

BEULAH HEIGHTS UNIVERSITY

“Rehabilitation and Regeneration”

PAPER SUBMITTED TO
Dr. Paul Stockard for the requirements of
A TH 621 Prison/Jail Chaplaincy

By

Rosa D. Rocker

Atlanta, Ga

12-05-2017

Introduction

In the early 80s, having become a member of the volunteer ministry team through the Church of God in Christ organization, in-house training with the district missionary on Monday nights became the norm. The district missionary stressed the importance of teaching and preaching the word, salvation, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. These are the foundations for effective ministry. However, to be relevant with the times, the first focus should be on the person, the problem, and steps taken to walk them through to wholeness. Being employed in the social welfare system with training in human services was very helpful in this field of ministry.

The first hands-on experience as a volunteer was a case of a troubled single mother of four children who had been arrested for shoplifting and possession of drugs. The call came in to the office about 9:00 am Monday morning. During the telephone conversation, the young mother asked the volunteer to visit her in the county jail. The volunteer agreed to meet with her in the county jail. Around 10:30 a.m., the volunteer arrived at the county jail and asked to see the inmate. The receptionist called for a police officer who escorted the volunteer to the room where the inmate was waiting. As the jailer opened the door, there sat a thin, brown complexion African American, 25-30 year old frightened troubled woman. She was crying and trembling with fear. She kept repeating, "I've tried to change my ways and stop the drugs but I couldn't." After she managed to calm down, she began to explain her situation and involvement with the law. She'd been in and out of jail since she graduated from high school for the same charges, shoplifting and drug possession. She had been found guilty and sentenced to 15-20 years in the state prison. She would be transferred to prison to begin serving her time a week from that date. Reality had set in. She realized she would be separated from her children for a long time. She was very depressed. As Dennis W. Pierce stated, "when the reality sets in – depression engulf the life of the

incarcerated. Prisoners begin to feel the stress of their lost freedom and their separation from family and friends, at this point, shame, hopelessness, guilt, and despair contributed to the pain of imprisonment.”¹

This young mother is part of a large percentage of prisoners who are incarcerated and separated from their families. This volunteer heard the cry and pain of despair coming from this young woman who represent thousands of men and women locked away for similar and more serious crimes. Questions ran through the volunteer’s mind as to what would happen to her during the time she would spend in prison? What type of rehabilitation programs the system had in place to help her overcome this addiction? What about spiritual and emotional support? It would take more than a rehabilitation program to help this inmate and thousands more like her. According to R. E. Honour, “Rehabilitation of criminals or prison populations in the United States does not evidence such a positive level of efficiency or fruitful outcome. The statistical reports issued by the various levels of government do not present an optimistic picture of the effectiveness of such rehabilitation.”²

Rehabilitation is the process of assisting dysfunctional persons back to functionality in society.³ The system attempts to relieve the suffering of criminals through federal guidelines so the criminals can return to work to boost the economy.⁴ Rehabilitation focus on restoring the physical aspects of the individual. Regeneration goes deeper than rehabilitation. Regeneration is

¹Dennis W. Pierce, *Prison Ministry: Hope Behind the wall*. (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 2006), p. 19

² R. E. Honour. *Vocational rehabilitation*. In R. J. Hunter (Ed.), *Dictionary of pastoral care and counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon, p. 1015.

³ J. H. Ellens. *The interface of psychology and theology*. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 16 (1).

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 1015.

the radical renewal of a person's inner being by the work of the Holy Spirit.⁵ It's about reform. Rehabilitation programs alone do not present a positive result. Confinement to prison for punishment without spiritual and emotional support does not achieve a lasting result for the prisoner. This is where the Christian volunteer and the chaplaincy ministry steps in to play a huge part in a successful outcome. This paper is not about statistics because statistics change from year to year. The focus is on the effects of "bare bone ministry which includes rehabilitation and regeneration.

