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Reformative Explorations

A Psycho-Spiritual and Crimino-Social Quarterly on Reformation and Rehabilitation

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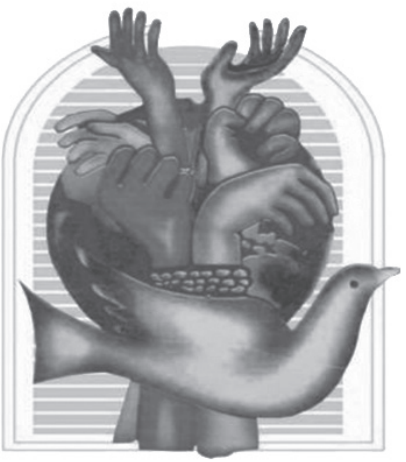

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TRANSFORMING SPIRITUALITY OF PRISON MINISTRY INDIA

Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS

Introduction

Jesus who came to seek and save the lost transformed many public sinners during his earthly life. He went to the tax booth of Levi, called and transformed him into his disciple (Mk 2, 13-17). He went to Zacchaeus house and reformed him (Lk 19, 1-10). He called Saul the persecutor and transformed him into an apostle to the gentiles (Acts 9, 1-9). He transformed Mary Magdeline from whom he cast seven demons into a great missionary. Following Jesus' transforming lifestyle, Prison Ministry India has been striving hard in renovating prisoners since 1981. To PMI's credit there are thousands of reformed, rehabilitated, reintegrated and redeemed prisoners. The secret behind every transformation is grace, the grace flowing from the cross, from the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The goal of PMI is to continue this redeeming and liberating mission of Jesus. This article illustrates the PMI spirituality in transforming and redeeming brethren behind bars.

Jesus' Mission for the Lost

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3,16). As God the Father sent His son to set prisoners free, PMI volunteers are sent to prison by Jesus to search, serve and save them, so that prisoners may have eternal life. Jesus proclaimed his life-goal at the outset of his public life:

"'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, release to the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour'" (Lk 4, 17-19). Jesus commanded us to visit prisoners: "I was in prison and you came to visit me" (Mt 25, 36). The goal of PMI is to release, reform, rehabilitate, reintegrate and redeem the lost, the prisoners. How did Jesus give us eternal life? Through His paschal mysteries - his passion death and resurrection. How can we give eternal life to prisoners? We do so by assisting them in participating in Jesus' paschal mysteries and by partaking of His body and blood. Our spiritual life, sacrificial life, ascetical life and our works of charity certainly will help them to reform themselves and find redemption.

Rainbow of PMI Spirituality

PMI spirituality is like the rainbow. It has many colours and fragrances and can be divided into two: Jesus-Centred Spirituality and People-Oriented Spirituality. The characteristics of Jesus-centred spirituality can be described as follows: overwhelmed by the love of God; redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus; led by the Holy Spirit; empowered by the Word of God; nourished by the sacraments; enlightened by spiritual exercises; fortified by ascetical practices; adorned by virtues; enriched by fraternity and enthralled by seeking and saving the Lost. The salient features of People-Oriented Spirituality are as follows: prison ministry is a gift and a call within the call. It's a call to seek and save the lost. PMI volunteers shall be one in mind and one in heart and shall be experts in outreaching the peripheries such as prisons, juvenile homes, observation homes, rescue homes, borstal schools and so on. They shall find joy and satisfaction in seeking and finding the lost, serving and healing the lost, reconciling and reuniting the lost, liberating and reforming the lost, rehabilitating, reintegrating and redeeming the lost.

Transforming Spirituality

St Paul in his letter to the Hebrews sheds light on the transforming spirituality of PMI: "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering" (Heb 13, 1-3). Paul's writing to a slave-owner about one of his runaway slaves – Onesimus – is also very relevant and inspiring with regard to transforming Spirituality. "I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me … Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good - no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord" (Philemon 1, 1-16).

Deadman Walking

The film Deadman Walking which won the Oscar Award presents a typical example of transforming spirituality through the story of Sr Helen Prejean. Matthew Poncelot was a cruel criminal, murderer and an inhuman rapist. He is in prison, condemned to death for the brutal rape and murder of a young girl and her boyfriend. Susan Sarandon, the heroine who got the 1996 best actress Oscar Award, plays the role of an exemplary Catholic nun, Sr. Helen. When Sr. Helen (Susan Sarandon) comes to know that Matthew is in prison, waiting for the execution of his capital punishment, she goes and meets Matthew in prison. Matthew, being a promiscuous man, naturally welcomes and likes her presence, only because she is beautiful. But she gently rectifies his attitude towards her. She begins to love him, pray for him, to work hard not only to get mercy from the state but also from the heavenly Father. As the day of the capital punishment comes nearer, Matthew, the hard criminal, begins to be silent, reflective,

begins to repent and read the Holy Bible which she gave him. An hour before execution, Mathew confesses all his sins to Sr. Helen, weeping and shedding tears. The scene of going to the scaffold is heartbreaking. Matthew moves slowly, shedding tears and listening to the Holy Bible that Sister Helen reads to him. And finally kissing the crucifix he bids good bye. This is exactly what prison ministry is all about.

