic, social, and political problems."\(^{30}\) I would often say to many of my current and former colleagues that the federal prison system is big business and is one of the largest employers within the U.S. Department of Justice. The same is true for States regarding their prisons and jails across America. (I will discuss this dynamic in a subsequent chapter regarding the multi-billion-dollar business interests that profit from prison construction and all ancillary operations connected to crime and incarceration.) Multiple lobbying groups and other special interest groups spend millions of dollars appealing to state and federal legislation to build more jails, prisons, and detention centers.

Unfortunately, as was my lived and work experience as a federal prison chaplain, locking up people has become the default position for every significant problem in American society, especially for people suffering from mental health and substance abuse problems. There are millions of individuals incarcerated in state and federal prisons who, by all rights, should be in mental health or drug and alcohol treatment centers. Additionally, many individuals incarcerated in these facilities also have social ills like extreme poverty rates, chronic unemployment, homelessness, behavioral disorders, or adverse childhood experiences (ACE). Immigration issues of late are generating a response from legislators, and city, state, and federal officials who consent to the call from constituents to lock them up, including immigrant children. Marginalized people suffering from these and many other social ills are easy targets to get rid of by locking them up by sending them to prisons and detention centers.

As a result of this political pressure, along with the need for job creation and the profiteering opportunities primarily fostered by private prison corporations, prisons have become the false solution to address these problems. Shamefully, despite the political posturing and fanfare, little is done in the hallowed halls of Congress on meaningful sentencing, criminal justice, and police reform. Instead, new crime categories are discussed and debated today as politicians play on the fears and anger of their constituents, which has been the persistent impetus that fuels mass incarceration during the last forty years in America.

Growth of Correctional Populations

According to the report entitled *Sentencing and Corrections in the 21st Century: Setting the Stage for the Future*, "A dramatic increase in offender populations accompanied changes in sentencing and correctional philosophy; this increase was unprecedented and followed a period of relative stability?"31 The report states that from 1930 to 1975, "the average incarceration rate was 106,000 adults in the population. The rate fluctuated slightly, from a low of 93 to a maximum of 137 per 100,000."32 After 1975, according to this same report, incarceration rates grew tremendously by 1985, "the incarceration rate for individuals in state and federal prisons was 202 per 1000,000 adults in the population. The acceleration continued to grow, reaching 411 in 1995 and 445 in 1997."33 Additionally, according to this same report, "If local jail populations are also considered, the incarceration rate in 1997 was 652, and by the end of 1998, more than 1.3 million prisoners were in federal or state authority, and more than 1.8 million were in jail or

32 Ibid.,1.
33 Ibid.,1.
prison.”\textsuperscript{34} Furthermore, the report states, "From 1980 to 1997, the national correctional population rose from 1.8 million to 5.7 million, increasing 217 percent."\textsuperscript{35}

The report also contends that "During the same period, the probation population grew by 1991 percent; parole, 213 percent; and the number of prisoners, 271 percent and by 1998, more than 4.1 million adult men and women were on probation or parole, and there were 1,705 probationers and 352 parolees per 100,000 adults in the population."\textsuperscript{36}

Mass Incarceration and Prison Expansion — The Impact of Misdemeanors

One of the surprising facts I realized about the contributing factors of mass incarceration was the misdemeanor system. Throughout my thirty-plus years as a federal prison chaplain, I had many conversations about the causes of mass incarceration. I attended workshops, seminars, conferences, and training sessions on this subject. In these settings, along with many private conversations with law enforcement officials, lawyers, police officers, judges, and current and former inmates, I discovered that most federal prison inmates began their criminal lifestyle by committing misdemeanor offenses. Mass incarceration in the national prison system is genuinely a significant problem. This problem poses a real and present danger for those affected by it and society. However, according to many criminologists, corrections professionals, and law enforcement officials, including judges and attorneys, a misdemeanor is equally, if not worse, in terms of cost and the destruction of lives. This dynamic is particularly true for the poor working-class segment of our communities, especially for communities of color.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 2.  
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 2.  
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 2.
From my observations and lived experience serving as a chaplain in the federal prison system, marginalized people are more susceptible. They become easy targets for law enforcement officials to arrest, convict, and incarcerate. A misdemeanor offense is often the springboard that opens the gates to federal county jail cells and federal prison bars. Also, many jails, prisons, and detention centers throughout the nation have untold numbers of homeless and mentally challenged individuals with substance abuse issues. They are there solely because they cannot pay a fine or make cash bail. These places are filled with individuals awaiting trial, sentencing, or returning to jail because of a parole violation. These holding tanks are notoriously overcrowded, understaffed, and underfunded. They have people confined inside them who may encounter the criminal justice system, jail, or prison for the first time. I served as a chaplain in several federal prison detention centers and visited many county jails.

Individual inmates' anxiety level inside these facilities is exceptionally high. Convicted felons can often, in some cases, wait for two to three years in detention centers or county jails before resolving their issue. These places are hellholes and human warehouses where offenders spend most of their time caged in crowded cells with absolutely nothing to do. These prison facilities have little supervision, management, and program resources. Inmates often are left to their own devices and vices. This dynamic alone can create inmate management problems for staff and prison officials. An idle man or woman inside a federal prison, jail or detention is exceptionally hazardous. The individuals detained inside these city and county jails and state and federal detention centers, which are nothing but holding tanks and awaiting trial, are poor and marginalized citizens. A public defender represents them instead of a private attorney. With poor or no legal representation, these individuals become frustrated, angry, and entangled in this bureaucratic tangled web of neglect and deceit; they give up and quit.
Their families' members and communities forget them. Thus, it becomes increasingly difficult for offenders and ex-offenders (returning citizens) from these vulnerable communities to break the cycle of crime, poverty, and incarceration. Failure to navigate this monstrous system and their inability to cope with it can lead to devastating consequences, resulting in financial doom and possible long-term prison or jail time for the offender. In other words, one can easily fall through the cracks, which will only exacerbate this already cumbersome system. Alexandra Natapoff, in her breathing book entitled, Punishment without Crime—How Our Massive Misdemeanor System Traps the Innocent and Makes America More Unequal, contends that "most Americans will experience the criminal justice system at the misdemeanor level." Natapoff states, "every year, approximately 13 million people are charged with crimes as minor as littering or as serious as domestic violence." She further contends, "Those thirteen million misdemeanors make up the vast majority." "This enormous system affects millions of people each year who are arrested, charged, booked, perhaps jailed, convicted, and punished in ways that can haunt them and their families for the rest of their lives." It is the belief by some, including myself, that misdemeanors have essentially slipped beneath the public radar. They lack the sensational appeal for commercials, marketing, and radio and television ratings. According to Natapoff, "their impact and importance are thoroughly underestimated because these charges and offenses do not make newspaper headlines.

38 Ibid., 2.
39 Ibid., 2.
40 Ibid., 2.
41 Ibid., 2.
She states, "Although the punishment associated with a misdemeanor is relatively light compared to felonies, they can be just as powerful and equally as harsh to the dismay of many."\textsuperscript{42} Furthermore, she asserts, "they, along with both the victims and offenders, interact with some mighty players such as bail bondsmen, probation officers, police, prosecutors, public defenders, judges, attorneys, arrestees, sheriffs, clerks, defendants, both victim, and offender families, as well as with the media and members of the public."\textsuperscript{43} She adds, "These entities are intertwined yet distinct, playing different roles like spokes on a wheel."\textsuperscript{44}

According to Natapoff, "these judicial proceedings and punitive actions are often done quietly and informally, without much fanfare, in courthouses or attorney's offices every day in the United States of America."\textsuperscript{45} Natapoff contends that “mass incarceration and the misdemeanor phenomenon reflects some deep and abiding flaws in the U.S. justice system."\textsuperscript{46} Natapoff continues by stating, "misdemeanors influence vital aspects of the public sphere' they shape race relations; they regulate employment; they affect immigration."\textsuperscript{47} The process she correctly reveals "is also an economic behemoth, quietly redistributing billions of public and private dollars; Misdemeanors fuel some of America's most infamous inequalities, especially the gap between rich and poor and the disparate treatment of people of color."\textsuperscript{48} Occasionally you may see a clergy or spiritual representative involved, I guess. For me, where is the church, and where are its representatives?

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 9.
The War on Drugs - Its contribution to Mass Incarceration and Federal Prison expansion

The War on Drugs started under former-President Richard M. Nixon, who initiated the inaugural drug campaign in 1971. His successors, Presidents Ford, Carter, Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama, built upon this flawed public policy calling for the nation to become tougher on crime. This domestic political war on drugs also supported longer mandatory minimum sentences for drug-related crimes. Hundreds of thousands of people, mostly Black and brown people, are languishing in U.S. jails and federal prisons for exceptionally lengthy periods without the possibility of parole for federal drug crimes. At least in the federal prison system, many of these individuals have a life sentence for their criminal involvement and drug association.

In his book, Locking up our Own-Crime and Punishment in Black America, James Forman states, "In 1954 when the Supreme Court ruled on the Brown v. Board of Education, about one-third of the nation's prisoners were Black."\(^\text{49}\) In contrast, according to this report, Forman contends that "by 1994, when Justice Sandra Day O'Connor sat on the Supreme Court, this number was nearly fifty percent."\(^\text{50}\) In 1995, The Sentencing Project issued increasingly alarming reports documenting systemic racial disparities in the criminal. His information concluded that "nationally, one in three young Black men was under criminal justice supervision."\(^\text{51}\) The report concludes, "Over the past forty years, the number of African Americans in state and federal prison facilities reached an all-time high."\(^\text{52}\)

\(^{49}\) James Forman, Jr., (Locking up Our Own (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017), 8.
\(^{50}\) Ibid., 8.
\(^{51}\) https://www.sentencingproject.org/Publications,1.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., 1.
Some see these alarming statistics from an entirely different perspective and use this data to make a compelling case supporting mass incarceration, prison expansion, and the militarization of police. These supporters contend with the backing of very influential politicians, conservative think tanks, judges, courts, and media personalities that mass incarceration and prison expansion are directly a consequence of good policing and adequate prosecutorial toughness. I contend, and it has been my lived-work experience as a federal prison chaplain, that the War on Drugs, which led to the imposition of new federal minimum sentences, is just one of the evil forces that led to this plague of mass incarceration. Another is the abolishing of federal parole. New federal drug offenses, namely crack cocaine, are some of the main contributors to mass incarceration and the expansion of the national prison system. I also contend that the motivation of many politicians was to create a world panic which they used effectively during their campaign’s stump speeches; the proverbial get tough on crime mantra during the 1980s laid the groundwork for mass incarceration and prison expansion.

These politicians' explicit and or implicit goal was to produce more prisons and incarcerate even more people. They argued that being tough on crime would make society and their respective communities more peaceful and safer. However, according to the Bureau of Justice statistics and many other reports, mass incarceration during this period had little or no effect on official crime rates. After these draconian federal drug laws and mandatory minimums, a cursory review of various reports and statistics proved otherwise, suggesting that expanding the federal and state prison populations did not lead to safer communities.
I have encountered thousands of inmates in federal prison who returned to prison after serving ten, fifteen, twenty, or more years. They were under supervised released criminal supervision and violated a misdemeanor (e.g., an inability to pay fines, child support, etc.) I was shocked to see how easy it is to return to federal prison because the law and your fate are in someone else's hands or their perception. For example, a person with a vendetta can pick up the phone and make a false claim or charge against an ex-offender (returning citizen). Even a simple misunderstanding that resulted in a verbal altercation or threat can cause re-incarceration. I have also seen hundreds of individuals return to federal prison for traffic tickets. A convicted felon can also be re-incarcerated by conversing or cavorting with suspected drug dealers on federal conspiracy charges.

As a federal prison chaplain, I often encountered inmates struggling with substance abuse who became drug addicts after release from prison. Individuals suffering from substance abuse are more likely to be reengaged in substance abuse behavior after prison. They are at substantial risk for recidivism. Substance abuse by ex-offenders (returning citizens) is a significant reason recidivism rates are high in state and federal prison systems. The extent to which an individual is willing to disengage from substance abuse behavior is dependent on their behavior and attitude after being arrested for such crimes and serving time in prison. If the inmate's perspective, conduct, and mindset are positive about changing, they can participate in drug treatment and other programs available in federal prisons to overcome their addictions. However, failure to participate in drug treatment programs makes offenders highly likely to recidivate and return to prison.
Accessibility to drugs in state and federal prisons is just as easy to obtain as on the streets despite the vigilance of correctional staff to prevent such contraband from entering the prison. Unfortunately, no matter how much training correctional staff receive and how many prohibitive prison rules and regulations forbidding such activities, drugs of all types still find their way inside these places. Dirty staff members who become compromised by clever and cunning inmates who manipulate them to bring in drugs are big problems inside federal prisons. In many instances, visitors, contractors, and family members also introduce drugs inside the jail. Inmates are notorious for their creative aptitude and ability to manufacture, use, sell, and distribute medications while incarcerated. As a chaplain, I would use the pulpit and various pastoral skills to motivate and challenge inmates who engage in such activities to refrain from engaging in such behavior. I would tell them that whatever they do while in prison, you will continue to do and engage after being released from jail. I would challenge them to consider terminating the harmful, illegal act of selling illicit drugs and turning their lives around. My goal was to help them see how they could transform their skill sets into something positive and productive, hoping to become successful people in society.

It is imperative for churches and para-church organizations to have drug treatment programs, narcotics anonymous, alcoholics anonymous, and domestic violence programs as part of their prison outreach-reentry ministry. To effectively manage drug-related issues that impact a substantial percentage of inmates in federal prisons and their families, such programs have reduced recidivism among drug addicts. Additionally, the church should support and encourage returning citizens upon their release from federal prison that participates in their prison reentry programs to attend reputable drug-alcohol treatment and violence prevention programs, including victim impact.
By providing such meaningful programs, which should be a part of any prison outreach and reentry ministry, churches and para-church organizations can help in this battle to reduce crime rates and recidivism rates. The federal government can save the American taxpayer millions of tax dollars that can otherwise get earmarked for other federal government programs like health care, education, housing, infrastructure, elder care, childcare, and job creation.

This chapter cites some of the crimes and causes that have contributed to the current high mass incarceration rates, which have doubled in the past forty years, especially among individuals in communities of color. In Chapter Four, I take a closer look at and examine the impact of mass incarceration on communities of color, how race, gender, and ethnicity play a role in who goes to federal prison, and why criminal justice reform and reentry are vitally necessary.
Chapter Four discusses the impact of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry in communities of color by highlighting the role of race, gender, and ethnicity inside the federal prison system. I also touch on mass incarceration's social and economic effects on families in these vulnerable communities. Finally, in this chapter, I will share some ideas about the types and kinds of programs necessary for a twenty-first-century prison outreach ministry, as in Chapter Three.

Given the magnitude of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, police brutality, and racial injustice, which are endemic within American society, especially within communities of color, there is a need to understand its impact on people, especially communities of color. Mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, police misconduct, racial injustice, and reentry are life and death-issues. They are the lived experiences that hang in the balance daily as communities of color continue to educate their children on how to relate when confronted by a police officer. Many statistics support my lived and worked experience as a federal prison chaplain regarding the vast number of African Americans incarcerated in Federal prisons.

Matthew 7:3 (KJV)
For example, suppose one would take a cursory visit to any local, county, state, or federal correctional facility anywhere in America. In that case, you will see black and brown men and women, boys and girls languishing in these jails. It is breathtaking and will break your heart and prick your conscience as it did me. If you are not afraid to visit these jails, prisons, detention centers, or juvenile halls, go to any courthouse or courtroom anywhere in America, and you will see the same deplorable picture. It is as though the face of crime in America is black or brown.

According to a report prepared for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, April 15-16, 1999, "almost half of the prison inmates nationally are African American, compared to 13% share of the overall population." According to this report, "Nearly one in three (32%) black males is under criminal justice supervision on any given day—either in prison or jail or on probation or parole. Furthermore, the report states, “As of 1995, one in fourteen (7%) adult black males was incarcerated in prison or jail on any given day, representing a doubling of this rate from 1985.” Accordingly, the report reveals, “The 1995 figure for white males was 1%, and a black male born in 1991 has a 29% chance of spending time in prison at some point in his life.” Accordingly, “The figure for white males is 4%, and for Hispanics, 16%.” The report concludes, “In contrast, African American males have been the most severely affected demographic group within the criminal justice system; other minorities have also been disproportionately affected.”

---

55 Ibid., 3.
56 Ibid., 3.
57 Ibid., 3.
58 Ibid., 3.
According to this report, "Hispanics now constitute 17% of their prison population nationally compared to their 10% share of the total population. Hispanic inmates increased by more than half in 1990-96."  

The report also states, “Women, particularly minority women, while incarcerated in smaller numbers than men, have also experienced dramatic growth in recent years.”  

The report contends, “The number of women in the prison system increased 418% from 1980 to 1995, compared to 236% for men.”  Accordingly, “Black women are incarcerated at a rate seven times that of white women.”  

According to a report published by the National Academy of Sciences, "After peaking in 2009, the number of people in state and federal prisons fell slightly through 2012. Then, the incarceration was 707 per 1000,000, 2.23 million—people in custody.”  

This report states, “The racial disparity in prisons still exists and perhaps has gotten wider.”  

For example, according to a report published by the National Academy of Sciences, "Of those incarcerated behind bars, in 2011, 60% were minorities (858,000 blacks and 464 000 Hispanics).”  

During my tenure in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, I witnessed this dramatic growth and saw the overrepresentation of minorities and females. Nearly every federal prison I served in (9) and all I visited, mainly as Mid-Atlantic Chaplaincy Administrator (50 plus), comprised many minorities. According to historical documentation, "the Federal Bureau of Prisons was established in 1891.”  

---

59 Ibid., 3.  
60 Ibid., 3.  
61 Ibid., 3.  
62 Ibid., 3.  
64 Ibid., 3.  
65 Ibid., 13.  
66 U.S Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons, Historical Information, (https://www.bop.gov/about/history/timeline.jsp1.5.22), 1.
The Federal Bureau of Prisons is the largest correctional agency in the country. Historical records indicate that by 1930, the Federal Bureau of Prisons operated fourteen facilities for just over 13,000 inmates." 67

According to this report, "In 1932, the bureau opened U.S. Penitentiary Lewisburg, the first prison built by the newly established agency; by 1940, the bureau had grown to twenty-four facilities with 24,360 inmates." 68 Accordingly, “The number of inmates did not change significantly between 1940 and 1980 when the prison population was 24,252." 69 However, as the bureau gradually moved from extensive facilities confining inmates to smaller facilities, facilities almost doubled.

Changes in federal laws significantly increased sentencing in the federal prison system. According to the congressional research service, “since 1980, the federal prison population has increased, on average, by approximately 5900 inmates each fiscal year." 70 In particular, the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 is one of the causes of this. “In 1984, it established determinate sentencing, abolished parole, and reduced good time: additionally, several mandatory minimum sentencing provisions got enacted in 1986, 1988, and 1990." 71 For example, from 1980 to 1989, the inmate population more than doubled, from just over 24,000 to almost 58,000 states in this report." 72 “The number of federal prisons increased to 62,000 at the end of this decade; during the 1990s, drugs and illegal immigration contributed to the increased conviction rates; by the end

68 Ibid., 2.
69 Ibid., 2.
71 Ibid., 2.
72 Ibid., 2.
of 2000, the bureau was operating ninety-five institutions.” 73 Reportedly, “The inmate population increased for the next thirteen years, reaching over 217,000 in 119 institutions.” 74

Today, the federal bureau of prisons manages an inmate population of 155,530.” 75 As of 2021, it had 127 correctional facilities operating in thirty-seven states, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii. Bureau of Prisons Statistics reports, “the number of inmates under the Bureau of Prisons' jurisdiction has increased from approximately 25,000 in 1980 to over 219,000 in 2013.” 76

The increasing number of federal inmates, combined with the rising per capita cost of incarceration, has made it increasingly more expensive to operate and maintain the federal prison system. According to The Federal Prison Population Buildup: Overview, Policy Changes, Issues, and Options by the Congressional Research Service report, “the per capita cost of incarceration for all inmates increased from $21,603 in 2000 to $29 291.00 in 2013.” 77 According to the report, in 2015, the year I retired, it grew to $31,977, averaging about $81.61 per day to stay in federal prison.” 78 It is probably costing the American taxpayer a whopping $35,500 per capita. During this same period, appropriations for the Bureau of Prisons increased from $3.688 billion to 6.455 billion.” 79 This data perhaps compelled Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) to make the following statement: "We had more African Americans under criminal supervision today than all slaves in 1850.” 80 According to Glen Kessler, a Washington Post reporter, "statistics suggest about 1.68

73 Ibid., 2.
74 Ibid., 2.
75 Ibid., 2.
76 Ibid., 2.
77 Ibid., 10.
78 Ibid., 10
79 Ibid., 10.
80 Glen Kessler, The Washington Post (Politics, - Debate analysis and fact Checking September 2012) 1
million African American males were under state and federal criminal justice supervision as of 2013, representing 807,076 more than the African American men enslaved in 1850.”

This statement by Senator Booker is an astonishing proposition, although disputed depending on the type of statistics an individual aligns. However, in this thesis project, the point is that there are too many people in our jails and prisons, especially African Americans and Hispanics. For generations, the long-term social consequences and the negative impact on the African American community will metastasize and affect society on all levels, not just in these communities.

Churches and Parachurch organizations must be prepared to respond to the grim reality of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and the need for reentry, especially in communities of color. As for this, the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are noteworthy, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. What affects one directly affects all indirectly." 

In the past forty years, the rapid growth in prison populations has exacerbated the overrepresentation of African Americans in the U.S. prison system, both state and federal. The proportion of African Americans in federal, and state prisons or local jails has increased dramatically since the 1970s, especially in the national bureau of prisons. The social implication of mass incarceration is loss of life, economic viability, and long emotional, social, and psychological problems among the affected individuals and their families. There is also a deep and abiding spiritual decline for the incarcerated and their families. Therefore, I contend that Black churches, Latin churches, and para-church organizations must be ready to offer the necessary support to hundreds of thousands of offenders and their family members who have

81 Ibid., 1.

82 Tags: Justice, unity – Martin Luther King Jr., Why we can’t Wait.
been convicted and are serving jail and prison terms. One day, these individuals will be released and return home. My humble opinion is that these faith-based and secular institutions must develop a robust, comprehensive, whole-person, whole-community twenty-first-century prison outreach ministry program. Such programs should support the needs of inmates and their families while in prison and after being released to reduce recidivism, crime, and victim impact, especially in these communities of color.

Today, there are calls to defund police and law enforcement agencies. On the contrary, what needs to be "defunded" is the amount of money American taxpayers spend on warehousing individuals, especially non-violent first-time drug offenders, inside state jails, detention centers, and federal prisons. The cost of prison construction, operations, and maintenance of federal prisons are astronomical. The budget and expenditures for such massive operations have skyrocketed over the past forty years. Since my time of service from 1987 through 2015 and currently as CEO of a prison outreach ministry, the federal prison system's budget has skyrocketed. I began my career and discovered that millions of taxpayer dollars get spent annually on prison operations. According to the Federal Prison System (BOP), "F.Y. 2021 Budget at a Glance report from Congressional Budget Office (CBO), "President Biden requested a whopping $7,778.00 million in his budget request to operate the federal bureau of prisons."\(^8^3\)

One of the unspoken facts that resulted from the 1994 Omnibus Crime bill sponsored by then-Senator Joe Biden and signed into law by then-President William Jefferson Clinton was the $100,000 million allocated for the construction of federal prisons. Senator Joe Biden was the chairperson of the Senate Judiciary Committee that had jurisdiction over this crime bill.

\(^8^3\)https://www.justice.gov/Federal Budget Request, Fact Check At A Glace., 1.
According to Robert Farley, Senator Biden said, "You can pass this bill; the Republicans will kill it if you don't put in more sentencing."\(^8^4\) Says Biden, “I talked to a lot of African American groups. They thought Black lives mattered.”\(^8^5\) Biden adds. “They said, take this bill because our kids are being shot in the streets by gangs. We had thirteen-year-old kids planning their funerals.”\(^8^6\)

Progressives, social activists, and groups have criticized Biden and Clinton for this awful piece of legislation. The ridicule and scorn extended against them was relentless, as it should be. (Later, in a subsequent chapter, I will state the horror, pain, and loss that this bill did to communities of color, including unequal incarcerations and convictions that have seen systemic racism against Blacks in the Criminal Justice System.) However, it is also a fact that members of the Congressional Black Caucus, community organizers, social activists, politicians, and pastors representing the African American and Hispanic communities also supported this bill. They also have blood on their hands to create a welcoming political climate for such laws to be enacted. This single piece of legislation has snuffed out the lives, dreams, hopes, and aspirations of hundreds of thousands of young African and Hispanic American men and women who got caught up in this nightmarish social, political, and mass incarceration dragnet. This mass incarceration was a pandemic that swept across the nations, especially in communities of color, like wildfire.