Beginning in the early 1970s, the United States embarked on an unprecedented escalation of the use of imprisonment. The 2.2 million people behind bars in prisons and jails in 2010 represented more than 500% increase from the level of 1972. During the highest growth years in the 1980s state prison population increased by as much as 12% in a single year. The rate of increase of women continued to outpace that of men, as it has for several decades. From 2000 to 2009 the number of women incarcerated in state or federal prisons rose by 21.6% compared to a 15.6

As law enforcement increased targeting of drug law violators and as sentences for drugs offenses became more severe, drug offenders came to represent a rapidly growing share of the incarcerated population with the proportion of women in prison for drug crimes exceeding that of men. In 1986, 12% of women in state prison were serving time for a drug offense compared to 8% of men. Overtime, these proportions increased and as of 2009, 25.7% of women in prison were serving time for drugs offenses, as were 17.2% of men.⁶

The History of Prison Reform

5 M. H. Manser. (2009). Dictionary of Bible Themes: *The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.

6 P. Harrison Guerino, P.M. & W. J. Sabol (2012). Prisoners in 2010 (NCJ236096). Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Data on race/ethnicity and gender from this publication should be interpreted as general estimates race/ethnicity and gender proportions within the prison population*. Sentencing Project.org, 11-13-2017.

In every human institution, making changes to improve is important. Prison reform movements in America have been marked by individuals whose Christian commitment motivated them to expand, express, and simplify changes in the penalties of offenders; and has also given meaning to those reforms.

The first use of imprisonment as punishment was the penitentiary, inaugurated in 1790 in Philadelphia. It was inspired by the Quaker belief that crime had its roots in the environment of the offender. As a result, the answer was to remove convicted offenders from those negative influences by placing them in solitary confinement. Their primary occupations were Bible reading, conversations with the warden, chaplains, visiting ministers, and hard work. It was believed that this reflection would bring the offenders to repentance; hence, the name penitentiary.

The Quaker view did not go unchallenged. Louis Dwight, founder of the Boston Prison Discipline Society in 1825, was the first national figure in the prison reform movement. His work with the American Bible Society had taken him into a number of jails, and he was shocked at the miserable conditions he found. He and the Baptist Congregational ministers who joined his Society stood on the teaching of John Calvin's doctrine of the inborn depravity of human beings. They argued that reformation came not through solitary reflection, but through revival, religious training, and strictly supervised work performed in silence with other inmates. He succeeded in convincing most states to adopt this approach, known as the "Auburn system," after the New York prison in which it was pioneered in the early 1820s.

Disappointing recidivism rates, serious overcrowding and opposition from the business community led to discontent with both the Pennsylvania and Auburn systems. In 1870, Zebulon Brockway, who had been converted during Charles Finney's revivals, joined with other prison leaders, most of whom were also inspired by their Christian faith, to urge segregating youthful offenders from hardened criminals, and providing them with education and job training. This was

known as the “reformatory” movement, built in 1876 in Elmira, New York. The warden of this movement was Zebulon Brockway. However, the old problems of overcrowding and underfunding reduced the effectiveness of the innovation, and reformatories soon became different from prisons.

The next major reform movement was the “correctional” or “treatment” model. It held that criminal behavior stemmed from physical or psychological (not moral or spiritual) problems, and that rehabilitation should follow the model of medical treatment. Although some of its advocates were Christians, the correctional model was influenced less by Christian faith than by medical science. It, too, produced disappointing relapse rates, severe overcrowding, underfunding; and public and prisoner resistance to some of its more extreme methods. Criminal behavior was viewed as a “disease” that could be cured through rehabilitation in prison with a focus on correctional counseling programs.⁷

In the last two decades, major Christian denominations and organizations have joined others in questioning the ability of imprisonment to rehabilitate, and have advocated alternative sanctions, such as restitution and community service, as methods of punishing offenders and restoring victim’s losses.⁸ The hope of the prison experience is beyond separating offenders from the rest of society. It is rehabilitation and regeneration. Rehabilitation cannot resolve the problem alone. This program is designed to expose the problems in an effort to eradicate it outwardly.

Rehabilitation is a self-improvement program derived from man’s philosophy. Regeneration is not a self-improvement program nor is it a cleanup program for our sinful nature.⁹ Regeneration

7 Reducing Recidivism through Programing in the Federal Prison Population Final Report: BOP Programs Assessment. The Boston Counseling Group. Copyright 9-19-2016. Pg. 10.

8 Daniel G. Reid, Robert Dean Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, and Harry S. Stout. Dictionary of Christianity in America. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990.