Good Shepherd Spirituality

Transforming spirituality further is to be illustrated with the Good Shepherd imagery which we find in Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34 and John 10. Jesus the Good Shepherd was the lamb of God who was immolated on the cross. Shedding his blood and breaking his body he saved us sinners. Like Jesus the good shepherd we should know our sheep, our brethren behind bars. Like the good shepherd we shall seek the sheep, heal the broken-hearted, carry the sheep on our shoulders, do sacrifices for the sheep, feed the sheep and finally shall be ready to be sacrificed like the lamb of God. We shall be adventurous and dynamic and shall be able to love the sheep, search for the lost and wounded, serve and save the lost. Like the Good Shepherd we shall lay down our lives for the sheep so that they may have life, life in abundance (Jn 10,10-11).

Spirituality of the Father of the Prodigal Son

PMI has many rehabilitation centers for released prisoners and many homes for prisoners' children, both for boys and girls. Spirituality of the Father of the prodigal son is meant for those who work in PMI rehabilitation centers. This is based on the unique characteristics of the Father of the prodigal son. They are compassionate love, unconditional love, forgiving love, fraternal love, motherly love, protective love, punitive love, supreme love, caring love and finally in being in love. Rembrandt in his book The Return of the Prodigal Son and Victor Hugo, in his Les misérables through the characters bishop and Jean Val Jean have amazingly illustrated this

spirituality. With genuine love even the hard-hearted criminals can be transformed into true lambs. St Maximillian Kolbe in Auschwitz Concentration Camp also manifested this supreme love by offering his life to a co-prisoner.

Signs of PMI Spirituality

Those who live and practice PMI spiritualty will manifest the following signs: enhancement in God experience and in divine providence, augmentation in faith, improvement in self-confidence, self-image, and self-appreciation, joy of unity and fraternity, amelioration in optimism and stamina, greater satisfaction in searching, serving and saving the lost, undertaking of adventurous deeds for the Lord, growth in the number of reformed prisoners, joy in inconvenience rather than convenience, enhancement in LQ – Love Quotient, development in HQ – Human Quotient and fully involved and immersed in the activities of searching, serving and saving the lost.

Self-Sanctification

"For their sake I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth" (Jn 17, 19). Sanctifying ourselves is the best starting point. As Jesus sanctified himself for the sake of others, we need to undergo self-purification before we enter into prison ministry. First sanctify and fortify ourselves so as not to be defeated by Satan. How do we sanctify ourselves? We sanctify ourselves by reading and meditating on the Word of God; by actively participating in the Holy Eucharist and by receiving the body and blood of Christ in holy communion and by frequenting the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Acts of charity, intercessory prayer, incessant forgiveness, divine mercy prayer, involving the outreach ministry of Jesus, etc. will help us. Fasting and penances are also necessary to save certain people. Offering our penances such as fasting, abstinences, mortifications, renouncing comforts etc. would greatly be beneficial for the redemption of prisoners.

Daily Habits of PMI Volunteers

It's worth knowing and practicing the daily habits of PMI volunteers. They are daily Holy Mass and Communion, bible reading, personal prayer, intercessory prayer for the renewal and reintegration of prisoners worldwide, rosary for prisoners, Jesus Prayer on the way to prisons, spiritual reading, weekly prayer in PMI prayer groups, fraternity and friendship with PMI prayer group members, and regular visits to prisons.

Skills of PMI Volunteers

The following shall be the special skills of PMI volunteers: being experts in prayer, having high spiritual life, charismatic gifts, counselling skills, polite, mature, gentle and pleasing behaviour, practical knowledge about prison administration, knowledge about PMI administration, knowledge about PMI rehabilitation centers and homes for prisoners' children.

PMI Spiritual Experiences

Following are the spiritual experiences expected from PMI volunteers: God experience – Abba experience, Jesus experience – Eucharistic experience, Holy Spirit experience – led by the Spirit experience, fraternity experience among prayer group members, divine providence experience – Bank of Divine Providence, ascetical experience – mortifications, inconvenience experience – sufferings, begging experience – not project depending.