I firmly believe that an apology or open letter is deserving to all who suffered from this biased law. (I discuss this letter/apology in detail in chapter twelve on Ubuntu for remedy.) However, as

---


\(^{8^5}\) Ibid., 1.

\(^{8^6}\) Ibid., 1.
I share my righteous indignation and passion regarding these issues, one should not be mistaken that I condone the use, sale, manufacture, possession, and distribution of any illogical drugs. I have seen the devastating effects of this kind of criminal activity on individuals and their families, especially crack cocaine, crystal meth, PCP, powder cocaine, opioids, and fentanyl. Neither am I giving vindication to those engaged in criminal activities. Parenthetically, as a hospital chaplain, I see the results of such drug use and its impact on incarceration and tragically ending the lives of so many young people. For me, law and order issues in civil society are essential to creating a perfect union. The United States of America is, after all, a nation of laws.

I agree with the sentiment expressed by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who contends that "several factors should be the justification for incarcerating individuals who violate the law, especially those who commit acts of heinous and violent crimes."87 However, I focus on non-violent crimes, primarily low-level, first-time drug offenders, in this thesis project. Although individuals using these soft drugs, such as marijuana, may not be violent, individuals who distribute and sell the drugs may engage in criminal activities during the distribution process. Those participating in unlawful, immoral, unethical, and ungodly behavior are problematic and negatively impact others. I am a firm believer and supporter of fair and equal justice under the law. I strongly support excellent and honest professional policing to protect and serve. However, I have vivid traumatizing memories of the pain, suffering, and misery relating to individuals who went to prison and their wanting experiences while serving their jail terms. While in prison, I saw, heard, and witnessed their sufferings, tears, anguish, hopelessness, despair, anger, rejection, sorrow, humiliation, and repentance. I would often return to my office after carrying out my

responsibilities as a chaplain ministering to the inmates and their families in the visiting rooms and weeping like the prophet Jeremiah.

The answer is not prisons but drug courts and drug treatment, especially for first-time offenders with no history of violence. These solutions could be much better at treating addiction among offenders.

In this new twenty-first-century prison outreach ministry model, I propose that churches and para-church organizations adopt a whole person, family, and community model as part of their prison outreach ministry. The model includes a viable substance-abuse component with trained, certified drug treatment therapists to serve offenders and their families to reduce mass incarceration and recidivism. Statistics suggest that many individuals in prison return to society with drug-related issues, mental health issues, sexual addictions, and other social adjustment issues. In her book, Punishment Without Crime, Alexandra Natapoff states, "most misdemeanor enforcement impacts the disadvantage, the poor, and working call African Americans and Latinos immigrants, the young, the homeless, the mentally ill, and the addicted."\(^88\) Furthermore, Natapoff contends, “Many people are ignorant of how easy it is, especially for poor and marginalized people in communities of color, to get arrested, charged with a crime, convicted, and sent to jail or prison.”\(^89\) This ignorance may be uniquely genuine for people of faith who seemingly have turned a blind eye to individuals who are both victims of criminal offenders. It is as though the hearts and minds of people of faith and goodwill in these Christian faith communities have been hardened and callous. Seemingly they have turned cold to the realities of our criminal justice system. A system that sends millions of people, predominantly black and


\(^{89}\) Ibid., 11.
brown, to jails and prison charged with simple misdemeanors for engaging in the use, sale, possession, and distribution of marijuana, crack cocaine, opioids, and other drugs.

Furthermore, according to a report entitled An Unjust Burden: The Disparate Treatment of Black Americans in the Criminal Justice System, Elizabeth Hilton writes that "Discriminatory criminal justice policies and practices have historically and unjustifiably targeted black people since The Reconstruction Era, including Black Codes, vagrancy laws, and convict leasing, all of which got used to continue post-slavery control over newly freed people."\textsuperscript{90} Furthermore, she contends in her report, "This discrimination continues today in often less overt ways, including through disparity in the enforcement of seemingly race-neutral laws."

For example, according to her, while rates of drug use are similar across racial and ethnic groups, black people are arrested and sentenced on drug charges at much higher rates than white people."\textsuperscript{91} Anecdotally, while serving in the federal prison system for three decades and more, this was my lived and work experience. I saw this racial nightmare up-close and personal, having a ringside seat at this public debacle. I had many pastoral conversations with hundreds of thousands of inmates in federal prisons nationwide for drug crimes. I surmised that people of color are more likely than their white counterparts to be arrested, convicted, and sent to jail for drugs, especially marijuana and crack cocaine. These individuals represented all races and ethnicities from various social-economic backgrounds. They had different religious affiliations, faith orientations, and gender and sexual orientations. Natapoff further contends, "This is not an

\textsuperscript{90} Elizabeth Hinton, (An Unjust Burden: The Disparate Treatment of black Americans in the Criminal Justice System, Vera Institute of Justice, May 2018), 1

entirely new problem: the American criminal justice system has a shameful history of punishing
the poor.”92

Natapoff further argues, “It is equally infamous for punishing people of color, especially African
Americans, and misdemeanors have long been central players in that shameful drama.”93

I have considered mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, and race. In the next
paragraph, I look at mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, its impact on women, and the
alarming increase of women incarcerated in state and federal prisons.

92 Ibid., 10.
93 Ibid., 10.
Mass Incarceration—Women in Prison

1992 to 2005 were the decades that perhaps saw the fastest growth and increased number of women arrested, convicted, and imprisoned. The adage, “when America sneezes, the world catches the flu,”\(^94\) is an accurate description and can undoubtedly be applied when discussing the unprecedented growth of women in prison compared to men during this period. The prison population growth, especially for women, over the past forty years, particularly in federal prisons. In her book, *Women Behind Bars - The Crisis of Women in the U.S. Prison System*, Silva J.A. Talvi states, "when the male inmate prison population catches a cold, women come down with Pneumonia.

Today, the number of girls and women doing time in jails, prisons, and detention centers is unprecedented in U.S. history with a shocking increase of 757 percent since 1977, at nearly twice the rate of male prisoners."\(^95\) "According to Talvi, official statistics put the proportion of female inmates at less than one in ten prisoners in the United States. However, she contends that raw data shows a slightly different picture revealing that nearly 17 percent of people imprisoned under correctional supervision are women. Her take on the data suggests that "at the end of 2006, there were 203,100 women in jails and state and federal prisons.” According to Talvi, the female jail/prison population grew 3.4 percent between 2004 and 2005. The male prison population growth during this period was 1.3 percent between 2004 and 2005, compared with the growth in the male population rate of 1.3 percent."\(^96\) She states, “Additionally, nearly one million women are on probation, plus over 94,000 women on parole, accounting for an estimated 1.3 million females under some type of correctional supervision.”\(^97\)

\(^94\) https://riglic.com>blog>when-america-sneezes-the-world-catches-a-cold.
When I began my federal prison chaplaincy ministry in 1988, three federal prisons confined female offenders. The Federal Prison Camp Alderson was in Alderson, West Virginia. This facility is the first and oldest federal prison for women and has 17,000 female inmates; The Federal Medical Center Lexington, located in Lexington, Kentucky; and the Federal Correctional Institution Marianna, located in Marianna, Florida. The female prison in Lexington, Kentucky, was the first federal prison designated as a medical center for female offenders. It has 2000 female offenders and houses the most violent female federal offenders in its administrative unit. This Administrative high-security female locked-down unit was eventually relocated in 1988 to Marianna, Florida, called The Shawnee Unit. I had the privilege of serving at all three female federal correctional institutions, The Federal Prison Camp Alderson, The Federal Medical Center Lexington, and The Federal Correctional Institution Marianna. When I retired in 2015, there were approximately 57,000 female offenders doing time in eight female federal prisons, with twenty-nine of these facilities housing women. That is a staggering 110 percent increase in just over twenty-five years and a 75.5 percent increase in prison beds during this same time.

Based on my experiences, I can confidently say that women in federal prison do time differently to some degree than men. Incarcerated women do time with their children, which has an enormous emotional and psychological effect on incarcerated women. I do not suggest that men who have children do not care about their children while in prison. However, as a chaplain, it was my lived pastoral experience that women have a much more difficult time dealing with their children's emotional ties, physical care, and safety while in prison.

---

96 Ibid., 7.
97 Ibid., 7.
What I also found to be a fascinating dynamic and lived-worked experience as a federal prison chaplain is that incarcerated women do not get visits from family members or friends when in prison compared to men. Having worked in both male and female prisons in the federal prison system, I witnessed a wide disparity and difference between men and women regarding visitors who came to see their loved ones while incarcerated. Female offenders do not get the same visitors as their male counterparts. As a chaplain, I would make "pastoral rounds" in visiting rooms inside every federal where I have served. At male federal prisons, regardless of their security level, the visiting rooms would be packed from wall to wall with children, spouses, parents, girlfriends, grandparents, cousins, aunties, uncles, and homeboys.

In contrast, the visiting rooms inside federal prisons where females would be empty and bleak, absent of family members, including their children. As for the spouses, boyfriends, or significant others, you can almost forget about them visiting. Men, unlike women, often leave their spouses or girlfriends when they go to jail. This lack of visitation for women is a disturbing dynamic and says a lot about the prevailing attitudes in this country about incarcerated women and the children of incarcerated parents. (I say more about children of incarcerated parents in a subsequent chapter.) I found this to be very sad and perplexing as a chaplain, and I would inquire of both staff and female inmates why this was the case regarding women in prison not getting visitors during their incarceration. Basically, for me, it came down to one simple fact. It is taboo for women to get locked up and serve time in prison. According to Talvi, "Stereotypes about female 'criminals' are exacerbated by persistent, sensationalistic media representations and promulgated by antiquate often regarded as damaged human beings and mothers who have failed their children."98

---

98 Ibid., 11.
In his book entitled Punishment, Prisons, and Patriarchy, Mark E. Kann states, “the prevailing attitude about female criminality in early U.S. history had everything to do with prejudice and biases’ toward women.”

For example, “by engaging in prostitution, vagrancy, or public drunkenness or by having extramarital affairs) were more disgraceful and disturbed than men who committed even the most serious crimes.”

My lived and worked experiences in dealing with female offenders and members of their families as a chaplain is that, in most cases, family members are usually ashamed when a female family member is arrested, charged, convicted, and sent off to prison. The guilt, shame, and humiliation from both sides, the female offender and her family members, are so embedded that they become almost impossible barriers to overcome. Females in prison also must contend with a wide range of emotional issues of abandonment, sexual assaults, low self-esteem, and self-worth, which are associated with these and other realities of incarceration. In addition, many women in prison are serving time for their male counterpart's crimes and criminal behavior.

Although a high percentage of women are serving time in federal prison for drug-related and other non-violent crimes, many unfortunately do not receive treatment while in jail because these programs and services are not as prevalent for them as they are for men. For example, Residential Drug Treatment Programs (RADP) and Life Connections Programs (LCP) are more readily available at male federal prisons than at female federal prisons. Women in federal prisons, especially mothers, need emotional and psychological support to help with the separation and, in some cases, the loss of their children. The children themselves desperately need moral, emotional, and psychological support.

---

99 Ibid., 12.
100 Ibid., 12.
An essential prison outreach ministry program proposes that churches and para-church organizations are various social services support programs in this new twenty-first-century prison ministry model. These include but should not be limited to transportation services so that their children can visit with them—aftercare, education tutoring, and counseling programs for children of incarcerated parents. The number of women in federal prison is relatively small compared to men. Many federal prison facilities for females are primarily located in small rural and isolated areas, making it difficult for them to get visitors. When these women are sent to these prisons to serve their time, and because they are far away from home, it becomes complicated to see their children or other family members for emotional and psychological support for long periods. I know women in federal prison who had children, and they would maybe see them once or twice a year, if at all, during their entire sentence. I served women in federal prison who died while in federal prison without ever seeing their children during their complete sentence. I also served pregnant women in federal prison who, if necessary, would be chained with handcuffs and leg irons, especially in an outside hospital during their pregnancy or birth. After giving birth, the infant and mother are placed in a secured facility and given six weeks to bond with each other. The emotional and psychological toll on women is unbearable, impacting how they do their time.

Unlike male inmates, physical violence is not as common inside female federal prisons. I have seen and ministered to men and women assaulted by other inmates and staff physically and sexually assaulted as a chaplain. Additionally, many female inmates told me that something as natural and normal as eating food in federal prison could become an absolute difficult barrier and challenge an emotional partner for their nutrition needs.
For example, I witnessed this dynamic firsthand, especially at Carswell's female medical center. Poor eating and dietary habits contributed to mitigating health concerns, such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and many other underlying comorbidity health issues, especially for female offenders. Also, unlike men, female offenders form an imaginary surrogate family unit with other female inmates while in prison. These pseudo-relationships are significant because they help fulfill essential human needs as articulated by Maslow's hierarchy of needs: “psychological needs, safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.”

I will never forget the first time I confronted this truth. I was introduced and welcomed as the new chaplain at my first female facility, and several women would come up to me and say they were not related by blood but by time and place.

These are just some of the unique needs of the female offender in federal prisons across the nation, which was my lived and work experience as a federal prison chaplain. However, the most crucial issue of concern is the increase in women in prison facilities in the United States. Women are the fastest-growing segment of the mass incarceration problem. Therefore, it is an absolute must for churches and para-church organizations to have as part of their prison outreach ministry programs and services geared explicitly toward female offenders and their children. In the following closing paragraphs in this chapter, I discuss the impact mass incarceration has on race, education, family, and income.

---

101 https://www.simplypsychology.org
Mass Incarceration – Its impact on race, education, family, and income

It is a known fact backed up by many credible statistical analyses and reports that racial and ethnic disproportionality exists in the American criminal justice and penal systems. Black and brown people are disproportionately overrepresented in state and federal corrections institutions. There are far too many factors contributing to this reality in this thesis project. However, at least anecdotally, related to my lived and worked experience as a federal prison chaplain, a high school dropout rate is one factor. I saw thousands of men and women literally, especially from communities of color in federal prisons, that did not obtain a high school diploma or GED Equivalency. According to a report published by the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Assessing the Role of School Discipline in Minority, contact with the Juvenile Justice System is a contributing factor that leads one to prison. The report states, "The school-to-prison pipeline is described as an increasingly punitive and isolating path for African Americans and other at-risk students through the education system."\textsuperscript{102} For example, "the report indicated that repeated school disciplinary encounters stigmatize students and interrupt social ties with positive peers."\textsuperscript{103} The report states, "As youths fall out of contact with mainstream friends, this report concludes that they develop new associations with genuinely deviant individuals."\textsuperscript{104} “In this manner, even students who may not have been initially inclined toward serious misbehavior can become delinquent,"\textsuperscript{105} claims the report.

\textsuperscript{102} National Criminal Justice Reference Service-Office of Justice Program (Assessing the Role of School Discipline in Disproportionate Minority Contact with the Juvenile Justice System: Final Report –August 2018), 8.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 12. 
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 12.
The report concludes, “to the extent that minority youths are more likely to have school discipline contact.”\textsuperscript{106} Thus, they have a higher chance of entering this school-to-prison pipeline on an accelerated path to academic failure, delinquency, juvenile justice contact, and adult criminal involvement.”\textsuperscript{107} Many suggest that this has more to do with race, which is often the cause of punishment. Again, as a lived and worked experience, another example of race's role in the significant incarnation rates of Black and Brown people is racism in policing. Racial profiling and driving while Black contribute to the unprecedented number of black men and women arrested by police. In addition, another factor is targeted law enforcement, especially for drugs in communities of color. I have experienced the above, and so have many family members, friends, associates, and colleagues who shared this fate. These realities are lynchpins for opening the jail and prison doors for many in these communities of color to enter.

These attitudes, stereotypes, and behavior need acknowledging, addressing, and eradicating if America will make good on her commitment to ending mass incarceration and criminal justice reform and reentry. Churches and para-church organizations have a role to play in his regard. They must not be afraid of speaking the truth to power regarding these stereotypes, biases, prejudices, and racism. Political rallies and protests sponsored by several organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Black Lives Matter, The National Action Network, and many others are on the frontlines of this horrific fight addressing all of these social ills.

\textsuperscript{106}Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{107}Ibid., 4.

These organizations have brought systemic racism in policing to the attention of society. However, Colin Kaepernick, a former National Football League (NFL) quarterback, brought these and other social ills to the forefront. His peaceful protest, kneeling during the National Anthem, was the immediate action that lit this quiet social revolution on racial injustice, mass incarceration, and criminal justice reforms. His voice was one of the most apparent, loudest, and most essential sounds since the one heard on August twenty-third, 1963. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke to a troubled nation amid social unrest arising from the racial treatment of Black people in his historic I Have a Dream speech. Although his assassination muted his single voice in 1968, people from different backgrounds have embraced his words, his songs of liberty, freedom, and justice for all. Because of the recent events surrounding police misconduct, the battle cry and calls for justice are phrases like; Black Lives Matter, I can't breathe, equal justice, say her name, no justice—no peace.

The crisis of mass incarceration, the need for criminal justice reforms, and reentry are issues that have troubled Black people for a long time. Systemic racism in this country's criminal justice and penal systems has led to the unequal incarceration of Black and brown people since slavery. For example, the Thirteenth Amendment outlawing slavery retained a caveat that has shaped our culture today regarding mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. It says, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for a crime of which the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States." This Amendment, to this very day, has had far-reaching economic, social, and psychological consequences on incarcerated men and women of color and their families. This impact can't be truly measured.

---

108[https://www.history.com/topics/thirteenth-amendment](https://www.history.com/topics/thirteenth-amendment) (American History, Race, and Prison, Vera Institute, September 2018), 16.
For example, consider incarceration's economic impact on individuals and families. The Pew Charitable Trust underwrote a survey analysis by Bruce Western and Becky Pettit in 2010. They reported that "more than two-thirds of incarcerated men and women who were previously employed, before serving their prison sentence, and nearly half had lived with their children before prison."\textsuperscript{109} "More than half of imprisoned parents were principal earners supporting their children."\textsuperscript{110} The report contends, “When a family's breadwinner, for example, is jailed, the responsibility of taking care of the family shifts to the remaining partner.”\textsuperscript{111} The report concludes, “The devastating result of improvisation is federal assistance, and the loss of labor and human capacity during incarceration becomes problematic. It will impede the economic progress for the incarcerated and their families for generations, perhaps tantamount to generation's equivalent to the slavery era.”\textsuperscript{112}

Another similar survey addressing the loss of earnings and wages suggests that the more educated someone is, the better their chances of incarceration. Reportedly, "college graduates had a lower risk of having a family member detained, but the risk for black college graduates was comparatively high.”\textsuperscript{113} According to the survey, “research demonstrates that people involved in the criminal justice system tend to earn significantly less throughout their lives than un-convicted individuals.”\textsuperscript{114} Moreover, the study suggests that “individuals convicted of crimes and sent off to prisons are disadvantaged regarding job opportunities, inadequate reentry

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 3.
services, and social stigma.” Additionally, this research further suggests that "conviction and imprisonment affect experience early in life, lowering individuals' annual earnings: (a) people who have spent time in prison suffer tremendous losses, with their subsequent annual earnings reduced by an average of fifty-two percent, (b) people convicted of a felony but not imprisoned for it see their annual earnings reduced by an average of twenty-two percent, (c) people convicted of a misdemeanor see their annual earnings reduced by an average of sixteen percent." What is even more disturbing about these and other surveys is the suggestion that “the disparity between formerly imprisoned people who earn during a career will make half a million dollars less than individuals who have not been convicted or incarcerated.” This is a noticeable fact evidenced disproportionately by people already living in poverty. Crime, punishment, and incarceration only add to their broken lives, which for communities of color widens the already big economic gap between Black, Latino, and White communities. For example, according to the research, "White people who have a prison record see their earnings trend upward, while formerly imprisoned Black and Latin people experience a relatively flat earnings trajectory. Because Blacks and Latino men and women are also overrepresented in the criminal justice system, these economic effects are concentrated in their communities and worsened by the current racial wealth gap." From my observation, lived and worked experience as a federal prisons chaplain for thirty years, I encountered a large majority of federal prison inmates who are highly educated with college degrees, both graduates and, in some cases, post-graduate degrees.

115 Ibid., 3.
116 Ibid.,3.
117 Ibid., 3. 
118 Ibid., 3.
Most federal prison inmates get convicted of what are classified as white color crimes like embezzlement, tax evasion, espionage, bank fraud, Medicare fraud, and the like. Individuals who commit such crimes are more than likely educated with credentials and a long history of employment experience. Therefore, these individuals may find it easier to regain employment and financial stability upon release from prison.

However, the challenge for ex-offenders (returning citizens), regardless of their education and employment status before incarceration, is their inability to find gainful post-incarceration employment. Most applications have the preverbal question: have you ever been convicted of a felony or crime, and did you spend time in jail or prison? Answering this question truthfully will likely disqualify the ex-offender (returning citizen). Failure to answer honestly can and, in some cases, send the ex-offender (returning citizen) back to federal prison. Employment assistance and job training programs are among the most significant ministries churches and para-church organizations should have as part of their prison outreach programs, especially for reentry. The best deterrence for crime and community re-engagement for ex-offenders (returning citizens) is a good, well-paying job with health benefits and retirement plans.

Another fact regarding mass incarceration in this country is that many American households today either know or have someone they are related to, impacted by the criminal justice and penal systems. For example, a survey administered in 2018 by the Family History of Incarceration indicates that "Almost half of the country has a family member who knows who is either in jail or incarcerated!"\textsuperscript{119} According to the data from this report, "forty-five percent of Americans have had a family member incarcerated."\textsuperscript{120}

---

\textsuperscript{119} Family History of Incarceration Study -Roper Center for Public Opinion (FamHIS-Released 3, 2018), Chapter 2
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., Chapter 2
Accordingly, “The incarceration rate of an immediate family member was prevalent for Blacks (sixty-three percent) but typical for Whites (forty-two percent) and Hispanics (forty-eight percent) as well.”121 Again anecdotally, I was not surprised at these statistics based on my lived and work experiences. For example, during worship service at a vast mega non-denominational church I attend, the Bishop asked how many people here attending today know or have something related to jail or prison. This church has in attendance over fifteen thousand people. More than two-thirds of the congregation stood up. The number of people today who live with the reality of being related to or knowing someone involved in some aspect of the American criminal justice and penal systems is appalling. We are an incarcerated nation, and churches and para-church organizations must position themselves to address, mitigate and help solve this national pandemic. They should consider many, if not all, of the programs I present here in this new 21st-century prison outreach ministry model.

As crucial as these reentry programs are, the need for churches and para-church organizations to lobby congress and state legislators is equally as important. Some essential pieces of legislation, like the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021 and The Federal Prison Bureau Nonviolent Offender Acts of 2021, are excellent. These and many other past or current legislation enable employers to be more ex-offenders (returning citizens) friendly regarding employment applications and interviewing these individuals. Incarcerated individuals need regular reassurances of hope because they have the potential, promise, and possibility to become successful entrepreneurs. Some have vital skills and talents to become artists, engineers, carpenters, plumbers, doctors, nurses, teachers, beauticians, actors, singers, pastors, chaplains, and counselors.

121 Ibid., 2.
The most worrying issue for me and many others representing my community is that Black men and women are more likely to be victims of police brutality than any other minority group in the United States.

Much was shared in this chapter about mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry regarding the role and impact of race, gender, education, family, and income within the federal bureau of prisons. Chapter Five will examine my perspective on how mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry became the answer to a changing American economy.
In Chapter Five of this Thesis project, I discuss mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry as the answer to a new economic transformation in America based on my lived and work experience. The prison business is jobs and more jobs for an ailing American economy. I conclude this chapter by discussing the financial impact, and effects mass incarceration has upon families, especially children of incarcerated parents.

According to the political dictionary, in 1992, James Carville coined the phrase, "it's the economy stupid when he was advising Bill Clinton in his successful run for President." Likewise, the economy expresses the same sentiment regarding mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. It's all about the American economy. A former Bureau of Prisons colleague I once served with was notorious for keeping a copy of his paycheck inside his shirt pocket. Paper paychecks, of course, back in the olden days were how we were paid instead of digital electronic direct deposit checks. Occasionally he would escort various vendors throughout the prison, delivering supplies, equipment, food items, etc. As he encountered the inmates, he would stick out his chest, display his paycheck in his front shirt pocket, point to the vendor and inmates, and say, crime pays, and it pays well.