9Robert S. McGhee, The Search For Significance: Seeing Your True Worth through God’s Eyes. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1998), p. 106.

is a radical change from the inside out (Ephesians 2:1-6). After true regeneration, one begin to see, hear, and seek after the things of God; we begin to live a life of faith and total trust in the power of God's grace. At regeneration, Christ is formed in the heart and we become partakers of His Divine nature (2Corn. 5:17).¹⁰

As I stated earlier, the chaplain and Christian volunteers will play a major role in developing a pastoral ministry that will liberate the prisoners from the spiritual and emotional oppression of the prison environment and lead on to change and restoration. This is what is called bare-bone ministry. This reminds me of the prophet Ezekiel and his assignment in the valley of dry bones.

“Valley of Dry Bones”
Ezekiel 37:1-14

Just as God brought life to the dead bones, He can bring life to the inmates trapped in a fruitless prison environment. But God need a prophet to go beyond the walls of modern day church buildings, down to a dry and lifeless environment. Chaplains have a unique identity and value system that evolve in many environments. Their primary role is to minister in environments that the church deems uncomfortable or that seems too secular. The theology that supports chaplaincy comes from the belief that we must go to them, rather than expecting them to come to us in our local churches.¹¹ The “valley of dry bones” is a picture that illustrates God's promise to bring new life and restore the nation of Israel physically and spiritually. It's a picture of the Jews captivity; their scattered and dead lifeless conditions.

Ezekiel was a Priest and a Prophet. The Old Testament identifies pastorate as prophet, priest, sage, and king.¹² As prophets, pastors, or chaplains, the ministry represent the moral

¹⁰ Robert Crick, *Outside the Gates: The need for Theology, History, and Practice of Chaplaincy Ministries*. (Oviedo, Fla: HigherLife Development Services, Inc. 2011), p. 154-155.

¹¹ Robert Crick, *Outside the Gates: The need for Theology, History, and Practice of Chaplaincy Ministries*. (Oviedo, Fla: HigherLife Development Services, Inc. 2011), p. 35-36.

¹² John Johnson, *Seeking Pastoral Identity; The Spurgeon Fellowship Journal* (Fall 2007, 4 WWW. thespurgeonfellowship.org.

conscience of the community they serve. Ezekiel worked for God right where he was. He was among the exiles in Babylon. He helped the people understand that even though they were far from home, they did not need to be far from God.¹³ The Word of the Lord came through the prophet Ezekiel that Israel would be restored to her land. This promise seemed impossible in light of Israel's present condition. Israel was dead as a nation, deprived of her land, her king, and her temple. The nation had been divided and dispersed for so long that unification and restoration seemed impossible. So God gave Ezekiel the vision of the dry bones as sign. The hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel. He was empowered to prophecy to the dry bones.

The dry bones represented the people's dead conditions. Our prison systems are filled with dried-up-bones of hopeless, and lonely men and women; living life under "a shroud of fear" draped over their lives. Fear is one of the main weapons the enemy uses to overshadow one with darkness.¹⁴ The author refers to the system as "a culture of hardness" or a "catacomb". Catacomb is a walk-in cemetery filled with the walking dead.¹⁵ Stripped of self-sufficiency with much regret from what they have done; broken and hurting people forced to live together in one small space; and forced by circumstances to listen to a preacher who they wouldn't normally give the time of the day if they were free.¹⁶

God directed Ezekiel to speak to the bones. He was to tell the bones that God would make breath enter the bones and they would come to life, just as in the creation of man when He breathed life into Adam. It was God in three days, created the atmospheres. It was God who, in

13 *Life Application Study Bible* (KJV) Carol Stream, ILL: Tyndale House Publishers Inc. p. 1520.

14 Lennie Spitale, *Prison Ministry; Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out*. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2002), p. 61-62.

15 *Ibid.* p. 88-89.