Characteristics of PMI Volunteers

Genuine PMI volunteers shall be like angels of peace (Gen 8, 8-12). Angels who bring Good news to the incarcerated (Gen 18,1-15). They shall be like the Good Shepherd going in search of the lost sheep (Jn 10). They shall be co-travellers like Jesus who travelled with the disciples of Emmaus leading to God experience (Lk 24, 13-20). They bring life and Spirit to prisoners who are in the valley of dry bones (Ezk 37, 1-14)

and anoint prisoners with the Holy Spirit like Jesus' baptism in river Jordan (Lk 3,21-22). They bring the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit to prisoners such as love, joy, freedom, hope, and consolation (1Cor 12-14; Gal 5, 19-21). They shall be prudent like snakes and innocent as doves, like lambs amidst wolves (Lk 10,16) and like the dove in Noah's ark (Gen 8). They shall be ready to sacrifice himself or herself as Jesus did on Mount Calvary in order to provide spiritual life to prisoners and to give it to the full (Jn 10,10).

Conclusion

Spirituality is like a rainbow. It has various colours. The PMI transforming spirituality anchored on the teaching of Jesus has two dimensions: Jesus centred and people oriented. Just like Jesus always trusted in His father PMI volunteers trust in Jesus to search, serve and save the lost. The Good Shepherd and the father of the prodigal son provide us ample illustrations and guidelines to live this transforming spirituality.

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THE PRISON PASTORATE

Karl Rahner[1]

You, who are prison chaplains, have come together here for an hour's meditation as priests. The meaning of such an hour can precisely *not* be to think out how the charge laid upon you is to be made fruitful and beneficial for those entrusted to your care, but must be directed to considering how such a pastor with such a charge is himself to find God. This does not mean that the task of caring selflessly for others, and Christian neighbourly love itself, are being changed into egotism. We are merely giving scope to the simple, fundamental insight that in our priestly lives we can only serve others insofar as we are ourselves filled with the grace of him to whom we are bearing witness, and whom we are there to mediate to men, in his word, his sacraments, and his grace. Nor is anything changed in this either by our objective official mission or by the power of the *opus operatum*. For both of these have got to be accepted by men if they are to be effective. But they will only be accepted if those who bring them are such as to make their objective mission and objective grace credible by the quality of their own Christian living. Nor can he simply say that selfless service is itself holy, and that the more a person forgets himself in it and dies to himself, the more he will be filled with the grace of God, and the more he will be apt to win his neighbour by the witness of the Spirit and of power. In its positive sense, this statement is true. But it would turn

1. https://strassenexerzitien.de/en/karl-rahner-the-prison-pastorate. From: Karl Rahner, Mission and Grace, Volume 3, pp. 74-97, Sheed and Ward – London and Melbourne 1966, translated by Cecily Hastings; the text was supplied by the Karl-Rahner-Archiv (since mid-February 2008) in Munich.

into a dangerous lie if we supposed that it could provide the one single all-embracing norm for our mission. There are no maxims in the spiritual life capable of providing, on their own, a total formula covering the whole thing. There is no way of including everything in one exercise. For we are creatures who, even in this respect, have no abiding city, but must humbly, in our finitude, do many different things in order to reach the whole. So we have got to take pains over our nearness to God if we are to be able to serve our neighbour, and we draw near to God *by* serving our neighbour: each depends on the other, and yet they are not both the same thing. And that is why, in an hour of meditation such as this, it is our task und our office themselves which bid us to take to heart our concern over our own salvation in the midst of our task. What we shall be considering during this short meditation can be summed up in two sentences. In the prisoners entrusted to our pastoral care we find Christ our Lord; and in these prisoners we find ourselves, what we see in them being the concealed truth of our own situation.

Christ in the Prisoners

We find Christ our Lord in the prisoners. We have got to find him there; he is really there to be found, and to be found in such a way that our encounter with him will also be for our salvation and our happiness. There is no need for me to remind you of your own experience as prison chaplains. This experience, in all its bitterness und horrible realism, is more present to you than anything I could describe or suggest of it: the experience of shattered human existences; the mental and moral defectives; the unstable characters; the psychopaths; the vicious, the smooth, the cynical, the hypocrites and liars; the merely impulsive, the victims of circumstances, of addiction; the inevitable recidivists, the religiously impervious, the poor devils, the imbeciles. Even though this kind of experience is not the only one that you have in prison, even though you also meet people there who strike you immediately as no