---

The free enterprise system is the cornerstone of the American economic system. The free enterprise system is also foundational to the American criminal and penal justice system. For example, most private and public sector agencies operate within the American economic system, especially non-governmental agencies (NGOs). This also includes private prisons and criminal justice reform agencies. An excellent example of prisons and profitability is rooted in the history of the US. Debtors’ prisons. An article entitled, The History of debtors’ prison and the abolition of jails and states, states that “many colonists shipped to the British colonies in America were sent, due to their inability to pay off debts in England.” Accordingly, “In the new territories, they became indentured servants that worked to pay off their debts over many years.”

Although congress outlawed debtors' prisons in 1833, it was implemented in twelve states between 1821 and 1849, according to an article entitled, The History of U.S. debtors and abolition of jail time. “Only in 1993, the Supreme Court affirmed that incarcerating indigent debtors was unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection clause.”

Although the American criminal justice and penal systems have become a vast bureaucratic agency with large budgets, costing taxpayers billions of dollars each year, mass incarceration has become its money-making enterprise, especially for the private prison industry. Based on my lived and work experience as a federal prison chaplain, I saw the U.S. prison system expand over the past forty years, especially in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Corporate involvement in construction, building, trades, goods and services, and prison labor also expanded. In an article entitled, Politics: The New Cold War, Part 1: Making Crime Pay, Cliff Montgomery states, 'Americans' fear of crime is creating a new version of the old military-industrial complex, an

123 [https://www.ejudicate.com/debtors-prisons/#:~:text=US Supreme Court banned debtors, (%24130approx in 2021).]
124 [Ibid., 1.]
125 [Ibid., 4.]
infrastructure born amid political rhetoric and a shower of federal, state, and local dollars.”

Montgomery states, “As they did in the Eisenhower era, politicians are trying to outdo each other in standing up to the common enemy; communities pin their economic hopes on jobs related to the buildup, and large and small businesses scramble for a slice of the bounty.” These mutually reinforcing interests are forging a formidable new iron triangle, similar to the triangle that arms makers, military services, and lawmakers formed three decades ago.” Furthermore, claims Montgomery, “prisons are big business. Privatization was the wave to catch.” Additionally, claims Montgomery, “parts of the defense establishment are cashing in, too, sensing a logical new line of business to help them offset military cutbacks.” The economic dynamic of prison building and operations boom receives enormous sums of money from the construction, food, and healthcare industries. According to Montgomery, the following companies are examples, “Westinghouse Electric Corp., Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co., GDE Systems Inc., (a division of the old General Dynamics) and Alliant Techsystems Inc.” Just as Macdonald Douglas and Lockheed Martin benefited from past wars like Iraq and Afghanistan creating what is referred to as the industrialized military complex. Today we now have the prison industrial complex. These facts enable me and many activists and scholars to subscribe to a sincere belief that these economic and political realities also contribute to increasing prison construction and mass incarceration. Montgomery further contends,” Many of

---

127 Ibid., 2.
128 Ibid., 3.
129 Ibid., 3.
130 Ibid., 3.
131 Ibid., 3.
America’s largest monied firms, such as Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, Prudential, and Smith Barney Shearson, were each fighting for a piece of the pie 132

I witnessed up close and personal and experienced the manifestation of this concept coming to fruition during my thirty-plus years of federal prison chaplaincy ministry. While serving at numerous federal prisons, I saw how the military and prison industrial complexes coexist, support, and promote each other. The prison factory where hundreds of inmates worked made military fatigues and other military equipment for various Armed services departments within the Department of Defense (DOD). As a lived and worked experience, I witnessed significant corporations like ATT, Coke-a-Cola, Western Union, American Express, and many others feeding at the trough of this prison industrial complex. UNICOR, the corporate inmate arm of the federal prison system, is a private corporation with "prison industries-factories" inside many of its facilities. The factories employ thousands of inmates who manufacture and distribute military equipment, such as night-vision goggles, fatigues, harnesses for military vehicles, and other items. Inmates in these factories get paid a much higher rate for their labor than the normal twenty-five to thirty-five cents per hour. Their pay can range from $1.25 to $2.75 per hour. Indeed, these are cheap and, as some say, including me, slave labor rates. Other operations and products inside these federal prison factories are call center operations for major credit card and telecommunications companies.

Suppose churches and parachurch organizations become successful advocates for criminal justice reform, mass incarceration, and reentry, especially in the 21st century. In that case, they need to broaden their understanding of the factors associated with the American criminal justice and penal systems. One should not solely focus on offenders' criminal acts, be they violent or non-violent, but also consider the hidden economic and political underpinnings and ulterior

132 Ibid., 3.
motivating factors. This is especially true regarding reentry programs initiatives for ex-offenders (returning citizens) about recidivism because these economic and social structures and ideologies shape public opinion. The 1970s thru the 1990s were when I began to see the results of what had occurred in our economy. I recall hearing much about the manufacturing, textile, steel, and, to some extent, automobile industries moving overseas to foreign nations and neighboring countries like Mexico and Canada. According to Wayne B. Gray, with Boston Research Data Center, he states, "these multinational corporations considered their bottom line. Concerns from their shareholders for more profits would no longer be at the mercy of organized labor in this country, along with higher wages and benefits demands from the unionized employee."\textsuperscript{133} In her book, \textit{Are Prisons Obsolete?} Angela Y. Davis, a vocal prison abolitionist, states, "These corporations roamed the world in search of nations providing cheap labor pools, less restrictive environmental laws, and employment laws to which they no longer had to adhere."\textsuperscript{134} Angela Davis contends that" one of the consequences of these migrating corporations, once they left these communities, was that the economic base of these communities became destroyed. This dynamic was also my lived experienced. Education and other essential social services were also profoundly affected."\textsuperscript{135} Based on many conversations I had with inmates from these communities, the belief is that citizens who live in these blighted communities became vulnerable to economic, political, and social vicissitudes.  

As a result, many believe, including me, that it enabled men, women, and children to be perfect candidates for crime and incarceration. Similarly, Geographer and Prison Abolitionist Ruth Wilson Gilmore describe in her book, \textit{Golden Gulag-Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in}  

\begin{itemize}
\item Angela Y. Davis, \textit{(Are Prisons Obsolete? Seven Stories Press, New York 2003)}, 16.
\item Ibid., 17.
\end{itemize}
Globalizing California, "similar expansion of prisons in California as a "geographical solution to social-economic problems." 136

As I see it, in response to this financial and employment gap, prisons became a viable alternative to replace these factories. To reinforce these facts and my belief, consider the community in northeastern Ohio where I grew up, Warren-Youngstown, Ohio. It was the home of manufacturing plants in the 1950s through the mid-1990s like General Motors, Delphi-Packard Electric, Ohio Lamp, Republic Steel, American Welding, Copper weld Steel, Hasley Taylor, General Electric, and Youngstown Sheet and Tube, to name a few. These industries were the underpinnings of the middle class and gave economic security to these and other surrounding communities. Thousands of residents, including many of my family members and friends, had worked for years in these bustling industries, which manufactured and produced automobiles, various steel products, aluminum, copper, lightbulbs, toilets, bathtubs, and sinks. I would say that a close examination of the crime rate in both Trumbull and Mahoning counties, where these factories closed their doors, negatively affected crime. Their presence had a positive impact on the economic viability of these neighborhoods and crime rates. In 1997, just twenty years after my high school graduation, these once-thriving financial entities had closed their doors and left what eventually became blighted and beleaguered communities. These once-thriving neighborhoods, with schools, shops, recreation facilities, restaurants, and houses of worship, suddenly became abandoned buildings, factories, stores, and homes with broken glass and dilapidated places that eventually became "crack houses" hotbeds for drug and criminal activities.

136 Ruth Gilmore, (Golden Gulag – Prisons, Surplus, Cost, and Opposition in Globalizing California, University of California Press Ltd. 2007), 44.
This scene is the current picture of most urban and rural communities throughout the county.

This social and economic hardship created by this shift laid the foundation for the proliferation of drug crimes, which became the conduit for mass incarceration. To replace these factories and provide some economic relief, Ohio built two state prisons and one federal prison between 1990 and 1995. One was The Trumbull Correctional Facility, a state prison in Warren, Ohio; the supermaxim state prison in Youngstown, Ohio; and the Federal Correctional Institution Elkton, in Columbiana County, Ohio. My younger brother, Reverend Doctor Avery Jerome Danage, now the senior pastor at Providence Christian Church in Chesapeake, Virginia, worked as a correctional officer at Trumbull Correctional Prison. I worked at Federal Prison Elkton as the Mid-Atlantic regional chaplaincy administrator. My brother and I were among the few individuals who did not get caught committing crimes by the grace of God. We could have quickly been arrested and incarcerated at either of these correctional institutions. Unfortunately, several childhood friends, classmates, and family members have served time in these facilities.

Despite these facts, prison jobs serve as vital safety and security management tools from a purely disciplinary management viewpoint and an inmate rehabilitation standpoint.

To effectively manage and operate a prison with thousands of inmates living in a secure artificial environment, there must be something for them to do and somewhere to go. An idle mind is indeed the "devil's workshop," and boredom is a continual force to be reckoned with by inmates and staff. One of the correctional management hallmarks of the Federal Bureau of Prisons is that all inmates must have a work detail assignment.

For churches and parachurch organizations, a theology of work connected to viable job programs for returning offenders is essential to successful prison outreach, criminal justice reform, and reentry ministry.
There is something positive, meaningful, and productive about work for individuals. The stigma and mentality of working for low wages and its effect on an inmate's work ethic and attitude are troubling. Ex-offenders (returning citizens) must see themselves as effective, productive, and law-abiding members of society ready to contribute positively to its growth. Inmates require mental health treatment and psychological services, mentorship programs that teach ex-offenders a renewed work ethic, job training, skills development programs, and employment opportunities that pay a decent wage.

To effectuate the employment status of ex-offenders (returning citizens), individual inmates need to develop a strong work ethic. Also, several political, employment, and social barriers need to change. For example, a definite abolishment of denying individuals an opportunity for meaningful and gainful employment if they answer "Yes" to the proverbial question, "have you ever been convicted of a crime?" on a job application. Applying for housing like a mortgage or an apartment, grants, and loans for school or college must also be changed and removed. All rights as a citizen ought to be restored once individuals have paid their debt to society. Changes like these can reduce the possibility of recidivism and create opportunities for reform and successful reentry. People go back to jail and break laws because they do not have a job and a healthy workplace that allows them to make a decent living wage with benefits.

Along with employment opportunities, the restoration of voting rights is also essential for ex-offenders to remain crime-free and break the cycle of recidivism. Former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg and NBA greats Michael Jordan and LeBron James teamed up recently. They donated several millions of dollars to address the issues of ex-offenders not being eligible to vote because of their felony convictions and inability to pay their pending fines, fees, restitution, or any cost associated with their incarceration.
Akin to what numerous state legislatures and governors did regarding the death penalty issues and executions by abolishing it, many state legislatures and governors in Kentucky, Iowa, and Virginia have moved and passed laws to reinstate the voting rights of former offenders. However, this caused a contentious debate in the state of Florida’s legislators after it passed [Senate Bill 7066 (SB7066) Florida Amendment 4, Voting Rights Restitution for Felons Initiatives]. This law permitted state prisoners to reinstate their voting rights upon release from state prison. It meets the following criteria: it cannot be convicted of murder or a felony sexual offense.

After paying their debt to society through incarceration, one of the many challenges that ex-offenders (returning citizens) face is the many fines and fees they are obligated to pay, voting, finding meaningful employment, and obtaining adequate housing and health care. The offender still owes prison fines imposed as part of their judicial sentence. The incarcerated offenders, even though released, must find a way to pay these fines. Failure to do so will result in their return to prison. Serving time by financial penalties can be a worse sentence than physical incarceration. I have had inmates say they would rather stay in jail than get out and not have any means to pay thousands and millions of dollars in fines.

Mass Incarceration—A Political Weapon of Mass Destruction—

And the economic effects on families.

The 1994 crime bill is the zenith of such political intrigue and maneuvering, culminating in the most significant number of federal inmates ever incarcerated, reaching approximately 235,000 in 2008.\(^\text{137}\) Although President Obama continued this trend under his administration through

Attorney General Eric Holder, there began to be a slow but steady decline in federal prison inmates. Despite this position, prison construction continued, and the privatization of federal prisons saw a marked decrease. According to a report published by A. W. Geiger with Pew Research: "After a period of study growth, the number of inmates held in private prisons in the United States has declined modestly in recent years and continues to represent a small share of the nation's total prison population."\textsuperscript{138} The report states, “In 2015, the most recent year for which data are available, about 126 000 prisons were held in privately operated facilities under the jurisdiction of twenty-nine states and the federal Bureau of Prisons.\textsuperscript{139} According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, that's an eighty-three percent increase since 1999, the first year with comparable data.”\textsuperscript{140} Also, during this period, several federal detention centers were being constructed to address the misguided policy of immigration that also resulted in large numbers of individuals detained in federal facilities. On July sixteenth, 2015, President Barrack Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit a federal prison during his second term. He saw the Federal Correctional Institution El Reno, located several miles outside of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Earlier the same week, the president gave a speech at an NAACP Conference in Philadelphia where according to Horsley, the President reportedly said, “The U.S. prison population has quadrupled since 1980. Keeping more than two million Americans behind bars at $80 billion a year!”\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{141} Horsley, Scott (Obama Becomes First Sitting US President 2008.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2015/07/16/42361244/onama-visits-federsl-prison-a-first-for-a-sitting-president.
During his visit to this federal correctional institution, he remarked, "We have to consider whether this is the smartest way to control crime and rehabilitate individuals."\footnote{142}{Ibid., 1.}

After visiting with six non-violent federal offenders, Obama argued, "It is time to change the laws that imposed mandatory sentences on non-violent drug offenders who are disproportionately Black and Latino."\footnote{143}{Ibid., 1.} His administration and Congress took decisive action and began to address these mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines. The public became aware of what was already known by many politicians and law enforcement officials that Black and brown individuals were targeted either by design or default and became pawns in this flawed public policy. Congressional hearings and various investigative reports revealed unjust disparities in sentencing for crack versus powder cocaine that had a cruel and unusual punishment effect that impacted primarily Black and brown people. This prison population pandemic in the United States has also created enormous social and economic problems for all aspects of society. The cost of incarceration is at an all-time high and has already put an out-of-control federal deficit in an untenable fiscal position.

As a nation, the country can no longer afford to incarcerate individuals in federal prisons at an estimated annual cost of approximately "$21,006 for minimum-security inmates; $25,378 for low-security inmates; $26 247 for medium-security inmates; and $33 930 for high-security inmates. According to a study International survey, “Over the past three decades, state and local government expenditures on jails and prisons' construction, maintenance, and operation have increased roughly three times as fast as the spending on elementary schools and secondary
During the same period, the federal prison system witnessed a significant increase in its prison population and new prison construction. In 1987, when I began my federal chaplaincy prison ministry, there were approximately 81,000 federal prison inmates housed in thirty-three federal correctional institutions. These included five U.S. penitentiaries, four nationwide medical centers, two for male and one for female offenders, twenty federal correctional institutions known as FCIs, three metropolitan detention centers, two national detention centers, and four federal prison camps. In 2015, when I retired from the federal prison chaplaincy ministry, the number of federal prisoners was approximately 191,000 housed in 122 federal facilities: These included twenty-one penitentiaries, seven medical centers, six for male offenders, and one for female offenders, sixty-five national correctional institutions, seven nationwide detention centers, and seven federal prison camps.

There were no privately-run federal prisons in 1987. Today, there are thirteen such facilities. President Biden recently signed an executive order on February eighth, 2020, ordering the Department of Justice to end its reliance on private prisons, which forbids any contractual agreements with external entities. The order to complete the dependence on privately-run orisons directs the attorney general to halt renewing Justice Department contracts with privately operated criminal detention facilities." this is the first step to stop corporations from profiting off incarceration," Biden said. “The more than 1400 federal inmates in privately managed facilities represent a fraction of the nearly 152,000 currently incarcerated federal inmates. It costs an estimated eighty to one hundred million dollars to construct these new facilities and

---

144 Studyinternational.com/new/education-spend-prison-system-us/ 1
146 Ibid., 1.
about twenty million dollars per year to operate these facilities. According to Danielle Sered, "The country now spends more money on prisons than anything besides war." The public is keenly aware of these staggering numbers regarding cost and human warehousing and is now ready to take these matters seriously. Politicians are no longer crying to get tough on crime but are now calling foul to mass incarceration. They are now calling for criminal justice reform.

This unprecedented mass incarceration has had an even more profound and devastating impact on communities of color. In a report, 'Cellblocks or Classroom: The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and its impact on African American Men,' published in 2002 by Jason Ziedenberg and Vincent Schiraldi from the Justice Policy Institute, one-third more African American men are incarcerated than in higher education. In the article, *Black Men: Are They in College or Prison?* Printed in February 2020 states, President Barack Obama repeated this mantra during a speech at the 2007 NAACP convention, "We have more work to do when more young Black men languish in prison than attend colleges and universities across America." According to this article, the sentiment was further expressed recently, as in 2015, by the current Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Ben Carson. "More young Black males are involved in the criminal justice system than higher education."

The social, economic, and political implications of this alone are irrefutable. They will continue doing irrefutable harm to our society for decades, especially in the Black and brown communities. Many may contest these reports and the conclusions drawn. However, particularly

---

148 Jason Ziedenberg and Vincent Schiraldi, ("Cellblocks or Classroom: The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and its impact on African American Men.,” 2002,) 1
150 Ibid., 1.
in this thesis project, this is a natural and present danger based on what I experienced for over thirty years as a federal prison chaplain. Furthermore, it is known that incarceration generates devastating and often lasting negative repercussions and has an intergenerational effect." For example, I have witnessed this prison subculture dynamic in several federal prisons. I have seen multiple generations of members from the same family; a grandmother, her daughter and granddaughter, a grandfather, his son, and his grandson, all from the same family incarcerated at the same federal prison! Neighborhoods that once thrived are now devastated because these present men and women have been arrested and taken away, leaving these communities blighted and abandoned. They are now crying, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"151

A groundbreaking study by a bipartisan criminal justice reform organization FWD.us and Cornell University got conducted in 2018. According to the survey, "it estimated that one in seven adults had had an immediate family member incarcerated for more than one year, and one in 34 has had a loved one incarcerated for ten years or more."152 Furthermore, the report contends that one in four American adults had a sibling incarcerated. One in five has had a parent incarcerated. There are 6.5 million adults with immediate family members in jail or prison today. Reportedly, sixty percent of women incarcerated have children, and more than forty percent were primary caregivers of their children before being detained."153 The sheer psychological and social developmental impact on children of incarcerated parents and grandparents is traumatic and long-lasting.

151 Psalm 137:4 (NKJV)
152 Felicity Rose, (The Impact of Incarceration on America’s Families, FWD.us December 2018) 1
153 Ibid., 1.
According to the study, researchers also found that "the rate of family incarceration was disproportionately higher for communities of color and low-income families."\textsuperscript{154}

For example, "black people are 50 percent more likely than white people to have a family member who is formerly or currently incarcerated, and three times more likely to have a family member who has been incarcerated."\textsuperscript{155} The problem has become so common that Sesame Street, the most celebrated venerable children's educational program, recently introduced a character named Andrew with an incarcerated parent to teach children how to cope with this challenging situation and its shame. Even worse, data suggest an extraordinary racial disparity: 11.4 percent of Black children have an incarcerated parent, 3.5 percent of Hispanic children, and 1.8 percent of White children."\textsuperscript{156} The schools where many of these children attend become the pipeline for prisons. Education is the great equalizer and will give these children a chance to go to college instead of jail. According to a recent survey taken by Pew Research in 2016, "An estimated 5 million American children have an incarcerated parent."\textsuperscript{157} The Bureau of Justice Statistics took a similar survey and concluded. "An estimated 684,500 state and federal prisoners were parents of at least one minor child in 2016 –nearly of state prisoners (47%) and more than half of federal prisoners (58%)."\textsuperscript{158}

One of the essential programs that this twenty-first-century new prison ministry model proposes is a program designed to teach the children of incarcerated parents. If we as a nation break the cycle of crime, incarceration, violence, poverty, and high school dropout rates, churches, and parachurch organizations must have programs to reach this vulnerable population.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{157} Pew Charitable Trust, (Legacy of Mass Incarceration: Parental Incarceration Impact One in Fourteen Children May 2016) 1.
\textsuperscript{158} Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children; Survey of Prison Inmates (Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2016), 1.
These children often suffer in silence, dealing with shame, isolation, and many emotional, psychosocial, mental health, and spiritual problems. The severity of this problem is so widespread across all social, gender, ethnic, economic, racial, and religious spectrums and should not be solely left up to Muppet Andrew alone.

Such reentry programs must be a part of any real prison outreach-reentry and criminal justice reform. They should include counseling, education, transportation support, after-school recreational programs, grief support, anger management, conflict resolution, and values clarification. "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea."\footnote{Matthew 18:6(NKJV)} In Chapter Six, I began discussing mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, re-entry from what it is like inside a federal prison, and what prisons do to people's survival. I look at many topics, from prison homicides, suicides, riots, sexual and physical assaults, alcohol and drugs, and hostages.
CHAPTER SIX

MASS INCARCERATION, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, AND REENTRY—A DAY INSIDE THE LIFE OF A PRISON: WHAT GOES ON INSIDE THEM AND WHAT THEY DO TO PEOPLE:

Rapes, Sexual Assaults, Homicides, Suicides, Prison Riots, Hostages, Beatings, Gambling, Drugs

In chapter six of this thesis project, I take you on tour inside a federal prison from my perspective as a chaplain. I describe the day and life of what goes on in prisons and what prisons do to people. From my observation, there seems to be something mystical and magical about human nature akin to being borderline voyeuristic or sadistic concerning how one may see prisoners, prisons, crime, and punishment. Some are purveyors of criminals and their crimes. In these cases, such individuals seek to idolize and romanticize them and their crimes.

This unquenchable thirst is evident in how much society consumes crime novels, movies, and music, especially in the hip-hop culture of rap, particularly among Millennials, Generation X-ers, and Generation Zs. Even a large segment of this population, both males and females, embrace them as heroes and see going to prison as an honor badge. Such a mentality is twisted and designed by the inventors and promoters of such perversion that it undermines any effort to impact mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. There seems to be an innate curiosity for many to know what it is like inside a federal prison. No matter what these multi-million-dollar correctional facilities look like on the outside (see pictures), prisons are not lovely places and are notorious for terrible things to happen to the staff who work in them and especially to the inmates who live inside them.
The Federal Bureau of Prisons has some of the finest correctional professionals, from directors to wardens to correctional officers, chaplains, and secretaries. They are on the front lines behind these prison walls dealing with mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. They do this by managing and providing a host of meaningful institutional and reentry programs designed to help inmates become law-abiding, productive citizens. Those with ultra-liberal political leanings and perhaps some prison abolitionists may take issue with these sentiments regarding myself and my colleagues as some of the finest correctional professionals. These beliefs are worth investigating and exploring and are deserving of some serious conversations. Having served for nearly three decades in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, I know the individuals who work inside them are people like me who are highly skilled, well-educated, and highly trained civil servants and law enforcement professionals. They specialize in various fields, including doctors, nurses, dentists, social workers, chaplains, cooks, electricians, plumbers, teachers, machinists, welders, and recreational specialists. I accept this misconception and will defend mine and their honor, integrity, professionalism, and correctional excellence.

As chaplains, we are "repairers of the breach, the Restorer of Streets to dwell in."¹⁶⁰ Notwithstanding, I will be the first to admit that some bad apples and actors are working in these correctional institutions like any other profession. All staff members are correctional workers first. However, as law enforcement officers, what we do to transform inmates' lives can and should be emulated by churches and para-church organizations involved in prison ministry. People of goodwill who are serious about criminal justice reform, mass incarceration, reentry, police brutality, and racial injustice should also consider such programs to emulate.

¹⁶⁰ Isaiah 58:12 NKJV)
In the following paragraphs, I describe what happens in federal prisons and what prisons do to people working and doing time in them. I write in vivid, stark terms to sense, taste, and smell what it is like inside a federal prison. These incidents are actual events that bear some names and are official public records. They are not to be sensationalized or tantalized.

Sexual Assaults, Physical Beatings, Drug and Alcohol abuse,

And Verbal assaults and threats.

A common occurrence is that on any given day, at all prisons, both state and federal, jails and detention centers, some unfortunate inmate(s) will become the victim of a sexual or physical assault and, in some cases, murder. Unfortunately, these prohibited sexual acts are not always carried out by force or coercion. For some, it is a willful, deliberative, and planned-out act on behalf of the coalition of the willing. The wicked imaginations and creative arts and crafts of people confined in an artificially controlled prison have no limits regarding sexual acts or physical assaults. Even Hollywood could not come up with some things inmates do to themselves and others, even inside the chapel. For example, the types and kinds of homemade weapons called shanks rival any items used by ancient Roman gladiators. Violent acts of raw brute physical force and fights go down with inmates using steel weights, pool balls in a sock, baseball bats, broom or mop handles, pots and pans, kitchen utensils, and even plastic knives, spoons, and forks, and many other items. I have witnessed several individuals on the receiving end of brutal fights. The awful beatdowns result in inmates being massacred and obliterated by being physically assaulted, which in some cases has resulted in death.
Self-inflicted wounds and mutilations of one's body are occasional, predominantly among female inmates. Although these violent acts are prohibited, physical and sexual assaults are everyday occurrences, especially among the male inmate prison population.