16 *Ibid.* p. 190.

three days filled those atmospheres. And it was God who designed a place for humanity, fashioned in His own image, to live. What makes this truth so powerful is that God is more than just a potter working on His great creation; He is also the life source that dwells within all life.¹⁷

As Ezekiel was given a vision and a message to speak to the dry bones. Verse 7 says he prophesied as God commanded him. When he obeyed the voice of God, the bones began to come together. The bones were restructured or restored to stand on their own and together. However, they couldn't function without the breath of the Spirit. Then he was instructed to prophesy to the wind to blow upon the bones. God is calling chaplains and Christian Volunteer to speak into the lives of the hopeless inmates in our county jails and state prisons. As chaplaincy obeys the voice of God and speak to the prison environment, the Holy Spirit empowers the people individually and collectively to transformation and change. God in His great mercy and compassion causes the Jail/prison inmates to be incarnated for a purpose, which is to consider the claims of the gospel; to hear and receive it.¹⁸ "For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgements, and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Romans 11:32-33).

Empowered men and women are needed to hear from God and go into uncomfortable environments and deliver the message that will bring new life and regeneration to a hostile environment. According to Carrie Doehiring:

Change happens when pastoral relationship help people combine and express spiritual practices that promote goodness and compassion with beliefs and values. If the goal is regeneration, the process of change involves trusting, respectful, compassionate helping relationships that help the inmate to open their heart to the Holy Spirit and connect with the power of change.¹⁹

17 Robert Crick, *Outside the Gates: The Need for, Theology, History, and Practice of Chaplaincy Ministries*. (Oviedo, FL: HigherLife Development Services, Inc., 2011), p. 5

18 Lennie Spitale, *Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out*. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2002), 191.

Another role the chaplain plays is to be able to understand the prison environment.

According to Dennis Pierce;

One need to be able to feel the fear, guilt, shame, loneliness, and abandonment that penetrate the environment. One needs to feel an inmate's feelings not through projection but through compassionate imagination. In order to feel empathy one must purposely engage the process since it is not part of sympathy, which is an unconscious response to a situation or a person's feelings. This is critical to a prison ministry, especially in a maximum security facility. A vital component of this process is interpathic caring.²⁰

Interpathic caring is crossing over into the world of the inmate – beyond the lines to a grace that helps him/her come to the place of change.²¹

Prison Ministry

Ministry to prisoners in the United States has grown steadily during the last half of the twentieth century in numbers of ministries, volunteers, and participating churches. The estimated 15,000 volunteers in 1977 had grown to some 100,000 by 1997. The number of prison ministries of all sizes also increased from 214 in 1977 to 1,200 in 1997, with some 30 of them serving nationwide. This has shown a huge impact with over 100,000 active ministry volunteers evangelizing in jails and prisons; showing record numbers of inmates making decisions to follow Jesus Christ. Of the 100,000, prisoners who have made a decision to follow Christ, 95 percent of them will be released within a three-to-five year period. Of the 1,200 small organizations who faithfully visit local facilities, roughly 450 have an organizational structure. These ministries can be seen to fit into four basic categories: evangelistic, chaplaincy, discipleship, and aftercare.

19 Carrie Doehring. *A Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*. (Louisville, KY: WJK Press, 2006), p. 18.

20 Dennis W. Pierce. *Prison Ministry: Hope Behind the Wall*. (Binghamton, NY: The Hawthorn Pastoral Press, 2006), p. 14.

21 Ibid. p. 14.

They are motivated, by the cry from men and women who live behind the wire, to bring the living gospel of Jesus.²²

The Gospel transforms lives. The dysfunctional functions again. Through faith in the gospel, one gain access into His grace. His unmerited favor. The Holy Spirit of Grace makes each believer a new person at the moment trust is placed in Christ as Savior. This is what Jesus call a new birth (John 3:3-6), a Spiritual change and renewal of the human spirit. A

transformation that takes place so that the Spirit is alive within the believer (Romans 8:10).

Through the gift of God's grace, we are made alive, forgiven, and complete in Him. To attempt to find wholeness and restoration through any other source, such as approval of others,

philosophy and guidelines of men, self-help programs alone, will render no effect.²³

As we speak to the dry bones behind prison walls, we speak what God speaks over their lives through Chapel services, Bible Study, discipleship seminars, tutoring, community service projects, re-entry programs teaching life skills, cell to cell ministry, one-on-one counseling, pen-pal correspondence, CDs, television broadcasts and any other means necessary that is permissible, we trust the Holy Spirit to reap a harvest of souls.