different from anyone else – normal, decent men -, yet it still remains true that you have often been struck with horror by the humanity you encounter there. You have so often been let down, shown up as stupid, rewarded with ingratitude; so often knocked in vain for admission to hearts that were locked and barred; so often provided help only to be rejected yourselves as representatives of the hated system. You have suffered the sense of futility and the hopelessness of all such efforts; you must often have had the impression that all your efforts, your concern, your love, your patience, and your work are being dropped into a bottomless abyss from which no response ever comes. You are men who continually encounter evil in all its dreary, nerve-racking, hopeless, detestable reality. You know all that better than I do. And now let us read the words of Christ, his incredible, provocative, thrilling words: „„Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for … I was in prison, and you came to see me'. Then the righteous will answer him, ‚Lord, when did we see thee … in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, ‚Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."' (Mt 25, 34-40).

I think that the first thing for you to do is simply to rejoice over these words. They apply to you without any kind of translation, just as they were spoken then. They do not need to be translated and adapted and transported into a new set of circumstances. What you live is a primary, abiding form of life which Jesus saw clearly in its abiding pattern; he gives it expression in a statement which he then raises to the level of a concrete utterance of God's judgement, the judgement which brings world history to its fulfilment, treads out as in a wine-press the ultimate meaning of that history, and transforms it into the wine of eternal joy. There are few vocations with such words to rejoice over, few that find themselves being addressed in so unchanged a fashion by the mouth of the Son of Man, with words at once realistically human and divinely

heavenly. But the next response to these words has to be one of terror: you are commanded to find out Lord in these people whom you visit in prison. What a terrifying and exacting task! Do not say that these words are not meant to be taken quite so seriously as that. Do not say that all that is a little human compassion, a certain amount of reasonable allocated help: some of that sober realism which has no illusions but at the same time is not too ready to despair of humanity: which has the humanist optimism to believe in the good in every human being, stimulate it, and give it another chance to do better; and which, when that fails, consoles itself with the thought that after all there are psychopathic conditions which can be as incurable as other diseases and ought not to break one's heart any more than the others: the patients all die in the end anyway, but the human race doesn't let itself get excessively depressed over it. No, no – and again, no. More is asked of you than this.

You are to find our Lord in these prisoners. You yourselves are to encounter him there to your own saving benefit. Are we not under the temptation to ask our Lord, impatiently and (as we like to see it) unsentimentally, in the name of sober realism, reason, and our own experience, "When did we see you in prison?" Are we not tempted to say: "We were in the prisons, but we didn't find you there. We found pitiful human beings, poor devils, and cynical criminals. But you? No, not you"? Perhaps we shall say: "We've nothing against it if you like to be so magnanimous and gracious as to use a sort of splendid heavenly fiction to count these services rendered, these visits to the prison, *as if* we had done them to you. That's all right, that's fine, we have no objection to a fiction of that sort. But a fiction it remains. You are you and these people are these people. And we did not find you in the prisons. Not there, of all places."

But Jesus says otherwise. Jesus rejects all our realism as unreal. He does not identify himself with these people by a legal fiction,

but in such a way that we are, in very truth, encountering him in them. We have got to let his words stand as what they are – and believe them. We can think about *how* they can be true, but we have got to take them as true. We can be horrified at how little we must have grasped of the self-emptying love of God in Christ, the *agape* of God, if we have not understood that there really is a love in this world – the love of God, that is – which accepts when to us it seems that there is no longer anything there to be accepted; a love which is not a matter of gracious condescension, but truly, in all reality and effectiveness, identifies itself with these sinners; a love which strips itself utterly; in which the lover can no longer find himself except in and through the beloved. We can consider the truths that this love is creative and transforming; that it is genuine and radical even to death, the death of the Cross; that it has dared to descend into the uttermost emptiness of God-forsaken, death-stricken lovelessness and has there been victorious and taken all things to itself; that it is a love which brought the Son of God to make himself a curse that he might really save what is really and inescapably lost – that which is, of itself, dead, without future and without hope; that which grimly locks and bars itself against all love; that which, with cold contempt and unambiguous cynicism, scorns love, purity, kindliness, and loyalty as utopian pretence. It is with such sinners that this love has, in strict reality, identified itself. For otherwise they would not be redeemed. Otherwise, only what is sound in itself would have been saved (whereas no such thing exists, though it often seems to; so that we think that this thing, basically good in itself, has been accepted by God because it is good, instead of believing that what was truly lost has been accepted in order that it should be made good). We must think about the truth, accepting it in faith and against out own „experience", that the Lord is in these lost individuals whom we meet in the prisons; that he is in them by his will to love, which calls nothingness and that which is lost by its name and creates it; in them by his patience, by the

almighty power that sees, even in this bit of the wreckage of world history, a person, an eternity, a brother of the incarnate Word of God, a beloved, someone to be taken seriously with divine seriousness: sees him as this, or, better, creates him as this, by looking on him with love. He is, in all truth, in them; because the primary mystery of that love which creates and makes one, which *is* God himself, is not understood, and hence the essence of Christianity is radically misunderstood, unless this improbable, paradoxical truth, with its radical reversal of all our short-sighted experience, is unconditionally accepted in faith.