Tragically, unfortunately, staff members will engage in such activities and become victims of physical or sexual assaults from time to time. No matter the circumstances, it is not a coalition of willing participants when staff gets involved. It violates departmental and institutional rules and regulations and criminal prosecutions. Sex with an inmate is strictly prohibited. All bureau of prisons team receives mandatory training annually on avoiding getting compromised by inmates. Unfortunately, sexual assaults by staff occur despite the professional role of the staff member or their title. Every year, it could be a physician, dentist, social worker, chaplain, psychologist, lieutenant, or captain, who gets involved with an inmate sexually. Somehow, they convince themselves they can do it and get away with it. They are wrong, and you will get caught, inmates always tell. There are no secrets in prison. Such incidents had increased dramatically and had become so bad within the federal prison system that Congress stepped in and passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act in 1997. All staff members are required to take this mandatory training annually. Some staff members continue to engage in other inappropriate, prohibited sexual crimes. Excessive force and bringing in drugs, weapons, food, clothing, cell phones, cigarettes, etc., are also problematic when dealing with inmates. Many such incidents still occur today and are very emotional and painful for me, but they also occurred during my tenure as a federal prison chaplain. For example, several former chaplains fell prey to this type of sexual assault crime and violated female inmates.
As a staff chaplain, supervisory chaplain, and chaplain administrator, I provided pastoral care, counseling, crisis intervention, and critical stress incident debriefing to staff and inmates who got entangled in these illicit relationships. Staff members are charged with a severe felony sexual offense, whereas the inmate participant bargains for a sizeable financial settlement and a reduction in sentence. I call this inverted justice inmates beating the system and making it pay. In her book, *After Life*, Alice Marie Johnson describes an event involving a sexual assault by a male staff member who was also a chaplain under my supervision.\(^{161}\) Johnson says, "I started noticing inappropriate contact with women, and I no longer felt comfortable working in the chapel."\(^{162}\) Accordingly, she writes, "In 2008, he pleaded guilty to multiple charges of sexual abuse of a ward and sentenced to federal prison for forty-eight months. The sentencing judge called his actions "surprisingly heinous and shocking."\(^{163}\) Once, a former colleague and co-chaplain I supervised was a convicted felon and a registered sex offender. I was demoralized and devastated. The entire pastoral care department underwent some excruciating investigations. Our credibility and professionalism often were questioned, destroying the chapel programs, which took years to repair. The after-action report recommended some physical, and structural changes within the department, which resulted in a total reconstruction of the chapel and staff offices. Some years later, I was conducting Program Review at FMC Butner, the prison where my former colleague was serving his prison sentence. The agency approved me to visit and provide pastoral care to my former colleague. This visit was by far one of the saddest I have ever had. We both cried as we embraced one another. He asked for forgiveness that I and others had already given.

\(^{162}\) Ibid., 144.
\(^{163}\) Ibid., 144.
Paul states, "Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.‖

Drug and alcohol abuse is prevalent inside federal prisons. Inmates find creative ways to get their high or drink whenever necessary. These prohibited items may enter the compound in various ways and methods. Visitors and dirty staff also bring contraband into the institution, including drugs and alcohol. No matter the rationale, they engage in immoral and illegal prohibited acts. The inmates have compromised these staff, visitors, and volunteers and will inevitably get caught and prosecuted. According to an Associated Press investigation, it "found that the Bureau of Prisons was a hotbed of abuse, graft, and corruption has turned a blind eye to employees accused of misconduct." The investigation "included examples of a prison warden charged with sexual abuse, another charged with murder, and allegations of workers taking cash bribes to smuggle drugs and weapons." Inmates also will abuse, sell, and steal prescription drugs that they take or those taken by others inside. Some inmates are so addicted to drugs that they trade them for sexual favors. Cheeking, as inmates call it, is when an inmate on a prescription drug will pretend that they are swallowing the medicine but instead hide it in their cheeks right in front of the pharmacist and officer on the pill line to sell to someone on the compound. Some will attempt to hide drugs and other contraband in various body parts, and once they relieve themselves, search for or pull out their prized possession again, only to sell or use themselves.

164 Romans 5:20-21 (NKJV)
166 Ibid., 17.
Alcohol, called "Hooch" inside prison, is made by inmates using fruit taken from the prison dining hall. Unless given permission, inmates usually are not permitted to take any food items from the dining hall back to their cells. These fruit items are stolen and stashed in unusual places like the ceiling, closets, the recreation yard, and perhaps even the chapel. Once fermented, inmates use sugar and other items that were also stolen and make their wine hooch.

The following three unique incidents involved introducing drugs, bringing in a weapon, and sexual misconduct. In 1995, I was the supervisory chaplain at the Federal Correctional Institution Marianna in Marianna, Florida. The pastoral care department consisted of four staff chaplains, one secretary, two contract staff, and several volunteers. Marianna was a unique federal prison in its co-ed federal correctional institution. The prison complex had a medium facility with two thousand male inmates and a minimum facility with five hundred female inmates. A high administrative supermaxim facility held twenty of the most violent female offenders (convicts), a term many have used when referring to themselves. This administrative supermaxim female facility is located at the Federal Medical Center Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas. I served at FMC Carswell as the supervisory department chaplain for ten years. I continued to do ministry for many of these women as President, CEO, and Founder of Faith Without Walls Prisons outreach ministry. I first met most of these high-security female inmates at The Federal Correctional Complex Marianna in 1990. Their sentences were to serve between twenty years to life in prison, one on death row. Her name is Lisa Montgomery. She was incarcerated at the administrative high-security unit for women at Federal Medical Center Carswell. I was also her chaplain for ten years. She transferred to the Special Management Unit (SMU) at the United States Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana, for inmates on death row awaiting their execution. She was the first woman executed in federal prison in sixty-seven years.
However, the three unique incidents I refer to here involved sneaking drugs and a weapon into the prison. Inmates attempted to bring drugs into the compound by hiding them in Bibles and other religious materials. Staff discovered that cocaine and other drugs were placed inside the inner cover of the Bibles and other sacred books. Even though all incoming outside mail for inmates is screened and read, this ingenious unholy act seemingly compromised the system. The bureau enacted a new policy regarding Incoming Packages; Program Statement 5360.5-Incoming publications. This policy prohibits inmates from receiving any religious items from home. They now must come directly from the vendor of the bookstore.

In the second unique incident, an inmate attempted to manufacture a homemade gun. It was concocted by having each part introduced inside the compound by mail. The perpetrator(s) had managed to put together a complete firearm. One of my colleagues discovered this, who was a Catholic priest. He was conflicted because the information came from the inmate who confessed and revealed this "sin" to him. Having been given this information, the priest did not disclose it immediately because of his sincere obligation to protect data under the Catholic doctrine under the Seal of confession. Under pressure, one day, the priest came to me as the department head supervisor and told me casually about this incident to avoid violating his oath. We resolved the case by maintaining the priest's dignity and respecting the Seal of confession. At the same time, the Warden kept an orderly running of the institution by protecting the safety and well-being of staff and inmates. The third unique incident was one of the worse sexual misconduct incidents involving staff and inmates, which resulted in the killing of several DOJ-Bureau of Prisons officials at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tallahassee.
According to a CBS news report entitled, FBI Probes Deadly Prison Shootout, "On June 21, 2006, a furious gun battle erupted inside this facility when a guard opened fire on FBI agents. These agents who had come to arrest him and several others on charges of having sex with female inmates in exchange; for money and contraband." 167

It is vital for churches and para-church organizations involved in prison outreach ministry, criminal justice reform, and reentry to get proper training and preparation to avoid the consequences of such vices. The above incidents can likely happen to those who work in prison and individuals who volunteer as representatives of churches and para-church organizations. The federal bureau prison system provides training for all volunteers and contractors annually, which is mandatory. In this new twenty-first-century prison outreach model, I propose that churches and para-church organizations offer this type of training for their congregation and organization members. Churches should use experts and invite these staff members from the local jails and prisons to conduct such training activities. I also recommend that churches and para-church organizations invite ex-offenders (returning citizens) to participate in their training to share their input and insights. We are always interested in hearing their "testimonies" of how bad a criminal they were instead of picking their brains and extracting their knowledge, skills, and abilities. My wife, who also worked in the bureau of prisons for 30 years, retired as an Employee Benefits Specialist. She first started as a correctional officer. Her Warden told her that one must think like an inmate to be an excellent correctional officer. I believe I was so successful and effective in prison chaplaincy ministry because I learned what I learned from inmates and their families.

Not all things occurring inside federal prisons are bad, awful, violent, dangerous, deplorable, and despicable. Although everyone in prison has committed offenses, not everyone engages in bad things while inside these facilities. To others' chagrin, some of the most decent, honorable human beings I have had the privilege of serving as a minister of the Gospel include inmates and their families. The question asked is, why do bad things happen to good people? However, it should be asked differently: How can bad people do good things? Or how can good things happen to bad people? My lived and worked experience working as a federal prison chaplain with people who broke the law and did some horrible stuff answers these questions and helps solve this mystery. I often preached and said to inmates, especially those who have committed their lives to Christ and are actively involved in the worship and spiritual life of the chapel. You can't define yourself based on what you did that led you to this prison, although you should take responsibility. You express yourself based on who Almighty God says you are in Christ Jesus. Even though you did certain things, you are not these things, and it takes time to renew your mind and become transformed. The administration of God's grace and the process of sanctification is a progressive and lifelong endeavor. You are, I added, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new.”

There are countless examples and stories that I could share here in this thesis project of some great and beautiful things that I have witnessed God doing in the lives of broken people. These are individuals, some convicted of murder, kidnapping, drug dealing, trafficking, bank fraud, mail fraud, tax evasion, bank robbery, prescription drug fraud, money laundering, counterfeiting,
weapons arms dealing, illegal gun sale, treason, spying, the selling of state secrets, prostitution, racketeering, and criminally organized enterprise operations. The list is infinite.

A few examples, however, are worth noting. For instance, inmates will aid and assist prison officials with intelligence information that can and does prevent all kinds of horrible things from going down that are detrimental to the life and safety of other inmates, including themselves and staff. For example, in 1997, at the Federal Correctional Institution Talladega in Talladega, Alabama, there was a staff hostage incident. I was the lead chaplain in providing critical incident stress debriefing to those impacted by this incident and the outstanding work carried out by the FBI's elite Hostage Rescue Team (HRT), which brought these situations to a close without any harm to those taken hostages. Some involved inmates assisted and ensured that no one suffered physical injury or foul play inflicted on these staff hostages. In 1993, there was a tornado in Homestead, Florida. The Federal Prison Camp Homestead got demolished. Hundreds of staff members were in harm's way during this natural disaster. Inmates assisted and came to the rescue to safely protect and bring some out of harm's way.

Inmates also participate in suicide watch calls, compassionate acts of kindness, and benevolence in providing food and other appropriate items to those in need. Parenthetically speaking, I have had some of the best gourmet dishes prepared by inmates while serving as a federal prison chaplain, mainly during approved religious holy days for authorized religious feasts and rituals. For example, faith groups like Native American Indians, Rastafarians, Muslims, and the Jewish community would have special sacred meals. These sacred meals could rival any five-star restaurant or the Food Network. When it comes to male and female inmates, they can make some great food dishes like pizza, casserole, pot roast, cakes, and pies, using only
the food and ingredients from the prison kitchen and commissary. However, I suspect that a visitor or a prison official occasionally sneaks in items (contraband).

As a chaplain, I thoroughly enjoyed these fellowship meals. After all, “The Son of Man has come, eating and drinking, and you say, Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.”\textsuperscript{169} The State of California's governor, Gavin Newsom, recently signed forward-thinking legislation allowing former firefighting inmates to heed the call to assist with the wildfires burning throughout Northern California. In Louisiana, the infamous Angola State Penitentiary is doing cutting-edge twenty-first-century criminal justice reform and reentry program initiatives with its inmate population. In 1995, the notorious Angola State Prison in Louisiana opened a seminary and trained hundreds of inmates for various ministry vocations. These and other programs have a demonstrated impact on prison management. They can give hope to individual offenders (ex-offenders who are returning citizens) and their families a real possibility of being changed, transformed, reformed, and ready to successfully transition back into society as productive, law-abiding citizens. Perhaps for me, simply paraphrasing, this is what Apostle Paul meant when he said to Philemon concerning Onesimus, "who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and me."\textsuperscript{170}

Communicable Diseases

Infections, various diseases, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic inside prisons are higher than in society. Based on interviews and conversations, the three federal prisons in the Dallas, Fort Worth metropolis have some of the nation's highest COVID-19 infection rates.

\textsuperscript{169} Luke 7:34 (NKJV)
\textsuperscript{170} Philemon 1:11 (NKJV)
According to the Bureau of Prison's coronavirus official report, "As of August 2020, there were 1200 inmates diagnosed with COVID-19." Accordingly, "At the Federal Medical Center Carswell, the nation's only female medical hospital for federal offenders, 500 cases of female inmates tested positive for COVID-19. At the Federal Medical Center Fort Worth, one of four medical centers for male inmates, there were, as of August 2020, over 900 male inmates who tested positive for COVID-19. At the Federal Correctional Institution, Seagoville, located in Seagoville, Texas, which houses the Bureau's Sex Offender Unit for men, there were 1100 inmates infected with the coronavirus as of August 2020. According to the Bureau of Prisons coronavirus official report, "The BOP has 134 federal inmates in BOP–managed institutions and 11,790 in community-based facilities." The report states, "The BOP staff complement is approximately 36,000. Nine thousand twenty federal inmates and 1,432 BOP staff have confirmed positive test results for COVID-19 nationwide." Currently, 43,427 inmates and 9,345 staff have recovered." Says the report. "There have been 279 federal inmate death and 7 BOP staff member deaths attributed to COVID-19 disease. Of the inmate deaths, 11 occurred while on home confinement." This health pandemic has impacted the bureau's compassionate release program.

As a chaplain, I have served on these compassionate release committees. Inmates diagnosed with debilitating illnesses and life-threatening diseases are considered for immediate, compassionate release. Some notorious, infamous individuals were recently released because of the COVID-19 pandemic, making national and local headlines. Former Campaign Manager for

---

172 Ibid., 2.
173 Ibid., 2.
174 Ibid., 2.
175 Ibid., 2.
President Trump, Paul Manafort, sentenced to a five-year federal sentence, was released after only fifteen months. Also, former Attorney for President Trump Michael Cohn filed a request for compassionate release. His release got rejected seemingly for political motivations. Under the Trump administration, the department of justice used a legal technicality in the criminal code, which prohibits inmates from profiting from their crimes through book sales and movies. Mr. Cohen eventually prevailed. Rita Gluzman was a convicted murderer who had dismembered her husband's body, placed his body parts in a trash bag, and thrown it into New York's Hudson River. She did twenty years on her eighty-year bit and received a compassionate release on September 20, 2020. I was Ms. Gluzman's chaplain at the Federal Medical Center Carswell, Fort Worth, Texas, for ten years. Although she was a practicing Orthodox Jewish adherent, we had a dynamic pastoral relationship, and she saw me as pastor-rabbi.

Alice Marie Johnson, in her book *After Life*, describes my pastoral relationship dynamic with Rita Gluzman and other inmates, "We provided religious and activities for all recognized faith groups: Protestant and Catholic, Jewish (Reform and Conservative), Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Wiccan, Jehovah Witness, Seventh Day Adventist, Mormon, Rastafarian, Native American, and many others." If anyone had a problem regardless of her religious beliefs, I made sure Chaplain Danage was aware of her crisis." Says Johnson.

---

177 Ibid., 143-167.
Homicides

Individuals in prisons are often victims of homicides. During my thirty-plus-year tenure, there were hundreds of homicides in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. A majority of these occurred at the agency's high-security prisons. Homicides happen for gambling debts, gang rivalry, contract hits, vengeance, and revenge. According to the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics report (BJS), "the number of deaths and mortality rates in federal prisons remained near the highest level recorded in 2016."\textsuperscript{178}

Suicides

Suicides occur at a much higher rate inside prison than the national average. From 1987 to 2015, when I served in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, there were several suicides. Perhaps, the most infamous one that gained national attention is Jeffery Epstein, who served time at the Metropolitan Detention Center in New York. According to a report published by USA Today regarding Mr. Epstein's suicide, "twenty-seven federal inmates committed suicide in the fiscal year that ended in September 2018, the largest number in at least five years, according to system records."\textsuperscript{179} According to the Department of Justice - Office of Justice Programs 2009-2019 Statistical Table, “suicides increased 85 % in state prisons and 61% in federal prisons, and 13 %in local jails.”\textsuperscript{180}

\textsuperscript{178} Matthew Clark (Prison Legal News, August 2021), 48.
\textsuperscript{179} amp.usatoday.com
\textsuperscript{180} E. Ann Carson (Suicide in Local Jails and State,2009-2019 Statistical Tables-October 2021), 1.
Depression, Guilt, Anger, Psychosis, Mental Health

In prisons and jails, thousands of individuals suffer from mental illnesses. Every federal prison in the country has a Psychology Services Department with at least two licensed clinical psychologists. At the medical centers, there is a psychiatrist. Every inmate must have a psychological evaluation. These are significant issues among the prison population and should be addressed. However, I contend that many people in jail need to be sent to behavioral mental health institutions to treat every mental health disorder listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental Disorders*.

Inmates would fare much better and have a chance of recovery instead of incarceration. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), "At mid-year 2005, more than half of all prison and jail inmates had a mental health problem, including 705,600 inmates in state prisons, 78,800 in federal prisons, and 479,900 in local jails."¹⁸¹

Gambling

Gambling inside prisons is also a significant problem, especially in sports played in college or professionally. According to Independent Researcher Dr. DJ Williams, "prisoners have the highest problem gambling compared to any other known population. Rates of problem gambling among prisoner populations vary by study methods and location, yet remain much higher than the general population (approximately 5%)."¹⁸² A word of warning, be not deceived; no matter how big, clever, or cunning, you will pay your gambling debt in prison by any means necessary! To bolster this truth, consider the motto of the Lannister family in the epic HBO movie series—Game of Thrones. The movie has a character named Lord Terrain; a little person often referred

¹⁸¹ Doris James and Lauren E. Glaze, BJS Statisticians (Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail inmates, September 2006), 1.
¹⁸² DJ Williams, New Research on Prisoner Gambling: Correctional Considerations and Implications for Reentry September 15, 2015.) 1
to as an Emp. Lord Terrain is famous for saying throughout the film, “The Lannister's always paid their debt,”¹⁸³ So it is with all inmates who gamble; somehow, in some way, they will pay their debts. Failure to do so will result in their suffering a swift, brutal, and long-lasting beat down or involuntary servitude for sexual favors, commissary, or other privileges. To this and the above vices that inmates often engage in, I would say, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not handle."¹⁸⁴

These and other behavioral problems are consistent experiences, and staff members are vigilant in mitigating their occurrence. However, when inmates engage in prohibited activities against prison rules and regulations, they will be charged with an institutional infraction called an Incident Report (official name). "Shots" is the name used in inmate prison jargon. The incident reports are processed by correctional staff at Unit Disciplinary Committee or Institution Disciplinary Committee hearings and usually result in a sanction.

Special Housing Unit

There is a prison inside every federal and state prison in America. This inside prison is called solitary confinement. An inmate could spend days, weeks, months, and in some cases, years here, depending on the severity of their infraction. Inmates typically spend twenty-three hours per day inside of their cells. My cousin Courtney and many former friends and family members I discussed in Chapter One of this thesis project did time in the Special Housing Unit (SHU) at their respective places of incarceration. Joseph, the Apostle Paul, and perhaps John the Baptist are biblical characters in prison and spent time in places like these.¹⁸⁵ The (SHU) is very

¹⁸⁴ Colossians 2:21 (NKJV)
¹⁸⁵ Genesis 39 and John 3 (KJV).
restrictive concerning inmates having access to the normal day-to-day activities available to the
general population. Everything the inmates do, such as eating, reading, exercising, praying, and
even using the toilet or showering, is done in your cellmate's open and public view if you have
one and staff assigned to work in these units. However, inmates are given an hour every other
day for recreation programming, which takes place in a caged section the size of a twelve by
twelve cage adjacent to the unit. It may have a basketball rim or a soccer ball. There is no weight
lifting equipment, no televisions, no pool tables, no ping pong tables, no baseballs or softballs,
no flag football, no visitation except for attorney visits, no phone calls, or access to the email
computer station. You get confined to your seven-by-eight cell at least twenty-three hours per
day. Staff members who provide services to the general population in every department, like
education, religious, psychology, medical, or social services, must make at least weekly rounds
in these units to provide whatever services requested by inmates housed in the SHU. However,
there are no congregational religious services.

As a chaplain, I would give prayer, a Bible or other approved religious material, counseling
and pastoral care, communion, and an occasional phone call if it was for a verified emergency.
The units are smelly, noisy, dark, and worn, especially in old facilities with poor ventilation. One
of the worst ones I have served at is the Federal Correctional Institution Seagoville, located in
Seagoville, Texas. FCI Seagoville was built-in 1932, and there is no air conditioning SHU. In
Texas, temperatures can reach the triple digits during the summer months. Imagine what it is like
being in the SHU—talk about cruel and unusual punishment.

Although this is an anomaly for most federal prisons not to have air conditioning in these units, it
is a common experience for inmates serving in most state prisons in the Texas Department of
Criminal Justice. The SHU is miserable for an inmate to do time. My first cousin, Courtney, was sentenced to ten years in federal prison.

He spent most of his time locked up inside the SHU at the two facilities where he served time because he liked to fight. The SHU is designed to exact the maximum psychological punishment as inmates are constantly surveilled by watchful cameras and officers assigned to work in these units. An inmate charged may lose visiting and commissary privileges and program opportunities such as the Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP), the Life Connections Program, or the GED. One could ask why these special housing units are needed if the prison cannot curtail criminal activity. Herein lies the challenge to the argument. Do prisons deter crime? No, if so, is there a need to have a prison within a prison? Again, jails and prisons don't change people. My theological belief is that prisons do not deter crime. They disguise, control, or mitigate criminal behavior. However, I will be the first to admit that many people contemplate changing their attitude about their criminal conduct while in prison.

For me, though, real transformative change is something that an individual must decide to change from within by the Spirit of God through the saving grace of Jesus Christ. "You must be born again," Jesus said to Nicodemus. As James states, "for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."  

Prison Riots and Hostages

In America, there have been notorious prison riots and hostages in prisons. For example, according to Wikipedia, "The New Mexico State Penitentiary Riot, which occurred on February
3, 1980, was one of the most violent in U.S. history.\textsuperscript{188} It lasted thirty-six hours, thirty-three inmates were killed, and twelve officers were taken hostage.\textsuperscript{189} Although none of the hostages were killed, they suffered horrific beatings and rapes.\textsuperscript{190} According to another Wikipedia news article account, "In 1971, a prison riot occurred at San Quentin State Prison located in San Francisco, California, resulting in the deaths of six people."\textsuperscript{191} However, According to a New York Times report, "U.S. history's most violent prison riot occurred at the Attica State Prison in Attica, New York."\textsuperscript{192} Accordingly, It also happened in 1971 and lasted four days, resulting in forty-three people dead.\textsuperscript{193} The report says, "Ten were correctional officers, one civilian employee, and thirty-three inmates.\textsuperscript{194} According to The Dayton Daily News, "The Southern Correctional Facility in Lucasville, Ohio was the longest prison riot in U.S. history; it began on Easter Sunday, April 11, 1993."\textsuperscript{195} It lasted for eleven days resulting in the death of one correctional officer and nine inmates.\textsuperscript{196} These are the more notable ones. A common theme in these news accounts suggests that "The underlying issues that sparked these riots were over poor prison conditions such as food, medical services, and rehabilitation programs and services."\textsuperscript{197} As an institution, staff chaplain, and regional chaplain administrator, I significantly responded to the following prison riots and hostage cases. At the Federal Correctional Institution Memphis,
located in Memphis, Tennessee, a prison riot erupted in 1995 during the million-man march. Racial unrest within the inmate population was the impetus behind this horrific event. No deaths were reported, but several people suffered severe injuries. The facility's destruction resulted in several buildings got demolished and other government properties, costing taxpayers millions of dollars to repair.