Conclusion

Being a Chaplain or Christian volunteer in the jail or prison setting is one of the most powerful appointments one could ever receive from the Lord. I solute all the men and women who have paved the way for newcomers to continue the journey. This is not a job or occupation, but ministry with a Divine purpose. The main purpose, I believe, is to care for God's creation who are locked away in another environment with real human need.

22 A. S. Moreau, H. Nethland, & C. Van Engen (2000). *In Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (pp. 788-789). Grand Rapids, MI: Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Baker Books; A. Scott Moreau.

23 Robert McGee. *The Search For Significance: Seeing Your True Worth through God's eyes*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1998), p. 105-108.

One takes special precaution in choosing a trained medical doctor skilled enough to diagnose the cause of a physical illness. To determine the recommendation for a cure, the Doctor refers to his physician manual for the right prescription plan to cure the disease or illness. The doctor's care plan not only deals with the immediate condition, but it should include an ongoing plan for total recovery and restoration. Rehabilitation is the short-term plan and regeneration is the long-term plan for total change and wholeness inside and out.

It is not this writer's aim to discredit the rehabilitation programs. These programs have provided education, training, physical therapy, psychotherapy, vocational therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy to millions of persons. These programs have demonstrated a rather high level of effectiveness in the United States.²⁴ However, planned programs alone does not deal with the real problem in prison ministry. The real problem is emotional and spiritual. The Chaplaincy ministry team has the answer to these problems. They can refer to the Spiritual Manual, the Bible or the Word of God. The Word of God is the change agent to this oppressive environment. The Chaplain and the Christian volunteers are God's Spiritual physicians; anointed, appointed, trained, and led by the Holy Spirit to breathe new life into this valley of dry bones.

In my introduction, I mentioned an African American mother of four who was sentenced to serve time for parole violation and drug possession. This was during the 1980s. She was sentenced to serve fifteen to twenty years in state prison. I am proud to say that she did not serve fifteen years in prison. Due to good behavior and the hard work of the Chaplain, Christian volunteer, social worker, and Christian counselor; she was paroled after serving eighteen months in prison to a twelve-month Christian drug rehabilitation program. She completed the rehabilitation program. She was released and has not return to prison as of this day. Today she is a born-again believer and serving the Lord. She has lived a crime and drug free life ever since.

24 J. H. Ellens. *The Interface of psychology and theology, Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 15 (1).

All four of her children graduated from high school and college. Praise God from whom all Blessings flow.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Crick, Robert. *Outside the Gates: The need for Theology, History, and Practice of Chaplaincy Ministries*. (Oviedo, Fla: HigherLife Development Services, Inc., 2011), P. 154-155.
- Doehring, Carrie. *A Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*. (Louisville, KY: WJK Press, 2006), p. 18.
- Ellens, J. H. *The Interface of Psychology and Theology: Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 16 (1).
- Guerino, P. Harrison, P. M. & W. J. Sabol (2012). Prisoners in 2010 (NC-1236096). Washington, D. C: *Bureau of Justice Statistics. Data on race/ethnicity and gender from this publication should be interpreted as general estimates race/ethnicity and gender proportions within the prison population*. Sentencing Project.org. 11-13-2017.
- Honour, R. E. *Vocational rehabilitation*. In R. J. Hunter (Ed), *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon, p. 1015.
- Johnson, John. *Seeking Pastoral Identity: The Spurgeon Fellowship Journal* (Fall 2007, 4www. The Spurgeon Fellowship.org.

Life Application Bible (KJV) Carol Stream, ILL: Tyndale House Publishers Inc. p. 1520.

Manser, M. H (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.

McGhee, Robert S. *The Search for Significance: Seeing Your True Worth through God's Eyes*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), p. 106.

Moreau, A. S., Nethland, H., & Engen, C. Van (2000). *In Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (pp. 788-789). Grand Rapids, MI: Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Baker Books.

Pierce, Dennis W. *Prison Ministry: Hope Behind the wall*. (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 2006), p. 19.

Reid, Daniel; Linder, Robert; Dean, Shelley; Bruce, L. and Stout, Harry S. *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Spitale, Lennie. *Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out*. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2002), p. 61-62.

The Boston Counseling Group. *Reducing Recidivism through Programing in the Federal Prison Population Final Report: Bop Programs Assessment*. Copyright 9-19-2016. Pg. 10.