But if we want to understand our Lord's words and find him in the prisoners, we must not only think, in faith and prayer, about the truth that he is in them; we must think even more about how we can find him in them. For this is the appalling thing, the deadly danger: that we can fail to recognise him, even though he is in these lost, unfortunate brothers of his, one with them. We are liable to pass him by; our eyes can be held, our hearts be dull and closed against him, so that we do not see him. In this time of faith and not of sight we shall indeed never find him except in a hidden fashion. When the last day comes, we shall still be amongst those who ask wonderingly, just as much as those who have not visited the Lord and not found him, "When did we see thee in prison, and visit thee?" (Mt. 25; 39, 44). As far as *experience* goes it will always be like this. It will seem to us that it is not he, that it is not possible to find him in the prisoners. But this is precisely what Christianity is, this finding when we think we have not found, this seeing when we seem to be gazing into darkness, this having when we think that we have lost. And so it is here. We have to seek and find him in the prisoners. And it is not easy. It is possible to ignore him and walk blindly past him, even when you are there in the prisons with your bodily presence and your "carrying out of your duties", even when you have the reputation of being a good prison chaplain.

What does it mean to find Christ himself in his brothers in prison? First and foremost, it means a reverent humility in face of this other human being, who is a child of God and a brother of Jesus Christ, one who is called and beloved by God, one who is embraced by the power of divine love. We all know (and anyone who denied it would be at the very least a Jansenist heretic, doubting God's universal will to save) that every human being still on pilgrimage through this life is called to salvation, beloved of God, and embraced by the grace of Christ, even if he has not yet freely accepted it. We know that we cannot ultimately judge anybody, that we cannot say of anybody with absolute certainty that he is living in God's grace, and so equally cannot say of anybody that he has lost it. And so, as we must with absolutely certain confidence in God hope in God's merciful grace for ourselves, we have the same duty of hope (since we must love our neighbour as ourself) on behalf of each of our neighbours. And we know that in every human being there is an eternal destiny in the making, coming to maturity through all the trivialities of everyday life and commonplace humanity. We know all that. We have never disputed it. But we do not live it. This infinite dignity, this indestructible nobility, this fact, that every human being is infinitely more than a human being, remains to a large extent a sort of thin Sunday-ideology, something we do not dispute in theory because it does us no harm and does not prevent us from sticking to everyday norms and attitudes in the everyday world. But suppose that our sober everyday eyes should look at this neighbour of ours and see through all his physical degeneracy, through the screen of his instinctual life, his conditioning, his psychology insofar as it is physiologically determined. Suppose they should see even through all that this other person thinks about himself and desires for himself, through all his self-interpretation, which is never capable of saying the ultimate truth about a man; that they should see through all that fate has done in the course of such a life, in terms of heredity, upbringing, environment, latent sickness,

psychopathology; and even through true and appalling guilt, since it too is not the ultimate thing, it too (as Paul says) is embraced and included within the greater and mightier mercy of God. Suppose that our eyes, seeing through all this, should seek and find that which is most real and ultimate in this other person: God, with his love and his mercy, who has conferred an eternal dignity upon this person and offers himself to him, without repentance, in the incomprehensible prodigality of the divine foolishness of love. Suppose that we should see in this way not at some solemn, ceremonial moment but at the point where this man confronts us with his blank gaze, his lack of receptivity, his reek of poverty; at the point where he rises up before us, sullen and resentful, malicious, unteachable, stupidly cunning. Supposing we could indeed see in this way, then we should really come to meet this man with a reverent humility, in which we would realise that we cannot recognise any higher dignity or holier calling in ourselves than that which is present in him.