In 1987, there were prison riots at the U.S. Penitentiary Atlanta in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Federal Correctional Institution Oakdale in Oakdale, Louisiana. The cause of these riots centered on the Cuban Mariel boatlift of 1980. Over 100,000 Cubans migrated to Florida. By 1987, about 4,000 Cubans were incarcerated for lack of documentation or related crimes. On November 10, 1987, the U.S. State Department announced that Cuba had agreed to reinstate a 1984 accord that would permit the repatriation of up to 2500 Cuban nationals. Consequently, 2500 Cubans incarcerated after the Mariel boatlift would be deported. Because life inside a federal prison was more palatable for many of these Cuban detainees than back in their homeland, they rioted to express their anger over facing deportation. They took hostages to try to negotiate a different fate. The uprising lasted for eleven days and involved over 100 hostages. On December 4, 1987, a correctional officer killed one Cuban inmate, and all hostages were freed.

In August of 1991, at the Federal Correctional Institution Talladega in Talladega, Alabama, the issue was also related to the deportation of Mariel Cubans, who took nine hostages. After nearly ten days, it was resolved without incident. All 121 Cuban nationals were deported back to their island homeland. As a chaplain, I was dispatched to U.S. Penitentiary Atlanta and FCI Talladega to provide pastoral care and critical incident stress debriefing.
These examples are what happens inside prison and what prison does to people who work in them and serve time. The incarceration experiences create very traumatic effects on the human soul, mind, and body. It is especially untenable for long-term offenders and the elderly.

The sights, smells, and sounds of being in such an environment are penetrable and deafening experiences that last with one forever and leave an indelible impression. Again, as the African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child." So it is with ex-offenders (returning citizens.) It takes a "whole community" to effectuate their successful reentry into society. It is an all-hands-on-deck approach. I believe my new Twenty-First-century prison ministry model illustrates what can work concerning prison outreach ministry, criminal justice reform, and reentry. The needs of these individuals and their families are complex, comprehensive, systemic, and dynamic, impacting all aspects of our social institutions, including churches and para-church organizations.

Chapter Seven briefly highlights, discusses, and profiles a few significant historical figures who addressed incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. They each have unique experiences that cover a broad spectrum of criminal justice and penal history from an international and American national perspective.

---

198 [https://freaskonomics.com/2011/06/it-takes-a-village/3:~:text=It%20takes%20a%20village%20to%20raise%20a%20child](https://freaskonomics.com/2011/06/it-takes-a-village/) Yale Book of Quotations traces the proverb ‘it takes, parent can raise a child.
In chapter seven of this thesis project, I briefly highlight some prominent historical figures addressing crime, punishment, criminal justice, and prison reform. I chose these individuals because they demonstrate my passion, commitment, and calling to the pressing matters of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. Each individual's life and work experience is unique concerning addressing mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. The world they lived and served in was quite different from today's society. For me, however, these individuals were bold, courageous, and creative with what they did to address mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. I hope that what is shared, although brief about them and their work, will be informative and inspirational.

History is replete with many individuals who heeded the call to address mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry during their time. The individuals cited came from diverse backgrounds with unique perspectives and experiences of political and religious affiliations. For example, According to the Quaker in the Word web portal (QITW), "many Quakers have worked to reform the criminal justice systems of their day."\(^{199}\) According to this report, "Quakers believe "that people can always change: their focus has been on reforms that make positive change more likely, such as increased opportunities for education, improved prison conditions, help with facing up to violent impulses, and much else."\(^{200}\)

---


\(^{200}\) Ibid., 1.
William Penn:

The article states, "William Penn was the first great Quaker prison reformer." In his *Great Experiment in Pennsylvania in the 1680s* states, "William Penn abolished capital punishment for all crimes except murder." According to the same report, Penn said, "prisons shall be workhouses, and bail should be allowed for minor offenses,' and 'all prisons shall be free, as to fees, food, and lodgings." Furthermore, Penn purports the article "provided for their rehabilitation, an honest living when released." These were radical reforms for his time, putting into practice his Quaker faith and the possibility of nurturing that of God in everyone.

The theological concept of Imago Dei is a doctrine in Judaism, Christianity, and some Islamic Sufi sects. Embracing the idea of Imago Dei is of great importance for the Church and Parachurch organization involved in prison outreach ministry addressing mass incarceration and criminal justice reform and reentry. Individuals who have broken through the law and suffered the consequences of imprisonment and ex-offenders (returning citizens) must understand and believe that they "are made in the image and likeness of God despite their criminal activity."  

John Bellers:

Another reformer in the early Quaker prison reform movement was John Bellers (1654-1725). According to Quakers in the World, “Bellers was the earliest British Friend to pay serious and systematic attention to social-prison reform." Records indicate that "he also pleaded for the abolition of the death penalty. Accordingly, he argued that "criminals were the creation of society itself and urged that when in prison, there should be work for prisoners so that they might

201 Ibid., 1.
202 Ibid., 1.
203 Ibid., 1.
204 Ibid., 1.
205 Ibid., 1.
206 Genesis 1:27(KJV)
return to the world with an urge to industry." Accordingly, "Bellers issued in 1724 an epistle to friends, pleading for a combined effort at penal reform, but there was no response. The idea had come too soon. Only in Pennsylvania did it find a place in the seventeenth century."

Political, social, cultural, theological, and medical issues surrounding the death penalty are all valid points that cause division among people of goodwill regardless of what side of the political or theological debate one may be on. Chapter Two of this thesis project discusses my lived experience in ministering to individuals on federal death row. However, I firmly believe and support churches and parachurch organizations in lending their voices to this hotly contested debate in the hope of reform by abolishing it. There are perhaps many people on death row who are innocent. Some excellent organizations like the *Innocence Project* are working tirelessly in this effort. The same is also true of many stars and Hollywood celebrities. For example, Kim Kardashian, Michael Moore, and others are fighting for the cause of Justice. Bellers’ reform idea that criminals are created by society is forward-thinking and would be considered by some as being ultra-liberal. However, I can understand and relate to this belief because I discussed my background and upbringing in Chapter One of this thesis project sharing how the social, political, and economic realities impact me. There is a delicate balance between personal responsibility and social responsibility. However, when you look at the so-called war on crime and drugs, there is some truth to the fact that society makes criminals. Bellers’ concept of prisoners' work is spot on. As discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis project, a strong work ethic and theology of work is the key to successful reentry programs for ex-offenders (returning citizens).

---

208 Ibid., 1.
John Howard:

According to the Quaker in the World article, "In eighteen century Britain, John Howard's most important work 'State of The Prisons' (1777) drew attention to the conditions of prisons."²⁰⁹ It states, "He received strong support from friends who developed the Society for Improvement of Prison Discipline and the Reformation of Juvenile Offenders."²¹⁰ They supported Howard's promotion of an Act of Parliament in 1774.²¹¹ "Records suggest that "Unfortunately, this was not implemented because public opinion was not ready to make it work."²¹² However, the article states, "John Howard brings attention to prisons that do not garner much discussion in prisons' design, construction, and building."²¹³ He states, "The design of institutions is crucial in determining what happens within the structure, how people relate to the environment in which they find themselves, and how they can relate to each other. Architecture, particularly buildings designed to constrain and control, can predetermine what regime can operate. The serried rows and tiers of cells reinforce the anonymity of prisoners."²¹⁴ Reportedly, “He expressed concern about experienced criminals passing on criminal values like a plague.”²¹⁵ His phrase, “seminaries of vice' captured the anxieties of policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic.”²¹⁶

Today, especially federal prisons in America are multi-million-dollar state-of-the-art facilities that could rival any college or university. I will never forget the words of an inmate who said, Chaplain, this prison is so lovely that I don't ever want to go home. I have everything I need here.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 1.
²¹⁰ Ibid., 2.
²¹¹ Ibid., 2.
²¹² Ibid., 2.
²¹³ Ibid., 3.
²¹⁴ Ibid., 3.
²¹⁵ Ibid., 3.
²¹⁶ Ibid., 3.
Today's prisons enable those confined to have opportunities for interaction and engagement with vocational, educational, and religious programs and services with the hope that they will become productive, law-abiding, successful citizens.

Elizabeth Frey:

Christianity provided a significant impetus in the evolution of penology during the eighteenth century. The modern prison system could be called a Christian invention. American Quakers influenced penitentiaries to provide a means of encouraging penance to spend long periods in isolation, to give time to reflect on their misdeeds, and come to repentance. Single-cell and solitary confinement in these prisons drew upon practices employed in medieval monasteries for disciplining wayward monks. Such was the experience that led to the birth of the Quaker prison reform movement in the eighteenth century, led by Elizabeth Frey. In her book entitled *Prison pioneer- The Story of Elizabeth Frey*, she states that "Stephen Grellet, an exiled French aristocrat who had become a Quaker in America, was in London on a religious visit and was concerned about the crime and degradation in the city." 217 Reportedly, "He held a religious meeting for pickpockets, thieves, and abandoned women in the meeting house in St. Martin's Lane, and a huge crowd gathered. As a result, Grellet was permitted to visit the city's prisons." 218 Frey says, "He went first to Newgate, where the Old Bailey now stands, visiting prisoners waiting to be hanged." 219 Reportedly, “at first, the authorities tried to deter him from seeing the women's side of the prison, warning him that they were violent." 220 "He arrived early to find the women still sleeping in the bitter winter weather without any bedding.

---

218 Ibid., 13.
219 Ibid., 13.
220 Ibid., 13.
He saw sick female prisoners lying on the ground and several naked newborn babies crying from cold."\textsuperscript{221} “Stephen Grellet was horrified and hurried around to see Elizabeth Frey, well known in society for her philanthropy, describe what he had witnessed and ask for help."\textsuperscript{222} According to Rose, “Elizabeth Frey quickly; she sent out for lengths of flannel and asked women friends to help her make up garments for the babies.”\textsuperscript{223} Rose states, “The next morning, she and her sister-in-law, Anna Buxton, went to Newgate carrying parcels of baby clothes. Disregarding the governor's warning about the savagery of the prisoners, the ladies swept in. They glanced around, shocked at the three hundred women cooking, eating, cursing, and tearing each other's hair. Elizabeth Fry never forgot the sight of two prisoners stripping the clothes from a dead baby to wrap them around a live child”\textsuperscript{224} Driven by religious compassion; she overcame her terror of thieves and murderers in that squalid prison. Although she shrank from violence, Newgate, the most notorious prison in England, appears to have held a curious fascination for her." She was filled with evangelical religiosity, awed by stories of hell-fire and damnation, and she found among the constraints and in the condemned cells a release for her spirits."\textsuperscript{225} She knew with certainty of her faith that prisoners were souls in peril and that she had the power to save them.\textsuperscript{226} In February 1817, she wrote in her journal, "I have lately been much occupied in forming a new school in Newgate for children of the poor prisoners and the young criminals, which has brought much peace and satisfaction with it,"\textsuperscript{227}

\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 13.  
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 13.  
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 15.  
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 15.  
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 15.  
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., 15.  
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., 15.
Although we are no longer in the eighteenth century and inmates are no longer hanged (although the death penalty was reinstated for federal prisoners in 1993), the prison environment is still deplorable. Female inmates are no longer walking around naked, and their children are not lying around unclothed either. Still, they are separated from their birth mother within weeks to continue her incarceration confinement at the prison.

Throughout history, some fascinating and influential people have been incarcerated in American jails and prisons. For example, there are politicians, actors, actresses, athletes, soldiers from all military branches, professors, medical professionals, physicians and nurses, faith leaders, pastors, Muslim clerics, and Roman Catholic priests. I have witnessed and ministered to people from all walks of life and profession in federal prison, unlike biblical characters who got imprisoned for defending ancient Israel, the church, and the preaching of the gospel, for the most part. Except for a few cases, no criminal cases were charged against them for violations against an individual or society except Moses. He was a fugitive after murdering a person and spending forty years on the backside of the desert, and Onesimus, a runaway slave and thief. Jesus was charged with being an Insurrectionist against Rome. However, the following individuals are briefly referenced here in this thesis project for their incarceration experience and how they and their expertise made significant contributions to the church, society, and the subject discussed in this thesis project.

Mahatma "Great Soul" Gandhi:

Before becoming a pioneering civil rights activist, Mohandas Gandhi was an attorney trained to take a seat on a train. Not long after he came to South Africa to help an Indian merchant with a legal problem, he was removed from the first-class section of the train after being told, "This section is for whites only," according to Ramachandra Guha, the author of Gandhi before India.
He paid the price, including four periods in jail during his twenty-one years in South Africa—for demonstrating against discrimination, but continued with protests, such as leading Indian expatriates in opposing a racist law requiring all Indians to register with the "Asiatic Department" and to carry the registration card at all times or risk deportation. On November 6, 1913, over one hundred years ago, he was arrested for leading a march of over 2,000 people to protest a tax on Indian immigrants.\textsuperscript{228} Gandhi also was arrested and imprisoned in jails in India and Great Britain.

\textbf{Dietrich Bonhoeffer:}

The German theologian is best known for his righteous stand and cause against Nazi Germany, for which he was sent to prison. During his incarceration experience, Bonhoeffer wrote to and received numerous letters from family members and friends. As was the case for him, it is today for those incarcerated in American jails and prisons. Receiving or writing a letter, email, or phone call is the most important pastime for many. It helps both the writer and the recipient to "pass time." Despite the overcrowding of most prisons in America, prisons are lonely. Being isolated from normal society, these letters or any means of communication, especially with loved ones, are lifelines for incarcerated inmates. A unique feature of the prison subculture is that inmates can create and develop ingenious ways of obtaining and receiving information from inside and outside. Like some of his visits, Bonhoeffer also had several letters denied by prison officials. According to a statement cited in Frey’s book, prison officials said, "In the action against your son, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, you are informed that the application for permission to visit is refused in reply to your letter of April 17, 1943."\textsuperscript{229}


\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 24.
The letter seemingly posed no significant threat and contained the following "Dietrich; I wanted to send you greetings from us and tell you that we're always thinking of you. We know you, so we are confident that everything will turn out well-and. Hope soon. After receiving permission, we sent you a parcel with bread and other foods, a blanket, a woolen vest, etc." Dear parents, the tenth day has come around last, and I'm allowed to write to you again." Parenthetically, inmates in federal prison are not restricted from writing and receiving letters, visitors, and emails or making telephone calls unless they have violated an institutional rule sanctioned by prison authorities. This also applies to other forms of keeping in touch with the outside, family members, or friends. All inmates' incoming and outgoing mail and emails are inspected and read. All phone calls are listened to and recorded for security purposes.

Depending on the letter's content, visit, email, or phone call, an inmate's institutional adjustment can be impacted, especially if it is a Dear John or Dear Jane letter to dissolve a meaningful relationship. One essential prison outreach ministry program that churches and parachurch organizations should have as a component of their prison ministry outreach is an approved letter writing, visitation, and a social media connection ministry. This enables them to stay connected with offenders and their families, especially those who do not contact family, friends, or churches. However, this ministry must be conducted with the most stringent security measures and parameters consistent with prison rules and regulations and ministry rules and regulations. It requires constant monitoring and training of both the recipient and the sender. Failure to do so can be catastrophic, detrimental, and criminal.

Unfortunately, I can share many stories where this has been the case for many volunteers, inmates, and family members and devastating consequences.

---

230 Ibid., 25.
Today, emails and other social media communications slowly make their way into the American penal system, allowing inmates to contact family and friends. Prison Visitation, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is an excellent parachurch prison outreach ministry specializing in ensuring federal prisoners get visitors.

Dorothy Day:

Dorothy Day is a pioneer in the prison reform movement in the American prison system. Although she is best known for her vision and work in the Catholic Workers Movement, she was actively engaged in many social movements and political events of her time in the twentieth century. "As a pacifist, she was against all wars, economic depression, class struggles, and the nuclear threat and supported the civil rights movement." She spoke truth to power through her writing as a reporter." Accordingly, “she was herself a prisoner whose first jail experience occurred when she accompanied a group of women suffragists to the White House to protest the treatment of other suffragists in jail." Reported, "In the 1950s, Dorothy Day participated in several protests for which she was jailed three times during the six years of these protests." Reportedly, "On an occasional visit with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India. Dorothy Day said, "I saw their eyes wide, as she recounted the many times she had chosen to go to jail.

---

232 Ibid., 1.
233 Ibid., 1.
234 Ibid., 1.
They understood that going to jail for liberation and truth, as Gandhi had done, now they were hearing it specifically in the Christian context of the workers of mercy, of visiting prisoners by entering prison."\(^{235}\)

Nelson Mandela:

Nelson Mandela served on Robben Island, perhaps the most notorious prison to house the most famous person of our time. He was a freedom fighter akin to his comrades Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Day, and King; he fought for freedom for the South African people against the tyranny of Apartheid. Like Joseph in the Bible,\(^{236}\) his story is unique to human history. He rose from a prison cell to the presidential executive suite in a nation where he became the president of South Africa. Mandela survived the brutality of being incarcerated in the notorious Robben Island prison by not allowing himself to become bitter despite being broken. The psychological, mental, and emotional trauma in an individual in prison is excruciating and brutal. Prison sights, sounds, and smells are detrimental to the whole person, and everyone related to the incarcerated individual and churches must be prepared to address these realities. Churches and parachurch organizations can learn a lot from his incarceration experience. Many people in American jails and prisons are political prisoners.

Martin Luther King Jr.:

Aside from Abraham Lincoln and President Lyndon B. Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr., the slain civil rights legend and icon, has done more for the causes of freedom and justice for marginalized, disenfranchised, poor people, especially people of the Negro race. His non-violent

\(^{235}\) Ibid., 1.

\(^{236}\) Genesis 20, (KJV).
peaceful protest against social injustice and racial inequality was the lynchpin that brought about the most comprehensive sweeping legislation known as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Voting Rights Act of 1965, and The Fair Housing Act of 1968. His stance not only impacted Black-White social relations but also brought the country to recognize that these constructs needed codifying into laws to which the U.S. Constitution was amended. Today, many of these liberties are taken for granted. They are under scrutiny, hanging in the balance with the strong possibility of being overturned. I believe churches and parachurch organizations can learn invaluable lessons from Dr. King's incarceration experience. His book entitled Letters from Birmingham Jail especially related to having an advocacy arm within one's prison outreach ministry that addresses unjust laws. Advocacy, social justice, and unjust laws are other proposed recommendations in this new twenty-first-century prison outreach ministry model. For example, the crack versus powder cocaine law is the cash bail requirement, mandatory minimum, abolishing parole, private prisons operating for profit, voting rights restored, and ministry. It is the belief that we are a nation of laws, not men. When posed with the question of advocating breaking some rules and obeying others, King states, "The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to obey just laws. One has a legal but moral responsibility to obey just laws"  

King continues, "Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I agree with St. Augustine, and an unjust law is no law." Furthermore, says King, “a just law is an artificial code that squares with the moral law.”  

King continues, “To put it in terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law not rooted in eternal and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just any law that degrades

---

237 Ibid., 10.
238 Ibid., 10.
human personality is unjust."\(^{239}\) Bonhoeffer, like King, shared similar sentiments about laws and Justice. For example, King asserts, “An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself.”\(^{240}\) King concludes, “This is difference made legal.”\(^{241}\) Finally, says King, By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and is willing to follow itself.”\(^{242}\) Concluding King says, “This is sameness made legal.”\(^{243}\)

Chuck Colson:

The former White House Counsel to President Richard M. Nixon, Chuck Colson, was incarcerated and spent time in federal prison. In his bestselling book, *Born Again*, Colson wrote, "I found myself increasingly drawn to the idea that God had put me in prison for a purpose and that I should do something for those I had left behind."\(^{244}\) Reportedly, “Colson emerged from prison with a new mission, mobilizing the Christian church to minister to prisoners.”\(^{245}\) He founded Prison Fellowship in 1976, which is now one of the nation's most prominent Christian nonprofits serving prisoners and their families and a leading advocate for criminal justice reform. Before he died in November of 1980, I had the privilege of being in the presence of this great servant at a church service where he was the featured speaker at Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Mr. Colson laid his gifted and anointed hand upon me and said a prayer of blessing for me and my son, Deylon. It was also one of my most cherished moments of service as

\(^{239}\) Ibid., 10.
\(^{240}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{241}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{242}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{243}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{244}\) [https://www.prisonfellowship.org/about/chuck-colson/](https://www.prisonfellowship.org/about/chuck-colson/)
\(^{245}\) Ibid., 1.
a federal prison chaplain to have had the excellent opportunity of working with the Prions Fellowship and the hundreds of outstanding volunteers and staff. I have witnessed the incredible power of God do great and mighty things in the lives of inmates and their families through this parachurch prison outreach ministry. I am also forever grateful to my former colleague and former Chaplain who was there with Mr. Colson, representing the Church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in ministry and service to Chuck Colson while he was incarcerated. What an incredible and mighty God we all serve!

Civil rights leaders and a host of political leaders in Congress debate vital legislation pieces about mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. This is also the case for many nation's mayors, city councils, and state representatives. Many religious leaders, particularly African American communities, have been incarcerated. Notable ones include Rev. Jessie Jackson, William Barber, Al Sharpton, and Resident Ben Chavis. Rev. Dr. John and Kirby Jon Caldwell. They must never forget and be willing to engage in this fight for equal justice under the law, liberty, and Justice for all, addressing the pandemic of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. In Chapter Eight of this thesis project, I look at the social order of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.
These heart-wrenching words that were spoken directly to me on August 14, 1997, challenged me to my core. As the Mid-Atlantic Regional Chaplaincy Administrator, I conducted a staff assistance visit at the Federal Correctional Institution Manchester in Manchester, Kentucky. Staff assist, or (Technical assistance) visit, is when a person in my position visits an institution under their oversight in each region at the warden's request or at the direction of the Regional Director to make an official visit. These official visits assess the department's effectiveness or any problematic concerns and issues, which, in my case, was the religious service and pastoral care department. A high-ranking senior member of the bureau of prisons executive staff was also visiting this prison. FCI Manchester is about thirty-five miles east of Lexington, Kentucky. It had about 2,500 (medium is the security level of inmates), male inmates at the Main institution and about 300 inmates at the prison camp.

I toured the facility with an entourage of fifteen staff members, including this high-ranking senior executive staff. All I saw around the entire prison compound during the tour was a sea of thousands of black males. No matter where we toured (food service, chapel, recreation department, psychology services, units, the SHU), the inmates were African American males. I was appalled and just overwhelmed at this distrusting sight! As fate would have it, I was the only African American male staff member on this entourage. In the presence of my colleagues, I said, "Are black men the only people committing crimes in America and getting locked up in Federal Prison?"
There are just too many black men here." After I spoke from my heart, there was a deafening silence, and this high-ranking executive staff person looked at me squarely and said, "So, Chaplain Robert, what are you going to do about it?" The Holy Spirit of God spoke to me in His still, small voice and said, I will do something about it and use you and others like you. "For many are called, but few are chosen."246

Since this sentinel moment of being challenged about mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry, I have been seeking ways to engage in many efforts to do something about such real and present danger regarding these pressing issues. As stated in chapter one of this thesis project, I remained active in chaplaincy upon my retirement from the federal bureau of prisons. I took a position with Methodist Health System as Chaplain. Since 2015 I have completed 6.5 Units of Clinical Pastoral Care Education (CPE). I am the Pastoral Care Department Manager at Methodist Midlothian Medical Center in Midlothian, Texas. I also became the founder, president, and CEO of Faith Without Walls Prison Ministry. (F.W.WP.) See more about this prison outreach ministry in Chapter two of this Thesis Project.

"He has shown you, oh man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."247 The prophet Micah was speaking to the children of Israel about their once again depraved condition concerning the morality of the nation of Israel, their inept, corrupt religious sacrificial offerings and worship that had become polluted and inverted by those who practiced them as a substitute for the true worship of Jehovah.

As a result, they again found themselves in Babylonian captivity (imprisoned). However, for me, these prophetic words have practical implications regarding mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.

246 Matthew 22:14(NKJV)
247 Micah 6:8 (NKJV)
They speak directly to my call and service as a federal prison chaplain. These words should resonate and prick the hearts and minds of the people of God today concerning mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. As a religious body, I believe we are also required to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before the Lord.

Mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, and issues of police brutality and racial justice dominate the social conversation here in America. Who is speaking for the Church? Who is not talking about these matters, and why are they not saying? Are questions deserving some answers? These topics are discussed in the public square and at the kitchen dining table in most American homes. They are being discussed and debated at the office water cooler and corporate board rooms. Local, state, and federal legislative and civic leaders, from the mayor's offices to the occupants of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, have made these topics an integral part of their political campaigns, platforms, and legislative agendas. The enormity of these three major issues and their social impact on the fabric of our social structures, including religious institutions, will be debated for quite some time. Professional athletes representing all major sports franchises from Major League Baseball, the NFL, and the NBA speak out concerning mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. For example, some read: *end racism, no justice –no peace, we are one, black lives matter, etc.* These professional athletes have also honored this movement by kneeling while playing the National Anthem. These athletes stated that the flag or the honorable men and women serving in the military were not protesting but for social justice.