And if we did look at him like this, in reverent humility, then we would see Christ in him: the incarnate Word of the Father, who is everywhere honoured and adored (whether this is realised or not) whenever one human being is taken absolutely seriously by another; whenever a person recognises that it is impossible to have any experience with a fellow human being, however evil and appalling, which would involve looking through him into emptiness instead of into the mystery of God, in whom is hidden the eternal image of this man, without which (as Angelus Silesius says) God „cannot for a moment live". Man, in his nature and his determination toward grace, exists because God has willed the God-Man: because *he* has willed *himself as man*; because henceforth there is no longer any truth of God which is not truth of man; because (this is so only out of free grace, but it really is so) God would not be, if man were not. And so, whenever the most wretched of human creatures, some mean, stupid scoundrel, is received reverently and humbly into our own hearts, it is Christ who

is being received and discovered. And – may one dare to say? – there best of all. For where have we a better hope of finding God than in such a case? When the spell of man's own greatness and beauty, his own goodness and splendour, is cast upon us, this may indeed act as a door into the infinite greatness, beauty, goodness, and splendour of God. It may, in itself. But we are so apt in such a case to stop short at the human greatness as such. This is something we cannot do with poor sinners, when we discover what is abiding and indestructible in them, when we honour what they perhaps take no account of in themselves, when we believe in God in them, though they do not find him in themselves.

And there is still another sense of finding God in our humiliated neighbour. When we go to meet this wretched neighbour in the way that we should, when we care about him without any supporting feeling of instinctive, physiologically conditioned sympathy, when we forgive even while feeling that we are being made fools of by doing so, when we really pour ourselves out without the reward of a feeling of satisfaction and without any return in gratitude, when our very encounter with our neighbour makes us unutterably lonely and all such love seems to be only an annihilating leap into an absolute void, then that is really God's hour in our life; that is when *he* is there. Assuming that we don't turn back; assuming that it doesn't get us down, that we don't find ourselves some sort of compensation elsewhere, that we don't complain, that we don't feel sorry for ourselves, that we keep quiet about it and really accept and commit ourselves to the absence of ground under our feet and the foolishness of such love. Then it is God's hour; then this seemingly sinister abyss in our existence, as it opens up in this hopeless experience of our neighbour, will be the abyss of God himself, communicating himself to us; it will be the beginning of the coming of his infinity, where all roads disappear, and which feels like nothingness because it is infinity. When we have had such an encounter with our neighbour, an encounter in which we break through

the instability of what is earthly in him and seem to fall into void; when we have to let go of ourselves in it and no longer belong to ourselves: when we have denied ourselves and no longer dispose of ourselves for purposes of power or self-enjoyment; when everything in such an encounter, and ourselves too, seem to have fallen away from us into infinite remoteness, then we begin to find God. Then this lonely, silent void of the interior man, who seems to have been as it were destroyed, begins to be filled with God; then we find God, we find Christ, who fell into the hands of the Father when, as he was dying, he recognised his God-forsakenness. At the beginning, this may seem alien to us; this loss of ourselves may terrify us, and the temptation may come upon us to flee in our terror back to intimacy and gratitude and the sense of being loved. Indeed it will often be right and necessary for us to do so. But we should gradually learn to find life in this death, intimacy in this loneliness, God in this forsakenness. It is only when we can do this, when we can find and experience God himself in this disappointment of our love for our neighbour, that our love for our neighbour becomes mature, and an act of the Holy Spirit in us. It can then become really long-suffering and patient, without malice, never ceasing to hope, never disillusioned. It will always find God.

It is not to be thought that this means that our neighbour, especially when he is a disappointing neighbour, is simply a means by which we practise ascetical renunciation so as to create that void within us which God then freely and mercifully fills with the unutterable intimacy of his presence. For none of this happens unless we truly love the person in question, truly accepting him for what he is, and not making this love into a means to anything. But if, without aiming at it, this God-loving love to our neighbour does find God while seeking our neighbour, then this lonely experience of God, taking place within the death of all self-seeking, becomes a final possibility for us, a final source of strength for loving our neighbour "to the last". We really die of this love; to die

without despair (and despair puts an end to love) can only be done if we die into the infinite life of God. So we must love and seek our neighbour, and not our own fulfilment and perfection, but this can only be done "to the last" if we find God in it and if this true love of our neighbour is embraced and redeemed, preserved and liberated by happening within the love of God, as a finding of God in Christ. Anyone, then, who exposes himself to this death-dealing adventure of an unconditional love of his neighbour will find God; and whoever finds God can love his neighbour as himself. He will receive that clearness of vision which belongs to the faith which sees the reality of God even in the most abandoned of men, making him in all truth worthy of being loved with humble reverence. We find Christ our Lord in the prisoners; we have got to find him there; he is really there to be found, and to be found in such a way that our encounter with him will also be for our salvation and our happiness.