Other professional sports teams, both national and international, have joined in with the NBA and NFL to speak up and out on these critical matters. America's favorite pastime, Major League Baseball (MLB), is on record about where they stand. For example, on the opening day of the 2020 season, teams locked arms and hands, kneeling in protest.
The players had the names of victims of police brutality on the backs of their jerseys and the motto *I can't breathe*. International soccer teams representing Germany, England, France, South Africa, and Spain spoke up and out on such matters. For example, during the Western and Southern tennis tournaments, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), Suffers, and the Tennis Associations spoke out against social injustice.

However, it was NFL star Collin Kaepernick who was not only a gifted quarterback for the San Francisco 49ners but also the quarterback for this social movement. His initial protest sparked the beginning of such a movement and shined a bright light on mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, racial injustice, and systemic racism.

Unfortunately, former President Donald J. Trump and many others attempted to mischaracterize and hijack Colin Kaepernick's initial protest, perhaps for political gain. Yet, these professional sports franchises and many players continued to take a bold stand against social injustice, including mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. Perhaps the most suppressing and incredible sports team that spoke out against racism is the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing. For example, in October 2019, during a race, Mr. William Wallace Jr. led race car drivers to speak against racism, the only current African American driver. Their voices were so loud that they banned flying the confederate flags during NASCAR racing events.

Additionally, major cities and universities have denounced protest by dismantling the statues and monuments of Confederate generals, whose symbols embody slavery and mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. The slogan Black Lives Matter symbolizes these issues. The motto is displayed on buildings, streets, shirts, shoes, and hats.
The Professional Golf Association has five African American players on tour. The president of the PGA actively seeks ways to close this sport's racial divide and gap. In addition, National Basketball Association (NBA) is displaying these powerful words on their courts. Players and coaches are wearing signs and victims' names on the backs of their jerseys. Corporate America is speaking up and out on these issues—Amazon, Microsoft, Nabisco, Gatorade, and Air B-n-B, to name a few.

Where are the voices of churches and parachurch organizations? Country singer and songwriter Grammy-nominated Mikey Guyton has some compelling, pointed, and personal lyrics that speak to these issues in her song entitled Black like me. It creates curiosity and strange credulity among individuals, especially me, why there seems to be very little, if anything, said or done by many churches and some leaders in the faith community representing churches and parachurch organizations. If the words spoken by the prophet Micah resonate with any faith community or its leadership, they must not be afraid to tackle and wrestle with these matters. These faith leaders often excuse not speaking up or out about such pressing and weighty issues because they are labeled or called "social issues" in nature with "political" overtones. Whatever the case or motivation is, I would remind them of what Jesus articulated in the Lord's Prayer. "Your kingdom comes; you will be done on Earth (social) as it is in heaven."248

The adage, don't be so heavenly minded that you become earthly no good is apropos. As far as I know, there are no prisons in heaven. There is no mass incarceration or a need for criminal justice reform, reentry, and racial injustice in heaven. Police brutality does not exist in heaven! Churches and parachurch organizations cannot and should not duck their heads and hide, pretending that these matters and issues do not exist here on earth.

Trust me; they impact them, their churches, and members of their faith community. These issues affect millions, not just inmates and their family members.

I would also remind them that many of these inmates, ex-offenders (returning citizens), are members of some of these churches and provide financial support to them and parachurch organizations. Therefore, from my vantage point, I believe it is imperative for churches and parachurch organizations to engage and find their voices to advocate for liberty and justice for all. Unfortunately, however, for some strange and peculiar reasons, individuals affected and crippled by the destructive chasms of crime, punishment, mass incarceration, reentry, racial injustice, and police brutality believe that many churches are not concerned about these matters. Offenders, ex-offenders (returning citizens), and their family members who experience the brunt of these social vicissitudes contend, and many believe, that churches and parachurch organizations and their leaders have had their voices muzzled like an ox or tuned out like a falling star. Inmates believe that some churches, parachurch organizations, and leaders within these faith communities refuse to support the cause of mass incarceration and fight for criminal justice reform and reentry.

To offer credence to this widely held belief, allow me to share a riveting personal experience. During my final year of seminary at Oral Roberts University, my then-pastor was the late Reverend Jim Rowe, Senior Pastor at New Bethel Baptist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Reverend Rowe was also a probation and parole officer with the Oklahoma criminal justice Department. I had written a position paper on mass incarceration and reentry. He thought it would be a good idea to present this paper at the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. So, he arranged a meeting with the then National Chairmen of Education, the late Reverend Dr. T. Oscar Chapple.
He arranged for me to meet with the then-President of The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., and the late Reverend Dr. T.J. Jemison to discuss this paper and get his approval to present it during one of our convention sessions.

My wife Karen and I drive to Nashville, Tennessee, to meet with Dr. Jemison. We could not meet with him; his executive assistant told us that Dr. Jemison was not interested in such matters because "there is no money in this…." I was not only disappointed but shocked and distraught by this insensitive statement. My plea was to clarify to him that we, as National Baptists, were in a unique position to get on the front end of what I saw then what is now a vast problem, mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. I had hoped he would see this looming problem as the federal bureau of prisons was undergoing a massive prison buildup in which thousands of Black and brown men and women would get locked up. My position paper then had some of the same proposals I shared in this thesis project. I wrote that we, as a Baptist Convention, should marshal resources within as a denomination at every local congregation, although autonomous, to develop programs for individuals impacted by crime, incarceration, and reentry. Throughout this thesis project, I cite such programs as crime prevention, recidivism, drug treatment, mental health treatment, a host of transitional reentry programs, and services for ex-offenders (returning citizens). This nodal event was in 1987 when I started my federal prison chaplaincy career. It fell on death’s ears, and he had no interest and saw no need for such programs. "Where there is no vision, the people will perish. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."249

249 Hosea 4:6 (NKJV)
Reverend Dr. Henry Lyons became President of the National Baptist Convention after Dr. Jemison completed his term in 1994. Soon after, he was convicted of a federal crime and sentenced to prison in Colman, Florida.

How ironic and sad! "How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" As Jesus said, “He who has an ear, let him hear Jesus; let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

As another example, consider a recent front-page article titled: *Fort Worth police use Tasers more on Blacks stats*. Printed on September 13, 2020, Sunday’s edition of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. The article states, "Even Black people have had difficulty believing police target disproportionately African Americans for aggressive action." “African Americans make up nineteen percent of the city's population.” The report states, "About thirty-three percent of the people tasted were White. Twenty-four percent were Hispanic." The article argues that "regarding the faith community, "The Police Department, city leaders, faith and thought leaders in Fort Worth have been apathetic to the disproportionate police use-of-force issues faced in the minority community.”

In this new 21st-century prison outreach ministry model, I propose that churches and parachurch organizations employ and have programs within their prison outreach ministry designed to educate the community and their respective congregants on data like this.

---

250 2 Samuel 1:27(NKJV)
251 Revelation 2:29 (NKJV)
253 Ibid., 14.
254 Ibid., 14.
255 Ibid., 14.
Light is the best disinfectant against darkness, facts dispel a myth, and Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This kind of community involvement is essential if churches and parachurch organizations expect to voice and impact mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, and social and racial injustice.

In that case, they must educate their congregation on the issues of crime, police misconduct, etc. Community engagement is one simple and practical way of informing and educating about such matters.

To reimagine doing prison outreach ministry in the 21st century, churches and parachurch organizations must think outside the proverbial box. For example, I propose that offenders and ex-offenders (returning citizens) who live in these affected communities and their families be brought to the table. They should be interviewed and share their wisdom and lived experience on such matters. Judges, sheriffs, police chiefs, district attorneys, prison officials, prosecutors, and defense attorneys should also be invited to the table to engage and shed light on these and other matters dealing with mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. These faith-based and secular institutions and agencies should collaborate and sponsor joint workshops, conferences, and training sessions to discuss such issues.

Finally, I implore churches to take it seriously and recognize that this is indeed the new domestic mission field and the new civil rights movement of the twenty-first century. Many inmates in jails, prisons, detention centers, family members, and ex-offenders (returning citizens) are unchurched. They are ready for an evangelistic prison outreach ministry with a message of love, forgiveness, mercy, hope, grace, and healing. Remember, Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few: therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the

---

256 John 8:32(NKJV)
harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

This referenced text has a practical application related to prison outreach ministry, criminal justice reform, reentry, and racial justice.

I contend that the Church and its leaders should care for the millions of inmates and millions more of their family members and those who are victims of crime.

For example, when the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at the March on Washington, he described "a fierce urgency of now" talking about the injustices in health care.

Dr. King told the Medical Committee for Human Rights, "Of all forms of injustice, healthcare injustice is the most shocking and inhumane." More than half a century later, Dr. King's words have a renewed meaning, and "the fierce urgency of now" can be said of the injustice of mass incarceration, the need for criminal justice reform, and reentry.

If a church of any denomination, anywhere in the country, would be asked anecdotally or conducted a survey. I am confident that many of its congregants and community members in these churches are currently involved with the criminal justice/ penal system. They have known of a family member, relative, or someone they work with; how many members of their respective congregations are impacted by crime, mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry? They would be shocked and perhaps amazed at how widespread these matters affect and impact their congregants and communities; furthermore, a Church would take this inquiry further and conduct a monkey survey to ascertain the actual cold fact about these pressing matters. Only to determine whether they socialize with or know someone, be it family members, neighbors, friends, or co-workers, involved with some aspect of the American criminal justice system. It would surprise many pastors that many of the

---

257 Matthew 9:37 (NKJV)
258 quoteinvestigator.com/mlk/2015/10/22/mlk-health/.
259 Ibid., 1
people who frequent their churches and houses of worship every Sunday are offenders, ex-offenders-(returning citizens), or family members.

This is us, America, and there is no escaping these issues, for they are indelibly woven into the soil of this nation and the soul of the Church. For example, I am a member of and attend a large non-denominational charismatic church in Dallas, Texas.

The average worship service attendance is anywhere between 10,000 to 13,000 on any Sunday morning. The Bishop asked who had ever been or knew someone in their family or someone they were acquainted with in Prison or involved in any aspect of the criminal justice system through incarceration, parole, probation, or any court proceedings, to please stand up. To the surprise of some but certainly not me, more than two-thirds of the congregation were on their feet! Approximately a staggering 6000 to 8000 people in just this one congregation are wrestling with these issues.

Another example considers this, "the city of Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metropolitan statistical area's population is about 7.57 million people, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 population estimates." According to Dallas County records, "There are three federal prisons, two state prisons, five-county jails, and two private prisons located within the two counties of Dallas and Tarrant." "There are thirty jails and prisons in Dallas County serving 2,552,213 people in 873 square miles." "There is one jail and Prison per 85,073 people and one jail and Prison per 29 square miles." "In Texas, Dallas County ranks 241st of 254 counties in Jails and Prisons per capita and first of 254 counties in Jails and Prisons per square mile."
According to Dallas County Office data. There are three Federal Prisons located in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolis area. The Federal Medical Center Carswell with an inmate population of 1,197; The Federal Medical Center Fort-Worth with a population of 1,384; The Federal Correctional Institution Seagoville with 1,676; The total number of federal offenders in this geographical area alone is 4,257 men and women. Imagine how many children of incarcerated parents or grandparents are impacted by these absent parents. I am confident that this is also an accurate picture of most major urban cities in America. The impact that this has on most churches in America is astonishing!

One of the essential tools that I am proposing in this new prison outreach ministry model for the twenty-first century is that churches should have resources aside from a Bible in their arsenal as they reimagine how to do prison outreach ministry in the 21st century. All too often, the default position for churches and parachurch organizations is to preach the hell out of these sinners in jail who have committed crimes. I don't have any problems preaching the Gospel to save the souls of broken men and women incarcerated. I faithfully did this for thirty-plus years at a federal prison chapel every Sunday and during midweek bible study. I have seen thousands of inmates come to a saving knowledge of Christ. However, my lived and work experience is that these individuals need their souls saved. They also need jobs, affordable health care, mental health therapy, drug and alcohol treatment, and other economic, social, and transitional programs and services. Perhaps more than any other institution in America, including the government, the Church is uniquely suited to offer such programs. Thousands of these individuals will one day return to a neighborhood near you. Guess who is coming to dinner or communion.

On December 10, 2021, a jury found three white men guilty of killing Ahmaud Arbery, a 25-year-old African American. The case, like several in recent memory, gained national attention.
Mr. Arbery was an innocent victim looking at newly constructed homes in his neighborhood while jogging. The assailants suspected him of some nefarious criminal activity, and they accosted him and held him against his will only to shoot and kill him. The murder and trial occurred near Brunswick, Georgia, where the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) is located.

I have often been to this Academy as a chaplain with the federal bureau of prisons. An attorney for the accused made a racist statement about the presence of black pastors in the courtroom at the trial. He attempted to disdain and ridicule the company of famed T.V. personality, talk show host, and civil rights leader Reverend Al Sharpton. The Attorney was wrong for this dubious racist legal tactic, but it was also morally reprehensible. However, I saw how God turned it for good, what he meant for evil. His racist antics also caused a groundswell of black, brown, and white pastors from various parts of the country to show up in protest to support Reverend Sharpton and Mr. Aubrey, and his family. As I watched this beautiful mosaic of faith leaders on television, I was in tears seeing pastors of all races taking a stand and doing something about criminal justice. It was an answer to prayers because I witnessed representatives of the Church heed the call to action for the first time in recent memory. Not since the March on Washington in the fall of 1963, under the leadership of slain civil rights leader the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, have many pastors joined hands and hearts protesting an unjust cause. I only hope to capture these faith leaders' energy, passion, and awareness in this thesis project don't stop here in Brunswick, Georgia. Tragic events like this occur across America, perhaps in their local communities. What these pastors did for Ahmaud should be done for the thousands of black and brown and white boys and girls, men and women who deserve kind of support as they confront
mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. Join me and others to do something about mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.

So, what are you going to do about it? "He has shown you, oh man, what is god, and what does the Lord require of thee, but to do to justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."  

Throughout chapter eight, I express my sincere, deep, abiding passion for my calling to prison ministry, addressing mass incarceration and criminal justice reform and reentry in response to the question, "so, chaplain, what are you going to do about it?" Using several personal and professional past and current events, I challenge churches and parachurch organizations to join with me and many others to reimagine how to do prison outreach ministry in the 21st century. I hope they will take my life and work experience as a federal prison chaplain and see the practical value of recommended proposals outlined in this thesis project.

In chapter nine of this thesis project, I discuss the causes of mass incarceration, the need for criminal justice reform, and reentry. I also further explore the role and response of churches and parachurch organizations in addressing mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.

\[265\] Micah 6:8 (NKJV)
CHAPTER NINE

MASS INCARCERATION, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, AND REENTRY—WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO ABOUT IT? THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

"You do not have the right to remain silent. Anything you don't say or don't do will be held against you in the court of public opinion, offenders, ex-offenders (returning citizens), their families, and perhaps members of your congregation."

In chapter nine of this thesis project, I address mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry and examine the role and responsibility of the church. For over forty years, mass incarceration became acceptable in contemporary American society. Until recently, issues like social injustice, criminal justice reform, police brutality, reentry, and mass incarceration have been examined only among politicians, academics, and talking heads. However, since the advent of various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google, and others, these issues have become everyday kitchen table topics. Especially now that Hollywood stars, professional athletes, and government officials have lent their voices and platforms to highlight these issues. We now have what I term celebrity inmates. Their crimes and profiles are now the stuff of talk shows, television interviews, and even political campaign ads. For example, Kim Kardashian has taken up the cause of several imprisoned individuals under questionable circumstances. Barry Scheck and Peter Naufal with the Innocence Project have been doing exceptional work exonerating individuals wrongly convicted and sentenced to death. Perhaps now than ever, individuals use their celebrity status and platforms to bring attention to these pressing matters. I highlight some additional examples later throughout this chapter and in subsequent chapters.

266 My quote used during an June Teeneth celebration in Dallas, Texas 2020
The two trending issues on these and other social media platforms are defunding the police and abolishing prisons. I think both are terrible ideas. My position does not mean that I support police misconduct, the excessive use of force and shooting by police of black men, and the massive prison build-up. Such brutality and misconduct are by far the worst travesty of justice. The law should fully prosecute those who commit such crimes. We send too many to prison that should otherwise be used in mental health or drug treatment facilities. Those who support defunding police are misguided and misinformed about why we need more police, especially in vulnerable communities. I believe that police presence alone can be a crime deterrent. There should be a concerted effort to train police to build better relationships within these communities. I also believe that there should be efforts to use other professionals trained in substance abuse and domestic violence in dealing with various crises that are not criminal but behavioral. Such professionals include chaplains, drug treatment counselors, therapists, social workers, etc.

Those who advocate that there should be no prisons are misguided and misinformed. Perhaps these individuals are reacting from an emotional–political place based on historical tragic events where people who serve in these institutions have done horrid things. For forty years, society has become accustomed to crime, incarceration, criminals, and prisons. Have we as a country become so intoxicated with prisons that we are now innocuous about their harmful effects and impact on humans and society? As stated by Lee Griffith in his insightful book, The Fall of The Prison, Biblical Perspectives on Abolition, Griasksth asks, “Why do we have prisons?” Griffith contends, “the answer to the question will likely refer to the need to protect society through deterrence of crime or the need to reject immoral or anti-social behavior through

---

retribution or (rarer these days) the need to treat or rehabilitate offenders.” He continues, “The answer will also likely allude to this or that individual considered to be the example of the criminal mind- Richard Speck, Charles Manson, David Berkowitz, or Ted Bundy.” (Timothy McVeigh -my addition) or another pathological individual who has committed the most recent atrocity to spark public anger.”

In my thirty-plus years of federal prison chaplaincy, I ministered to some people that committed such horrific crimes. Others who have not engaged in such atrocities and done horrible things to others and society must be locked up. As a chaplain in the federal prison system, I often received prayer requests from jail individuals to pray for their release. I have done this and will continue to do so, but I would ask the individual why I must pray for you to get released from prison. Some say I can commit more crimes, sell more drugs, etc. I would look them dead squarely in their eyes and say, no, I am not going to pray for you simply because peradventure God answers my prayer; you might be the one to harm someone I love or sell some drugs to one of my children. I tell you, what I am going to pray is that you while being here, learn from the error of your ways and find a reason to change. I pray that you repent and seek forgiveness, get your education in federal prison, and get substance abuse treatment. I pray you to learn a trade like heating and air conditioning repair, barbering, or cosmetology. When you get released from prison, you can find meaningful employment to break the cycle of crime and violence. Trust me; I know these individuals are criminals. We need prisons.

However, I will be the first to admit we have mostly drug users and drug dealers in our prisons, especially in federal prisons—these individuals, absent any violence, should be treated for
substance abuse. For example, According to a congressional research service report, *the federal prison population Build-up: Overview, Policy Changes, Issues, and Options*, "in 1998, weapons and immigration offenders were 8% and 7% respectively, of all federal inmates." According to a congressional research service report, "in 1998, weapons and immigration offenders were 8% and 7% respectively, of all federal inmates." Accordingly, "By FY 2001, weapons and immigration offenders comprised 15% and 13% of all federal offenders. "By FY 2011, approximately out of every ten inmates in federal prison were incarcerated for drugs, weapons, or immigration offense fewer were incarcerated for violent crimes." The report's conclusion is, "in FY, nearly 12% of federal inmates incarcerated were for violent crimes; by FY 2011, the proportion of federal inmates incarcerated for violent crimes decreased to 6%." Many people in federal prisons would perhaps do much better for themselves and society if they were in drug treatment and substance centers rather than federal prisons.

According to Lee Griffith, "Before the 1980s, authorization regimes in South Africa and the Soviet Union led the world as the governments most likely imprison their citizens." According to Griffith, "one of every 250 Americans is in prison, but it is incorrect to assume that they are "criminals" before being found guilty." Contends Griffith, “Many of those incarcerated in the United States are people awaiting trial. Even when a prisoner has been convicted of a crime, the court decision does not constitute evidence that they are any more dangerous than the rest of us."  

---

272 Ibid., 5.
273 Ibid., 5.
274 Ibid., 5.
276 Ibid., 29.
277 Ibid., 30.
America, not Houston, has a problem, mass incarceration, which is now the norm accepted in the United States, but something must be done about it. There are many mitigating factors about the cause and effect of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry, especially among people of color. I discussed some of these cases in this thesis project in previous chapters. Victims of crime take pleasure and some delight, hoping that the full force of the law becomes levied against the perpetrators of the crime. Individuals engaged in criminal activities are looked upon as misfits with no redeeming value. In the twenty-first century, churches and para-church organizations must embrace the Imago Dei doctrine (as defined in Genesis 1:26-27) in reimagining prison outreach ministry. They must be willing to redesign their programs to address inmates' emotional, psychological, and physical (whole person) needs and ex-offenders (returning citizens). Church members, pastors, priests, rabbis, and imams must be ready to reimagine new ways of ministering to inmates and ex-offenders (returning citizens) in their communities. The implication is that the church is to put "...new wine into old wineskins..."278

It is incumbent for faith-based organizations to change their hearts and attitudes toward inmates who have violated the laws and suffered the consequences and offer the necessary support to them. Churches and para-church organizations must act quickly because, depending on the prevailing political winds, these issues will fall off the radar or go in a completely different direction. These noble social and political institutions cannot satisfy the sacred role that Christ gave the church of taking care of others, bearing the infirmities of the weak, remembering the poor, and visiting those in prison.

---

278 Mark 2:22 (NKJV)
I propose in this new prison outreach ministry model for the twenty-first century that senior pastors and CEOs of para-church organizations, along with the entire church leadership, including elders, deacons, and volunteers, facilitate prison outreach programs and activities intended to rehabilitate offenders' minds and offering emotional and spiritual support to the inmates and their families. In doing so, church members can experience how inmates feel and understand their needs while in prison and what programs and services are essential for their successful reentry. Given the hostility within the prison facilities, it is imperative for individuals, churches, and para-church organizations to consider wholeheartedly the possible challenges in the prison ministry when addressing mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry. I contend that church members should identify their motivation for engaging in prison outreach ministry, criminal justice reform, and reentry programs. Nevertheless, this is a noble calling and a worthy endeavor.

A fundamental recommendation for this new twenty-first-century prison outreach ministry model for churches should ensure that a representative responsible for their program takes the initiative to involve themselves with inmates and officers within correctional facilities. This engagement and interaction will help them identify inmates' needs and address them. Detention centers, county jails, and parole offices are ready for prison outreach ministry and are overlooked and neglected. As a Bureau of Prisons chaplain, I have visited and served in many such facilities. I identified prisoners' essential needs and possible ways to address them, such as providing spiritual nourishment. Some prison facilities include the Federal Detention Center Seagoville, the Metropolitan Detention Center Chicago, the Federal Detention Center Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Detention Center Miami, Metropolitan Detention Center New York, and Metropolitan Detention Center Philadelphia.
Although I did excellent pastoral care and conducted religious services at the Federal Detention Center Seagoville, these services were limited in terms of time and how a chaplain could offer much-needed support to inmates. For example, security concerns and the operational mission of institutions like detention centers, county jails, volunteers, or outside clergy are often inhibited from frequent or free moments with inmates in these facilities. Prison facilities also are designed to operate on a constrained budget, limiting staff and resources available for church programs and services. I found these facilities challenging and demanding to do ministry and provide pastoral care. Issues related to family separation and not knowing when or where they would go for their sentence are paramount.

Additionally, what other charges are pending or the status of ongoing investigations are primary concerns and cause undue stress and mental torment. The church has an opportune moment for prison outreach and reentry ministry teams to engage and connect with these individuals and members of their families. Forging these relationships will help them establish and maintain a pastoral relationship to begin the process of reform and reentry and break the cycle of recidivism. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with inmates in prisons will create opportunities to evangelize the good news of Christ.

It is crucial for churches and para-church organizations to reach out and connect with inmates and facilitate church behavior through the word of God by supporting confession and true repentance for the forgiveness of sins. I believe this happened to Apostle Paul and Onesimus, who took time to fellowship with inmates in prison and proclaimed the good news, bringing them to repentance. This bond creates a strong sense of worth and value among prison inmates.
For instance, Maya Angelou once said, "I may not remember much about what you said or looked like, but I will remember how you made me feel." Theodore Roosevelt said, "People do not care how much you know, but they want to know how much you care."

Such attitude and thinking must be the motivation and attitude for all who do prison outreach ministry. Building trust, establishing credibility, and being genuine and authentic with inmates and their family members are critical to a successful prison outreach ministry. The continuity of care pre- and post-incarceration with the inmates and their family members is foundational in facilitating repentance and behavior change among inmates. Accountability, responsibility, and mutual respect can and should be firm from both ends of the established relationship. Once in prison, individuals develop coping and survival skills. Their families often cannot endure the prison experiences, which could become difficult to manage even for those born again. Most relationships in prison are transactional. Relationships are forged based on money, favors, sex, drugs, alcohol, protection, legal representation, or gang affiliation.

I recommend churches and para-church organizations adopt a program to support criminal justice reforms and reentry initiatives in this new twenty-first-century prison outreach ministry. Churches should also consider Jubilee outreach and financial support programs to help offset the financial burden facing offenders upon release. Today, twenty-first-century prison ministry outreach programs must address the whole person and the comprehensive, unique pre-and post-incarceration needs of offenders, ex-offenders, and their families. Church members who are called and are involved in prison ministry must understand what prisons do to people and what is needed to reduce recidivism.

279 https://www.goodreads.com quotes by Maya Angelou/ 1
280 https://www.goodreads.com quotes by therodoreroosevelt/ 1
Additionally, the time is upon us as a faith community, a body of believers, to reimagine
criminal justice reform and reentry regarding mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and
reentry in the twenty-first-century spiritual institution that seeks to reconcile people to God. The
mandate is clear from a biblical, historical, social, cultural, economic, and family perspective.
Individuals affected by these systemic issues do not need platitudes, placating rhetoric, fancy,
and clever ways to hide and turn a blind eye. What is needed today, right now, in this very
moment, is not just passion but passion translated into compassionate action. The church of the
Lord Jesus Christ must not default on the warnings found in the scriptures concerning those in
prison, those returning from prison, and those impacted by prison.

To address social issues related to mass incarcerations, churches and para-church organizations
need to be bold, creative, imaginative, and innovative concerning implementing prison outreach
ministry, criminal justice reform, and social justice. Church members must demonstrate a
genuine willingness and not be afraid to address real prison issues and inmates' needs. This new
twenty-first-century prison ministry outreach model focuses on the whole person (mind, body,
and spirit) and families of offenders and their communities. These include the social and
religious institutions they must interface with before, during, and after incarceration. The
components (families, communities, social and religious institutions) should not be neglected or
overlooked. They are major contributing factors in crime, imprisonment, and prevention.
The details are also important because they play a vital role in the ministry to incarcerated
individuals concerning reform, reentry, and recidivism.
The administration of justice has removed criminals from society to punish them. This societal control and institutional power present two countervailing views. One view says to punish and dehumanize. The other view says to rehabilitate criminals. For me, the answer to this question depends on the individual criminal. The federal bureau of prison has a stated goal which is to provide all inmates with essential programs geared toward their successful reentry. Successful reentry is also one of the core values of the agency. However, inmates must find it within themselves to participate in such programming. Michel Foucault's theory of panopticism is a worthy concept to explore regarding criminals. For example, says Foucault, "They are punished using a punishment that has the function of making the offender ‘not only desirous, but also capable, of living with the law and providing for his own needs; they are punished by the internal economy of a penalty which, while intended to punish the crime, may be altered shortened or, in certain cases, extended) according to changes in the prisoner’s behavior.”

Foucault states, “they are punished by the security measures that accompany the penalty (prohibition of entering certain areas, obligatory medical treatment), and which are intended not to punish the offense, but to supervise the individual, to neutralize his dangerous state of mind, to alter his criminal tendencies, and to continue even when this change has been achieved.”

Mass incarceration is a serious problem. Churches and para-church organizations can no longer remain silent on mass incarceration and its impacts on offenders and their families. Politicians, lawmakers, the courts, judges, social workers, criminal justice officials, and those personally affected by incarceration experiences are searching for ways to address this public scourge. The alarm has sounded, and society is looking to the faith community for answers to help stem the tide of mass incarceration to assist with criminal justice reform and reentry initiatives.

---

282 Ibid., 18.
New laws enacted by state and federal legislative bodies will free hundreds of thousands of incarcerated individuals to be released into society. Most inmates will return to their communities with overwhelming economic, social, financial, family, educational, mental health, religious, and spiritual problems and needs requiring attention for their successful transition into society.

Today, churches and para-church organizations must have programs and services designed toward helping the whole person, family, and community. The rehabilitation and support programs are essential, no matter the cost. If churches and para-church organizations impact ex-offenders and their families, they must be willing to expand their prison outreach ministry programs. I believe this was the Apostle Paul's objective in his relationship with Philemon regarding Onesimus. "Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do m when assisting inmates after being released from prison.

The First Step Act 2019 is the most recent legislation passed by Congress, and President Donald J. Trump signed it into law. It is a law that preceded the Second Chance Act, signed into law under President Barack Obama in 2016. I have witnessed the direct benefits of these two compassionate, humane, forward-thinking pieces of legislation. The adoption of the two laws has resulted in the release of hundreds of federal offenders, including some with life sentences, including Alice Marie Johnson, Shalonda Jones, Denise Catalina, Cheryl Howard, Rita Guzman, and plenty of others like them. These and other federal and state legislative policies will give hundreds of incarcerated individuals in federal and state jails, detention centers, and prisons an opportunity to be granted parole, especially those incarcerated for low-level drug crimes.
The Church must practice such acts through acts of kindness, including providing meals, clothes, and spiritual guidance to inmates in prison or after being released to support their successful reintegration into society. Chapter ten briefly overviews crime and punishment from a biblical perspective, addressing mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.
Chapter ten discusses mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry addressing crime and punishment from a biblical perspective. The adage, "there is no atheist in fox holes," This aphorism can also be said of prisons. There is no atheist inside of prisons. In his book, The Fall of The Prison-Biblical Perspectives on Prison Abolition, Lee Griffith states, "The biblical word on prisons and caring for both prisoner and victims of crime has radical implications for the church’s witness to the nation and discipleship of the church." For example, consider what Christopher D. Marshall writes in his book, Beyond Retribution - A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment. Marshall states, "There is a temptation especially evident and extend this teaching in conservative Christian circles-to appeal almost exclusively to selected Old Testament proof-texts on crime and punishment." This teaching to the Christian era by citing New Testament texts about the eternal validity of the law." Marshall contends, "Certainly, it is crucial to consider Old Testament teachings; it has much to teach us: It also provides the indispensable context for understanding New Testament teachings and certain aspects of our modern legal system."
Furthermore contends Marshall who states, "any position that minimizes the discontinuity at the social, institutional level between Old Testament Israel and early Christianity, and that fails to assess the normative value of Old Testament material in light of the distinctive features of New Testament revelation, can hardly claim to be authentically Christian." According to Marshall, "It is not only that text that speaks directly of wrongdoing and retribution that is relevant, but the whole sweep of biblical teaching on the nature of God and humankind, covenant and community, justice and peace, honor and shame, sin and redemption."

Furthermore, says Marshall, "An observation that New Testament writers do not discuss penal justice per se needs careful testing. The statement is true concerning penal justice at a theoretical level." The Christian Scriptures provide no infallible ready-reckoner for the guidance of a criminal court, no clear directions as to whether punishment is permissible in a Christian country, and no precise advice as to what kinds of penalties are appropriate for particular offenses. The New Testament authors are pastors and theologians, not legal or social theorist. We cannot expect them to write as such," Marshall claims.

However, Marshall contends, "But at another level, there is a surprising wealth of detail in the New Testament on all major components of a criminal justice system—laws, crime, criminals, courts, police, prisons, and punishment." Even a cursory review of this material provides a fascinating insight into the social location of the early Christian communities and their perspective on the surrounding social order. It also offers meager comfort for those who want to base a strong "law and order" platform on the biblical text."

288 Ibid., 10.
289 Ibid., 10.
290 Ibid., 11.
The Law

According to Marshall, "The New Testament writers have much about law, none so extensively and reflectively as the apostle Paul. Paul's perspective on law is exceedingly complex and the subject of enormous debate in current New Testament scholarship, but it is noteworthy that he expresses extreme skepticism about the ability of an external law-code to control human wrongdoing." Marshall goes on to say, "Law, even "holy and just and good" law (Rom. 7:12), stirs up sin and increases transgression, but can do nothing to make people good (Rom. 5:20, 7; 7-12; Gal. 3:19-24). Marshall, like me, believes, "Something more potent than the rule of law is needed to deal with human wickedness." Also, like Marshall, who says, "Significantly, God's redemptive justice is made known "apart from the law" although the law bears witness to it and its recipients find themselves now able to fulfill the law's true purpose. According to Marshall, "They now live their lives under "the law of Christ," but this is the law of love, not a code of legislation." Says Marshall, "Of course, in all this, Paul is not thinking primarily of what we call criminal law. But given the social, moral, and civic function of the Mosaic Law in the first century Judaism, Paul's perspective on the law cannot be limited to purely theological concerns."
According to Lee Griffith, "Criminal law has ostensibly served many purposes throughout history. In ancient times, enforcing laws and the imposition of sanctions was understood as an activity performed at the gods' behest"\(^\text{296}\). Griffith states, "Of course, kings and potentates were viewed as instruments for recording the legislative will of the gods and inflicting the divine wrath upon violators."\(^\text{297}\) Griffith states, "The state was conveniently situated to assume all divine functions as the gods faded into conveniently situated to take all religious roles as the gods faded into obscurity."\(^\text{298}\)

Griffith contends, "It is not certain that various states have been nobler in their formulations of criminal statutes than were the orneriest tribal gods."\(^\text{299}\) If slavery or concertation camps suit the purposes of the state, law books, and judicial precedent will provide these institutions with appropriate underpinnings."\(^\text{300}\) Griffith further contends, "The development of the prison system in colonial Tanganyika (now Tanzania) provides an example of how criminal law serves different purposes in various settings."\(^\text{301}\) Griffith states, "The people of Tanganyika were accustomed to working for the provision of their own needs, but their unwillingness to provide the additional labor needed to work the colonial plantations profitably led Europeans (first Germans and later the British) to characterize them as lazy natives."\(^\text{302}\)

---


\(^{297}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{298}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{299}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{300}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{301}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{302}\) Ibid., 31.
Griffith points out, "Through the imposition of a series of taxes Tanganyika's, were completed to leave their agricultural endeavors for wages." He asserts, "A prison system was developed to deal with those who failed to pay taxes, and the prisoners were sent to work building the roads that served the colonial plantations." Accordingly, Griffith states, "The definition of crime is, therefore, in the eyes of many, seen as a relative manner that changes with the whims of a particular legislative body (or politician-addition mine) or socially accepted norms.

According to Griffith, "Homosexuality, polygamy, and prostitution are crimes in some nations, states, and cities but not others. Murder is typically considered a crime unless the perpetrator acted in self-defense or because of insanity or "in the line of duty" as a member of the police force or military body."

As for police officers murdering civilians, this fact is based on what is referred to as implicit immunity, which gives police permission to use lethal force without any reprisals or face prosecution. Police can also claim, which is often the case, especially in the recent police killings of black and brown people, that they feared for their lives. "Indeed, soldiers might be liable for refusal to kill on order," says Griffith.

The State may not prosecute some crimes, but the Feds will indict. Some crimes are considered federal but not state-considered. For example, it is legal to manufacture, sell, possess, distribute, and use marijuana in Colorado and Portland, California. However, these are still considered federal offenses.

---

303 Ibid., 30-31.
304 Ibid., 30-31.
305 Ibid., 30-31.
306 Ibid., 30-31.
307 Ibid., 30-31.
Many prisons today in America, both state and federal, have individuals incarcerated inside of them for doing things that were, say, several decades ago, not even considered a felony, especially drugs. For example, marijuana is legal in several states now. The production, distribution, sale, and use of it are booming. There were very few cases of things like drug conspiracy. You would be charged by the Government for something they believe based on a simple phone conversation, being around suspecting individuals, or the words of someone trying to save their backside. Once law enforcement officials are convinced that you are involved in a drug conspiracy and indicted, it is almost impossible to put up a legal defense. To make matters worse, conspiracy charges are often accompanied by the intent to distribute. I have met thousands of men and women, destitute, brown, and black, serving upwards of 20-60 years in prison for such dastardly conspiracy changes.

People like Willie Nelson, Snoop Dog, Bill Myer, athletes, actors, and even politicians known to be habitual marijuana users-smokers and buyers are never seemingly arrested, charged, or imprisoned for using such vices. This is also the soft landing given to white-collar pharmaceutical drug traffickers. In her breathtaking book, Big Dirty Money-The Shocking Injustice and Unseen Cost of White Collar Crime, Jennifer Taub provides a compelling account of how the rich and powerful escape incarceration for committing crimes and paying fines. She writes, “Take the secretive Sackler family who cashed in on the opioid crisis; the pharma business collected $35 billion peddling OxyContin, the supposed addiction-proof painkilling release to the public in 1996.” Furthermore. She contends, “The Sacklers personally amassed a reported 14 billion fortune and joined the ranks of twenty wealthiest families.”

309 Ibid., X.
She says, “More than 232,000 fellow Americans died of prescription opioid overdose between 1999 and 2018.”310 The award-winning television news magazine show on CBS -60 Minutes aired a compelling story on July 21, 2020, called "The Opioid Epidemic: Who is the Blame," which reported how big drug companies are some of the worst drug dealers on the planet. However, they do not go to federal prison; they pay a fine.”311 Questionable law enforcement tactics are often levied in communities of color regarding drugs. For example, based on observation and conversations with past and current law enforcement officers and residents, offenders, ex-offenders, and their family members, there is a vast and apparent disparity between Oak Cliff, South Dallas, Texas, and Highland Park, North Dallas, Texas. Oak Cliff is a predominantly African American and Hispanic community composed of lower to middle-class residents. According to economic data from the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, "the median household income in 2019 is 52,580 thousand dollars."312 At the same time, Highland Park is predominantly white upper and very wealthy-class residents. "The average household income is 369.517 thousand dollars, while the median household income is 211.000 thousand dollars."313 Drug deals, drug sales, drug possession and distribution, and drug use occur in both communities. Law enforcement resources are targeted only in specific communities or neighborhoods. More drugs are being used, possessed, distributed, and sold in these communities than in minority communities. However, people of color are the ones targeted by law enforcement.

310 Ibid., X.
312 https://www.dallascityhall.com
313 https://www.point2homes.com
It is disconcerting to realize that law enforcement may sometimes be insensitive to the human plight of justice. Lady Liberty needs to "wake up" and open her eyes to see the awful ways in which justice is meted out to marginalized people. I have vivid memories of thousands of pastoral conversations with young black men and women who realized that a conviction could negatively impact their lives full of opportunities. I have difficulty believing that politicians do not consider these and other tactics and laws harmful to many constituents. I employ them to take as much vigor and intentionality to reverse this debacle by supporting current legislation that will reverse these trends. The myth that black people are soft on crime is a bunch of malarkey. My personal and professional experience has been that most African American families and individuals, regardless of their social and economic status, social standing, and education, are conservative in morality and social behavior. Unfortunately, the face of crime is all too often painted black. I am convinced this is by design and facilitated by major media conglomerates that portray people of color as criminals, thugs, lawless, and gang bangers. This implicit racial bias fosters an already misguided stereotype people believe that those who live in these communities of color are criminals.

Criminals

Marshall says, "Criminals are also prominent in New Testament narratives." According to Marshall, "The sayings of Jesus are populated by a veritable gallery of rogues- including thieves, bandits, fraudsters, murderers, child abusers, and corrupt judges- and Jesus himself is eventually classed with criminals and suffers a criminal's fate." Marshall also contended, Marshal also

---

argues, "It has been said that the first Christian suffers a criminal's fate." Furthermore, Marshall continued, “It has been said that the three outlaws of Golgotha formed the very first Christian community: Jesus and" two other criminals also" who were crucified with him. (de kai heteri kakouri duo sun auto, Luke 23:32).” Some would say prisons are needed as a deterrence to protect society from crime. Thus, they serve a retributive or punishment purpose. While others would say prisons help people come to grips with their wayward ways in hopes of being changed; thus, they serve a rehabilitative or reflective (penitent) purpose. After all, they say, we are a nation of laws, not men. On the streets, it is said in this vernacular that if you can't do time, don't do the crime. Chapter six of this thesis project states, "Many of those incarcerated in the United States today are awaiting a trial-people who are in jail not because they have been convicted of a crime but because they are not rich. Enough to pay bail. This is a severe problem and is a significant contributor to mass incarceration.

The Courts

According to Marshall, "Jesus advises his followers to avoid going to court to seek legal redress for wrongs suffered (Matt 5.25, 40; Luke 12:57) and forestalls any possibility of perjury by ruling out all oath-taking, judicial or otherwise. (Matt. 5:33-37) Marshall points out, "In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul sharply criticizes the litigious Corinthians for taking even their "trivial cases" (V2) before "unrighteous" magistrates (v. 1), who have "no standing" in the church (v. 4)."

According to Marshall, "Paul is aware that the muckraking and character assassination that litigation invariably entailed in antiquity would do nothing to enhance relationships in the

---

315 Ibid., 11.
316 Ibid., 11.
317 Ibid., 12.
318 Ibid., 12.
church." According to Marshall, “There was little chance of Roman judges and juries administering justice fairly. To believers of lower social rank.”

Furthermore, says Marshall, "James, the half-brother of Jesus, reminds his readers how the law courts favor the rich at the expense of the poor (James 2:6; cf. Luke 18:1-8).” Accordingly, "Scenes of courtrooms in the New Testament often show them to be little more than kangaroo courts where justice is perverted and the innocent- like John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Apostles- are condemned.”

However, two centuries later, we still see this attitude in courts across America daily. Millions of people, especially the poor, the marginalized, and unfortunately, black and brown people who can't afford rich, fancy, slick lawyers, are caught up in this divide and fall through the cracks. At the same time, their cases linger on the court docket for years in some cases. As for criminal justice reform, the courts are an excellent place to start. This is also where churches and para-church organizations must get involved in prison outreach ministry. Financial, legal, and pastoral support should provide to defendants, victims of crimes, and their families. An arrested person in jail awaiting trial and their families experience unsettling amounts of anger, bitterness, rage, stress, fatigue, and uncertainty. Getting charged, pending trial, going to court, and getting sentenced to prison. The importance of taking the initiative on the front end instead of waiting for this individual to get sentenced to prison will give churches and para-church organizations a distinct advantage and offers several benefits:

---

319 Ibid., 12.
320 Ibid., 12.
321 Ibid., 12.
322 Ibid., 12.
1) will enable one to develop a relationship with all persons involved, 2) gives an awareness of what is taking place from charges, fines, legal representation, family status, assessment of needs both spiritual and financial, 3) enables one to establish credibility and authenticity, and 4) gives one the ability to see the big picture of all that is involved with the criminal's justice system. This is an incredibly stressful and anxious time for all parties involved because of the uncertainty, missed information ion, and inadequate legal or no legal representation. It is hectic, costly, and can be very confusing and cumbersome. The need for clarity, personal response and ability, and emotional and psychological support is essential. Once the fire starts, the firefighters need to be on the scene as quickly as possible and not come to the crime scene when the house (individual and family) has completely burned down. Churches and para-church organizations should have a hotline where individuals arrested or charged with a crime can call an attorney, bail bond agents, or prison ministry support staff. This means those involved should be well-trained in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing and Safe Conversation. These prison outreach ministry teams should consist of well-versed persons in scripture and can hoop. The outreach team should also have social workers, medical personnel, mental health substance, domestic and child abuse counselors, family counselors, marriage counselors, financial counselors, someone who may be legally trained, or perhaps an attorney. I hasten to say, however, that Federal Courts seem more judicial and fairer regarding the administration of justice in prosecuting federal crimes. Thousands of people languish in state and federal prisons and county jails who have never had any evidence presented against what they were alleged to have done. Today for many, justice is based on hearsay, the words of a snitch, probable cause, falsified or fabricated changes, failure by the indicated felon to cooperate with law enforcement and prosecutors—government conspiracies based on phone call conversations and casual acquaintances.
Take Alice Johnson, for example; in her for; she instead took her case to trial."\(^{323}\) This, of course, infuriated prosecutors, who took it out on her, which resulted in her being given a life sentence without the possibility of parole based on a phone conversation. Imagine that, talking about a miscarriage of justice, and these deals prove that something has gone array in our justice system. This kind of judge, jury, and executioner residing in the hands of prosecutors, FBI, and DEA agents is a common occurrence that has resulted in millions of people being sent to prison. It must cease if we will have integrity in our criminal justice system. The double bind prosecutorial legal entrapment of plea bargains verse going to trial desperately needs criminal justice reform.

Consider the current case involving Brianna Taylor, an aspiring Emergency Management Technician (EMT) for Louisville, Kentucky. She was murdered and slain by vice squad police officers that were permitted to execute a no-knock warrant while sleeping in her bed. According to reports and eyewitness accounts, the suspecting police officers, who, by the way, went to the wrong location and ended up killing her. This happened in March 2020, and still, to this day, no charges have been filed against her assailants, for they were found to have no probable cause. To add insult to injury, it is pre-ported that prosecutors have attempted to strike a plea-bargain deal with her live-in boyfriend, who was sleeping next to her in bed the night that this occurred. Because of his questionable past dealing with drugs, they ceased on the opportunity thinking that he was desperate to cut a deal to save his backside; they asked him to sully the name and character of Ms. Taylor in exchange for a ten-year prison term. What can a man give in exchange for his soul? He refused to cave in and rejected the deal. In 2020, a dead innocent young black woman cannot get justice.

---

Whereas in juxtaposition to Kyle Rittenhouse, who took it upon himself to take the law into his own hands, brandishing a log gun during a peaceful protest against the police shooting of Jacob Brown seven times in the back. This white male vigilante shot and killed two protesters and left the crime scene brandishing the murder weapon he used to carry out this crime in front of several police officers who did not even heed the call from those who witnessed this horrific crime. Nothing was done. Rittenhouse literally walked past these officers without fear or threat of reprisal and went home without any incident or arrest. Despite what was witnessed at the scene, caught on camera, a pardon was being considered by the President of the United States. President Trump is on record defending this violent criminal act claiming that Kaye was in fear for his life and was justified in his shooting. The Attorney General also describes this senseless criminal act and lends his support, claiming that he was in fear for his life. So much for the law-and-order mantra these two spouted. Jacob Blake, a black man, could not walk to his car to be with his five children, whereas Kaye, a white male, could walk home to be with his family. One is paralyzed. The other is rationalized.

This was a difficult chapter to write because of the raw emotions I felt and many others who see the injustices being levied against black and brown people who are defendants, victims, and offenders of our penal and criminal justice systems.

Chapter eleven of this thesis project addresses mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry through the lens of race, recidivism, reform, and reentry as barriers to successful reintegration.
Chapter Eleven

Race, Recidivism, Reform, and Reentry

Religious, Social, Political, Economic, and Environmental Barriers to overcome

In chapter eleven of this thesis project, I briefly address mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry through the lens of religious, social, political, economic, and environmental barriers. Even though I have touched on the above-referenced issues throughout this thesis project, here in chapter twelve, I briefly reiterate them from the perspective of barriers to race, recidivism, reform, and reentry. These observations are solely based on my living and work experience as a federal prison chaplain. They are supported by referenced material cited in this chapter and throughout this thesis project.

During my thirty-plus years of federal prison and chaplaincy, and in my current I have ministered to, interviewed, counseled, and read the official jackets of thousands of men and women doing time in our federal prison system and some in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. To my utter dismay and disappointment, many of these individuals were black and brown men and women from virtually every State in the union and several countries worldwide. From my vantage point, most individuals incarcerated in federal prison were black or brown. From a personal profile and observation, these incarcerated individuals were more than likely from economically challenged backgrounds and lacked an education beyond a high school
diploma. Most of them were sentenced to prison for the possession, use, sale, and disruption of drugs, namely crack cocaine. It was also absolutely appalling to see the number of federal inmates incarcerated for drug conspiracy charges, which resulted in some people being given a life sentence.

Consider the following: to bolster what I saw and experienced every day for thirty years inside these federal and state prisons. Which, by the way, is a current picture of today's prison population. In his book, The Fall of The Prison-Biblical Perspectives on Prison Abolition, Lee Griffith makes a compelling point. According to Griffith, he states, "since one out of every sixty-seven serious offenses results in imprisonment, it is revealing to examine who this one imprisoned person is likely to be." Griffith contends that "the prisoner is most often a low-income male and a person of color-usually black or brown." Griffith reveals, "A recent study of New York prisons found that about 80 percent of all prisoners in the State are black or Latino."