Ourselves in the Prisoners

We find ourselves in the prisoners when we see in them the hidden truth of our own situation. Every human being is continually running away from himself. Only those saints who have attained perfection could say that they no longer deceive themselves about themselves. Only the perfect have stopped repressing the truth of God within them. The truth that we are sinners; the truth that we are self-seekers; the truth that in a thousand different ways, crude or subtle, we are always trying to God *and* ourselves; the truth that we are cowardly, easy-going, lazy, refractory servants of God; the truth that we do not do what we ought to do: love God with our *whole* heart and *all* our strength. Together with the Scriptures and the teachings of the early Church, we can express the content of this repressed truth by acknowledging that we are unfree, prisoners, unless the Spirit of God, his grace, sets us free. We may be free in a bourgeois, legal sense: we may be responsible for our actions, not only in the sight of men but also in the

sight of God and his most merciful and just judgement. But if we have not been set free by the Spirit of God into the freedom of Christ, then for all this earthly freedom and its corresponding responsibility in the sight of God, we are nevertheless helpless and hopeless prisoners in the prison of our guilt, our unsaved condition, our inability to perform any saving act.

And these people whom we visit are an image of this: an image of all those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, imprisoned in the dungeon of their own finitude, the dungeon of a freedom which has not yet been set free by Christ and is still enslaved to sin, the flesh and the power of the evil one. The prison in which your work goes on is an image of this prison of the world, not in an external, artificial sense, through some artificial analogy, but an image in the sense of a manifestation, a true and real type, the making visible of a hidden reality which makes itself manifest and tangible in this real symbol. For no matter what may be the immediate causes of prisons and of the plight of their inmates, the one ultimate cause is the guilt of mankind from its beginnings onwards: the guilt which propagates itself through all individual personal guilt; the same guilt which confronts us incarnate in poverty, sickness, and unhappiness; the guilt which is a power in our own lives too, so that what we call prisons and penitentiaries are, to a Christian understanding of things, simply individual cells of a perceptible kind in that one great prison which Scripture calls „the world", „this age", „the evil world", the domain of the prince of this world, the realm of the powers of darkness, death and evil. When you go from your own surroundings into a prison, you do not go out of a world of harmony, light and order into a world of guilt and unfreedom: you stay where you have been all the time. It is merely made clearer to your bodily senses what has been surrounding you all the time: the unfreedom of guilt, the imprisonment from which Christ's grace alone can set us free into the freedom of the children of God.

But (it might be objected), true though all this is, we ourselves are nevertheless those who have been redeemed, who have been liberated into this freedom, we are no longer in servitude to sin, the law, vanity and death! So it is with us; we hope it is; each day we strengthen our hearts anew in this hope, which may often, alas, seem like a hope against hope. We comfort our hearts anew each day with this hope, which faith alone, and no experience or pharisaic self-consciousness of ours, can give us. But equally, so long as we are pursuing our pilgrimage in hope, not in vision, and are redeemed in hope, so long as we are still marching and not yet at the goal, we are still as it were prisoners, whose prison door is opening at this very moment, who are suddenly being bidden, by an unlooked-for miracle of grace, to get up and go, like Peter being struck on the side by the angel: „Get up quickly, dress yourself and follow me" (Acts 12, 7-8), while the chains fall from our hands. We are people who have entered into freedom and can be said to have attained it precisely insofar as we do not think of it as a possession that can be taken for granted; insofar as we are aware, in fear and trembling, of whence we come; insofar as we know that we can only receive this gift of the freedom of Christ with impunity, if we accept it simply and solely as our redemption from slavery by the grace of God.

And again: even if we are the redeemed; even if in those who are in Christ Jesus, those who believe in him and love him, there is no longer anything worthy of damnation; even if the ground of our being, its innermost centre, is graced and filled with the holy Pneuma of God; even if, then, what is in us can no longer make us, as indivisible subjects before God's judgement, worthy of damnation, yet the heritage of the past is still at the same time ultimately and indissolubly still in us. Or is concupiscence not still to be found in us? Is there not in us that which in the world, the lust of the eyes and the flesh and the pride of life? Are we not sick, compulsive, only too apt to deceive ourselves, egoists, slaves (if only in an attenuated form) to our cravings for this and that? Supposing someone