Furthermore, says Griffith, "In the nation, almost one-quarter of all black men between twenty and nine are either in jail or prison or on parole." Regarding death row and executions, my living and work experiences also reflect what Griffith articulates in his book. Griffith writes, "Blacks constitute slightly over 10 percent of the American population, but about half of all people executed in the U.S. are black." For example, as a federal prison chaplain who provided pastoral care to three inmates executed during my tenure, their race and ethnicity were Timothy McVey, white. Raul Garza, Latino, and Louis Brown Jr., who was African American.

---

325 Ibid., 79.
326 Ibid., 79.
327 Ibid., 80.
Two of these three individuals (75%) were persons of color. Racial bias, unconscious or implicit, is a natural barrier in society that offenders, ex-offenders (returning citizens), and their families must overcome.

Unfortunately, America's prevailing attitude and stereotype are that the color of crime is often painted black or brown. In this regard, Griffith states, "apart from the biased presuppositions that black and brown people are somehow genetically predisposed to break laws is a stereotype."\(^{328}\) Furthermore, Griffith contends, “The traditional explanation for why blacks are more frequently subjected to the workings of the American penal system maintains that crime rates are naturally higher in communities that suffer the frustrations of high unemployment, low per capita income, limited health care facilities, high rates of infant and overall mortality, and scare or poor-quality community services.”\(^{329}\) I maintain that to have an effective prison outreach reentry and criminal justice reform ministry, churches and parachurch organizations must debunk and not fall prey to these serotypes. In this new 21\(^{st}\)-century prison ministry outreach model, I propose that individuals working on these ministry teams within these churches and parachurch organizations receive sensitivity training to address unconscious bias, stereotyping, racism, and bigotry issues. These racial barriers often hinder and prevent effective ministry. I can see the merits of Griffith's contentions, given my lived and work experience personally and professionally, as stated in chapter four. In addition, Griffith correctly points out one of the most challenging barriers foundational within the American penal and criminal justice system: institutional racism. "The legacy of institutionalized racism in America means that such circumstances disproportionately victimize black people."\(^{330}\) Says Griffith.

\(^{328}\) Ibid., 80.
\(^{329}\) Ibid., 80.
\(^{330}\) Ibid., 80.
Matters of race are real, and churches and parachurch organizations, when confronted by these issues while doing prison outreach ministry, should not pretend they don't exist. To overcome these and other barriers that impact reentry, recidivism, and reform, people who serve must become self-aware of their biases and not succumb to these and other facts that affect and impact persons of color. They must not be deterred by false assumptions against people of color in jails but should be well-informed and accept the realities of institutional racism and its impacts on life. My sincere conviction is that churches, parachurch organizations, and all persons of faith and goodwill have a moral, ethical, and biblical responsibility to engage in restorative and social justice, primarily related to criminal justice reform and reentry restoration reconnection, and reconciliation.

The Apostle Paul once requested the church's help, assistance, and support during his missionary ministry journeys throughout Asia Minor. In biblical-theological terms, this is referred to as the "…Macedonian Call…"[^331] to come over here and help, he uttered. Today, we face unprecedented numbers of individuals locked up in American jails and prisons. Like the Apostle Paul, as a chaplain, I am appealing to churches making a clarion call to come over and help. This is my "Mass Incarceration call" Come inside these jails and prisons where hundreds of thousands of black boys and girls, men, and women, are.

One day, they will return to the community from which they came. Implement reentry programs to help these individuals successfully transition into society as whole persons. As Paul said of Onesimus, ex-offenders (returning citizens) were perhaps unprofitable, but now they are profitable. Many offenders are spiritually bankrupt and have no connection to any faith community. They are also socially and morally compromised and need a total makeover of their

[^331]: Acts 16:9 (NKJV)
mind, body, and soul. During their incarceration experience, many unfortunately continue in this downward spiritual of human depravity.

In some cases, they continue to engage in criminal activity while in prison to survive, pay off gambling debts, pay exorbitant court costs, fines, and attorney fees, or get items from the prison commissary or get money sent in from home via Western Union. Most incarcerated young black and brown individuals have had little, if any at all, real-life job-work experience. They, therefore, have no work ethic and a substandard education requiring them to obtain a G.E.D. Also, they lack the requisite skills to find meaningful work in this high-tech global, diverse economy. These social, political, and environmental barriers make it virtually impossible for ex-offenders (returning citizens) to find employment upon release. Additionally, these and other social barriers create a hostile environment that cripples their efforts to break the cycle of crime and poverty upon returning to society.

Outlined throughout this thesis project for churches and parachurch organizations are proposed prison outreach ministry programs like financial literacy, money management, budgeting, job training services, and employment assistance. These and many others are significant ministry reentry components designed to help return citizens become gainfully employed. They have a fair chance of breaking the crime, violence, and incarceration cycle. There is a close connection and relationship between poverty, regular employment, despair, hopelessness, drugs, and fatherless homes. Ex-offenders (returning citizens) are a particular population, and they face unique challenges in getting a fresh start. Churches and parachurch organizations must be willing to confront these barriers by coming up with new strategies, methods, and means to tear down such impediments. This requires a willingness to speak truth prophetically and politically to power and become advocates for change. They are disconnected from their families and their
respective faith communities. Chapter thirteen concludes this project and addresses mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry issues; the role and response of churches and para-church organizations—reimagining prison ministry in the 21st century.
In this final Chapter Twelve of this thesis project, I address mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry by outlining the most vital components of this new twenty-first-century prison ministry model: the continuity of care – aftercare outside the community of the church. No matter how good one's intentions are, an effective prison outreach ministry program, especially for ex-offenders (returning citizens) and their families, must include what I outline in this chapter, indeed, throughout this thesis project. I strongly recommend that programs used inside the prison upon an inmate's release continue their involvement in these meaningful programs and services on the outside that will inevitably lead them to successful reintegration.

Inmates serious about their successful reentry will take the initiative to get involved in reentry programs available at all federal prisons. Establishing a successful prison outreach ministry requires the offender and ex-offender (returning citizens) to participate in reentry, reintegration, restoration, reconciliation programs, and the continuation and continuity of care outside the prison. Offenders and Ex-Offenders (returning citizens) who are participants must be committed and dedicated. They must take the initiative as their responsibility and have some skin in the game. The latter requires assistance and availability of said programs within churches and parachurch organizations. The following five recommendations throughout this thesis project are concisely restated in the chapter. They should be a part of a church, and parachurch organizations should adopt the following:
Reentry:

1. Churches and parachurch organization should tailor their prison outreach reentry programs similar to what ex-offenders (returning citizens) participated in during incarceration and make them available outside (post-incarceration) in churches and parachurch organizations. Inmates get used to a routine while in prison, and they do themselves well to continue this routine upon release. To accomplish this, one must become familiar with this process. Churches and parachurch organizations must be willing to get involved immediately with the inmate and their family once they receive their sentence. This involvement should start at the onset, during the initial criminal and legal proceedings. You don't wait until the house completely burns down before calling the fire department; you immediately call them once it starts to burn. An extensive workup is needed to become aware of programming opportunities and services, family support, mental health status, spiritual or religious needs, education, etc., called a (pre-sentence report).

A needs assessment report to determine institutional adjustment upon release is known as (a pre-release report). Information in these reports is critical to ensure adequate programs and services for the inmate's successful reentry and their family members. The church or parachurch organization should have an open dialogue with prison staff, namely the institution chaplain, social worker, and drug treatment counselor, to ensure that the offenders in involved in meaningful reentry programs.
The offender's family, probation or parole officer, lawyer, counselor, the case manager should also be a part of this dialogue. Accountability and open, honest communication are vital for a successful transition back into society.

Churches and parachurch organizations must be willing to invest in the staff and resources needed to continue this care for ex-offenders (returning citizens). These prison outreach ministries require professional, qualified, well-trained mental health treatment specialists, substance abuse treatment counselors, anger management, conflict resolution specialists, employment and job training mentors, financial and money management experts, and case management staff. If a church or a parachurch organization cannot employ people with these skill sets, people with these experiences will undoubtedly serve as volunteers and mentors. Churches, parachurch organizations, and institutions involved in prison outreach should also canvas their respective community and link up with these agencies that provide such services for ex-offenders (returning citizens), especially in housing, employment, and health care. Here, the point for me is to get these prison ministry teams to think outside the box and reimagine prison outreach ministry for the whole person.

The church relies solely on preaching the gospel or Bible studies for offenders and ex-offenders (returning citizens), which is fine. However, how will you make them whole once you capture the soul? Ex-offenders (returning citizens) need to reconnect to every facet of life and community, including their families and the church. "But whoso hath this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"  

---

332 1 John 3:17(NKJV)
Initiative and personal responsibility on behalf of the offenders and ex-offender (returning citizens) is the key to a successful prison outreach ministry, especially for reentry.

Inmates committed to making a successful transition back into society will benefit themselves and those who are prepared to assist them, including their families, by taking advantage of meaningful programs inside the prison and out in the community. Some of the ex-offenders (returning citizens) are court-mandated to do so. Federal Judges can mandate convicted and sentenced felons to participate in drug treatment, mental health, and various professional services and programs geared toward helping the inmate become a better person. These programs are available at all federal prisons. I propose that churches and par-church organizations require such participation and involvement as a prerequisite for their program. I also offer that the individual offenders' family members and ex-offenders (returning citizens) get involved. Consistency and continuity of care are essential factors, along with accountability. Failure to do so only leads to a high probability of recidivism.

Reintegration:

2. Reintegration involves assisting the ex-offender (returning citizens) in making solid connections with their family, faith community, and other meaningful relationships and entities within a given society. Again, motivation and willingness must be at the forefront of the goal of individual offenders and ex-offenders (returning citizens). Trust must be re-established to accomplish successful reintegration and restore these broken relationships. An honest, open dialog between all parties involved is the key. Self-awareness of the recipient and the provider of such services and programs is vital.
Communication is essential, and no games, tricks, schemes, or hustles should be tolerated.

The offender, ex-offender (returning citizen), and their families must come clean or don't come. I highly recommend the book *Games Criminals Play: How You Can Profit by knowing them*, written by Bud Allen and Dianna Bosta.

Restoration:

3. Restoration like reintegration involves targeting specific help for the ex-offender (returning citizens). For example, obtaining their voting rights, their ability to apply for jobs, grants, loans, etc., by advocating a change in public policy. The dreaded question on most applications that automatically eliminates any restoration opportunity concerning these and other services is; have you ever been convicted of a felony? It should be done away with if we expect these individuals to commit to change and become responsible, law-abiding, productive persons of faith. To accomplish this, churches and parachurch organizations, which I address in the previous chapter, must have an advocacy component as part of their prison outreach ministry program.

Reimagining prison outreach ministry in the twenty-first century means that that institution must get outside of the church's walls and engage the community, politicians, legislators, law enforcement officials, etc., to address reintegration matters, reentry, and restoration. Again, suppose a church or parachurch organization has no legal professionals on its staff. In that case, they should adopt such services and expertise either as volunteers, mentors, pro-bono, or community service. An Attorney should be a part of any prison outreach program to avoid any potential misstep,
especially when dealing with federal offenders, the department of justice, the F.B.I., D.E.A., and other law enforcement entities.

Knowing the offender's (ex-offenders) status as returning citizen is critical. People deal with the devil, and everything is not a plea bargain. You would be surprised at what inmates do to get out of prison. Snitching is authentic, and cooperating witnesses are part of the criminal justice and penal systems. You want to avoid getting caught up in a trick bag of illegal entrapment.

Reconciliation:

4. As I propose, this new twenty-first-century prison outreach model involves getting the ex-offer (returning citizen) to reconnect with and into three vital communities: (the church for religious significance, their family, and social-community organizations). These targeted significant relationships with which the individual ex-offender (returning citizen) reconciles come from the New Testament book of Philemon. I see some practical applications that churches and parachurch organizations can glean as they consider how the Apostle Paul negotiated Onesimus’ return to his faith and the faith community on the outside. Like all scripture, there are various theological debates and interpretations of what Paul was saying. For me, however, since Paul suggests that he converted Onesimus while in prison (v.11) and that the Church was meeting at the home of Philemon, indeed, Paul was concerned about Onesimus' faith reconnection. Reconciliation is a two-way street; all parties must be willing to take risks. There must be a genuine willingness to forget one's past and a desire to seek and receive forgiveness. Fostering such goodwill takes time and does not happen overnight.

Because ex-offenders (returning citizens) have had a history of poor relationships with
people, most relationships inside prions are transactional; reconciliation becomes
difficult based on what one can get out of the relationship. Reconciliation involves
restoring meaningful relationships with significant people and the secular and sacred
faith community. When these relationships become healthy, they provide a stable and
robust support group. In my faith tradition, we say, as part of the benediction, "the
doors of the church are open," which must be the case for all returning citizens and
their families. They must be welcomed back into the church and given the right hands
of fellowship.

5. Responsibility.

This twenty-first-century prison outreach ministry model includes requiring the
offender, ex-offenders (returning citizens) returning citizens to make a personal commitment to
take the initiative in completing all program objectives, goals, and treatment plans. It also
expects them to engage in behavior consistent with their faith commitment and look for
authentic, meaningful ways to right the wrong. One way to accomplish this is by having
covenants written up and signed by all parties. These are just five practical recommendations that
should be a part of a prions outreach ministry. The Nation is at an inflection point regarding mass
incarceration, criminal justice reform, and reentry.
The church, parachurch organizations, and secular institutions must unite and utilize all available
resources, capital, training, etc. The country, the family, our educational, business, and
healthcare sectors are being stained to a breaking point because we have become an incarceration
nation. After his release from prison in 1990, Nelson Mandela observed, "No one truly knows a
nation until one has been inside its jails.
A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens but its lowest ones. I know the greatness of this country. I have been inside its federal prisons. However, I would offer my sentiment by saying you can judge a nation by how it treats its ex-offenders (returning citizens), especially the children of incarcerated parents. With this, we have yet to become a perfect union as a nation.

We must never compromise our abiding fairness and equal justice principles under the law as a nation. I firmly believe that America is the greatest country on the planet. Our criminal justice and penal systems have some of the most honorable and decent law enforcement people working in them who are second to none. More importantly, however, I believe in the faith of our fathers and mothers and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, all expressions of faith, religion, spirituality, and practice are incumbent in the twenty-first century, especially in the Christian church and parachurch organization, to reimagine prison outreach ministry. Mass incarceration, criminal justice-prison reform, and reentry are relevant issues that require a response. As a faith community, we cannot pretend and ignore the call to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly.

The sacred and secular must join hearts and hands, pool our resources, and marshal our talents, knowledge, skills, and abilities to address these pressing matters. No man, woman, boy, or girl is above the law, nor are they beyond God's grace and mercy.

For what the law could not do.
Reimagining prison outreach ministry in the 21st century requires that church and parachurch organizations put new wine in old wineskins. The following is one such proposal regarding restorative justice. Over the past forty years, what has occurred since the inaugural War on Drugs and the get-tough-on-crime political mantra laid the seeds for such awful social policy? The result blossomed an unprecedented prison expansion, new sentencing guidelines, mandatory minimums, the prison industrial complex fueling an ailing American economy, and a targeted focus using various law enforcement tactics in communities of color. The fallout and impact of these and other mitigating factors have been one of the most devastating societal forces that have had deleterious effects on black and brown communities. It is the belief by some, including myself, that America has lost an entire generation of black and brown men and women due to mass incarceration.

The sense of community accountability and family responsibility is a concept worth exploring as churches and parachurch organizations reimagine how they address issues of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, racial injustice, and policing black and brown people. Community accountability and family responsibility must be a part of our social contact with one another to restore any sense of moral decency and hate lawlessness.
**Ubuntu: The Indigenous Ethos of Restorative Justice**

In her book, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Angela Y. Davis asked a profound and compelling question regarding prisons. She asked, "Why do we take prisons for granted?" Davis states, "While a relatively small proportion of the population has ever directly experienced life inside prison, this is not true for poor black and Latino communities." She continues, "Neither is it true for Native Americans nor certain Asian-American communities." However, Davis asserts, "But even among those who must regrettably accept prison sentences—especially young people—as an ordinary dimension of community life, it is hardly acceptable to engage in serious public discussions about prison life or radical alternatives to prison."

Davis concludes, "It is as if prisons were an inevitable fact of life, like birth and death." Faith Without Walls Prison Outreach Ministry, of which I am the President, Founder, and C.E.O. of this non-profit organization, will be such a space to have a safe conversation. As Davis put it, "a place to engage in a real serious discussion about prison life or radical alternatives to prison."

In her profound, breathtaking book, Fania Davis, A sister of Angela Davis entitled, *The Little Black Book of Race and Restorative Justice- Black Lives, Healing, and U.S. Social Transformation,* defines "Ubuntu as the indigenous Ethos of Restorative Justice." According to her, *Umuntu, ngumuntu, ngabantu* is an Nguni proverb, translated as "I am because we are, and we are because I am."

---

335 Ibid., 15
336 Ibid., 15.
337 Ibid., 15.
338 Ibid., 15.
340 Ibid., 17.
Davis says this "expresses the universal African core belief that the individual exists concerning the collective." Furthermore, Davis says, "This communitarian view is known as ubuntu in southern Africa's Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Venda, and other African traditions." Davis states, "Also translated to mean a person is a person through their relationships, and ubuntu emphasizes humans' inner identity and interrelation with all dimensions of existence, other people, places, land, animals, water, air, and so on." Accordingly, Davis contends, Ubuntu affirms our inherent interrelatedness and the resulting responsibility we bear to one another, flowing precisely from our deep connection.

In a published article entitled, Restorative Mindset; An Overview, Davis contends, "Restorative practices are grounded in a shared mindset among many indigenous cultures and communities of color that vies individuals as profoundly interconnected and inherently good." The sense of community accountability and family responsibility is a concept worth implementing as churches and parachurch organizations reimagine how they address issues of mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, racial injustice, and policing black and brown people. Davis states, "As the Lakota Sioux put it, Mitakuye Odas'jn. We are all relatives; we are here to learn to care for one another. As relatives living within the continuum of creation, it is our responsibility to live in the right relationship and be present to one another and the earth in ways that promote healing and flourishing for all." Accordingly, says Davis, "Ubuntu, the indigenous ethos of restorative justice, must be a part of our social contact with one another to restore any sense of moral

341 Ibid., 17.
342 Ibid., 18.
343 Ibid., 18.
344 Ibid., 18.
345 MM Department of Education, ( St Paul Public Schools, and Prevention Research Center, PRCenewsletter, Jan-2019) 1.
decency and hate lawlessness."§ 347 According to Davis, "Former Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes it this way, *Ubuntu* speaks of the very essence of being human… it is to say, "My humanity is caught up, inextricably to each other."§ 348 "We belong in a bundle of life. "§ 349 *Ubuntu* affirms our interrelatedness and responsibility to each other,"§ 350 Davis says of Tutu.

Howard Zeher, a restorative justice pioneer, links restorative justice to the Judeo-Christian concept. According to him, “[e]mphasis [es] right relationships between individuals, between groups of people, between people and the earth, and between people and the divine [and] declares allegiance to respecting life in all its forms… "§ 351 Says Davis. She further contends, “[It] encourages us to see the nurturing of this sacred relational web as our calling.”§ 352

The *Ubuntu* concept is the foundation calling for churches and parachurch organizations to adopt this new 21st-century prison outreach ministry model. The focus is on the "whole person (mind, body, and soul) along with (the family, social and religious institutions, and the community from which they hail and will one day return. As such, I am calling for what I define as *(holy community huddles)* where individuals, community members, family members, representatives from the faith community, business sector, and law enforcement community engage in the practice of Ubuntu in what will be *sacred community huddles*. In these holy *community huddles*, everyone impacted by crime, mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, reentry, and police misconduct can share and have a safe conversation that leads towards healing, forgiveness, restitution, and reconciliation, responsibilities that undergird those bonds.

---

348 Ibid., 1.
349 Ibid., 1.
350 Ibid., 1.
351 Ibid., 1.
352 Ramsay and Carrie Doehring, *(Military Moral Injury and Spiritual Care, Chalice Press, Saint Louis, Missouri, 2019)* 79.
Nancy J. Ramsay and Carrie Doehring, Editors for the book *Military Moral Injury and Spiritual Care*, state, "Every individual are, at all times, in concurrent relationships with self, community, the world, and God." They contend, "Judaism conceives the relationship between God and the human being as a covenant that is a bond of mutuality in which each partner has obligations to the other."

Accordingly, there is a close relationship between *Ubuntu* and how Ramsay and Doerhing interpret classical Jewish texts from core Jewish teaching. For example, they claim, "*Atah b*ratah, atah y’tzartah, atah n’fachtah bi. V’atah m’shamrah b’kirbi.*" Translated, this means states Ramsay and Doerhing, "My God, the soul you have given is pure. You created it; you shaped it; you breathed it into me. And you protect it within me." According to them, "The Hebneshama *n’shamah* is usually translated as 'soul,' but can also mean 'breath.'" They state, "In Judaism, our souls—the breath of God—comes to us in purity, and every human being created in the image and likeness of God, *b’tzelem Elohim* (Imago Dei—my addition)

However, states Ramsay and Doehring, "because we live in a world filled with pain and brokenness, the original purity of our souls is not enough to protect us from error." They state, "Judaism teaches that each human being has a *yetzer*- an inclination towards evil." Therefore, according to them, "Goodness and thus are ever-present possibilities, and they become a reality when human beings enact them."

---

353 Ibid., 79.
354 Ibid., 79.
355 Ibid., 79.
356 Ibid., 79.
357 Ibid., 79.
358 Ibid., 79.
359 Ibid., 79.
360 Ibid., 79.
361 Ibid., 79.
The Apostle Paul said, "Now if I do what I will not do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me, I find then a law that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good." One of the essential requirements for an effective prison outreach ministry program is to ensure that participants understand and expect accountability. There must be a high expectation that participants will adhere to specific rules and conduct consistent with ministry goals and objectives will be reinforced. Personal initiative and a willingness to change are uppermost.

Robert D. Lupton, in his insightful book entitled, Compassion, Justice and The Christian Life-Rethinking Ministry to The Poor, states, "personal involvement as betterment activities offers relief from a difficult situation and improves the existing conditions." However, says Lupton, "this kind of help can and often does cripple the individual." There is, according to Lupton, "a distinct difference between serving people as opposed to developing people." Lupton continues, "Betterment does for people, whereas development enables others to do for themselves." Adding, "Betterment improves conditions, whereas development strengthens capacity." Finally, "Betterment gives a man a fish whereas development teaches a man how to fish." These are the aims and goals of the stated (5) areas of focus ministry (Reentry, Restoration, Reintegration, Reconciliation, and Responsibility) in this newly proposed twenty-first-century prison ministry model for Faith Without Walls Prison Outreach. (F.W.W.P.)

The Brennan Center for Justice published a 2017 report on Economic Freedom in the Period of Invisible Punishment. According to this report, approximately 7.7 million formerly imprisoned

---

362 Romans 7:20-21 (NKJV)
364 Ibid., 39.
365 Ibid., 39.
366 Ibid., 39.
367 Ibid., 39.
368 Ibid., 39.
people live in the United States of America." Reportedly, "another 12.1 million were convicted of felonies but did not serve time in prison. Another 46.8 million people had been convicted of misdemeanors." Furthermore, the report states that 'in total, about 66 million Americans- more than one in five- had a criminal record in 2017." These individuals and their families should be targeted for such programs and ministry objectives as they confront the American criminal justice system pre-incarceration, incarceration, and post-incarceration.

The following inspirational words are "Don't let time do you - You do time." "You can be in prison, but don't let prison be in you." "What you do while you are here on the inside will determine how successful you will be on the outside." These are words that I would often say to inmates to motivate, inspire, challenge, and encourage them to take advantage of meaningful programs and services while in prison that will help them survive the crisis of incarceration and become successful once released. The process of reentry begins on the inside.

369 Ibid., 9.
370 Ibid., 9.
Bibliography


Carson, Anne E. 2009-2019, *Suicide in Local Jails and State-Statistical Tables*

Clark, Matthew. 2021, *Prison Legal News*


I am experiencing Justice from the Inside Out Theological Considerations about the Churches’ Role in Justice. n.d. Healing and Forgiveness


Glaze, Lauren E., Doris James, 2006 “BJS Statisticcains Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates”


Loritts, Bryan, ed. 2014. Letters to a Birmingham Jail: A Response to the Words and Dreams of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Chicago, IL: Moody Press.


Rademacher, Nichols. 2009. “To Relate The Eucharist To Real Living ; Mother Teresa and Dorothy Day.” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 27, no. 4.


Slevin, Peter. n.d.


“Stocks and Pillory,” https://aphformuseum.stocks


Wald, Johanna, and Daniel J. Losen. n.d. “Defining and Redirecting a School to Prison Pipeline.” *New Directions for Youth Development*.

Wald, Jousha, and Daniel J. Losen. n.d. *We are defining and Redirecting School to Prison Pipeline*.


2021. TheNew Yorker.