came to us – supposing *God* came to us, und lit up the interior of our hearts not merely with the cold inexorability of a psychotherapist but with the incorruptibility of the ultimate truth of the Thrice-Holy One; supposing he were to analyse our motives, our attitudes, our behaviour patterns, our secret impulses, hidden even from ourselves; if he were to confront us with ourselves, stripped and naked, as we are, not as we like to appear to ourselves, should we not then have to fall down in terror before this judge of our hearts, crying „Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"? Would not his grace, by which we are made holy, then appear to us as something which we simply are not; would we not have to say, brokenly and with tears, „That is you, that is your inconceivable love, the unreasonable prodigality, so to say, of your mercy; but I am not that; I am dull and cowardly and shut up within myself, I am a confused and tangled bundle of impulses and chances and external determinisms of which it is never possible to know at any moment what is genuinely my own, what is mere façade, what is real, whether shabbiness is the humility of the virtue that is in me or virtue is the disguise for the wretchedness in me"? Should we not have to pray with tears, „If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who shall endure it? Enter not into judgement with me, cleanse me from my secret sin!"?

Should we not then have to recognise and acknowledge that we are not so essentially different from those poor sinners whom we visit in the prisons? Should we not have to say that what distinguishes us from them is merely the fact that the *formes peccati*, which is in us in the same way as it is in them, has not – because of circumstances which are no merit of ours but matters of situation, fate and chance – brought us into conflict, as it has them, with the external order of men and society? We can indeed be grateful to God for these very circumstances: even extremely so. But does that differentiate us so much from them that, because we are the redeemed, we can no longer see ourselves in them, and must deny that our

own image, stripped of its masks, looks out at us from them? The more so as we can never say that they are not in the grace of God, since everything that confronts us in them is just as liable to be sickness as guilt, or to be the guilt of society, in which we too may perhaps have our part, having drawn on it, and continuing to draw on it, for our revenue of comfort and bourgeois security and affluence. And the more so again, since we are not certain that we are in God's grace.

So, then, we meet ourselves when we meet prisoners in prison. They present our own image to us, that image which we must face continually, day after day, if we hope to find the grace of God for ourselves; for that grace is only given to those who acknowledge themselves as sinners and build their lives on one thing only, the incomprehensible grace of God who takes pity on the lost. We have no choice: either we are going to go through the prisons like Pharisees, saying "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as one of these, robbers, swindlers, adulterers", or like the publican in Luke's Gospel. He stood afar off, just as our unredeemed feelings find the prisons far off from God, beating his own breast and not someone else's (a thing we are apt to do when visiting in prison), and said "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke 18, 9-14). Only if our attitude in the prisons is that of the publican in the Temple will the prison become for us poor sinners, a Temple from which we can return justified to our own homes. Otherwise, we shall be going into the true prison of our own blindness, hypocrisy, and pride, against which God sets his face, while those inside, perhaps, may be the ones who are justified and free in God's sight. So, then, we find ourselves in the prisoners, seeing in them the hidden truth of our own situation.

In every life, and even in the holiest office a man can hold, there is one deadly enemy: habit and routine. Oh, we need habit and routine. We cannot live for long without them. They make many things easier for us which would otherwise soon be too much for our powers; they may often be a mild narcotic

which God has mercifully supplied against the pain of living. But they are also the deadly enemy of our life and of the holy office we hold. They blunt us, they keep us going long after the real substance – spirit and love – has faded out of our work. And thus they may give us a "good conscience" when what we ought to have is a bad one. They make us take credit for our good deeds instead of beating our breasts because there is in them so little love, so little heart, so little humility and reverence for men, even those who are outcasts from society. We must keep fighting this deadly thing, habit, as though it were a cunning and mortally dangerous enemy. This applies to your job, too. It is a grace from God to have his providence sustaining you in this battle, not only through the grace of that holy joy you feel as pastors over someone whom you have been able to bring back to the love of God, but also through all the sharp disappointments and bitterness of the job, all its failures, all the indifference which it meets, all that it can do to torment you an wear you down. If these experiences, these hard and bitter ones, force you out of the mediocrity of habit and routine, confront you with the question of what you really are trying to do in a job like this, and compel you to think about the real meaning and grace of such a calling, then this too is God's grace. And – again through the gentle and unobtrusive workings of grace in you – you should come to meet this grace, thinking and praying in the sight of God about what you are and what you are aiming at in this calling. And if, in the course of such a meditation, you also perhaps consider that, in the prisoners entrusted to our priestly care, we can truly and indeed find Christ for ourselves, and that, by encountering in them the reflection and likeness of our own situation, we may be recalled to that humility to which alone God's grace is promised, then such a meditation may well build up to greater fullness and completeness that unity between your calling and your life, your office and your own personal existence, which is, in the nature of things, made possible to an unsurpassed degree of splendour and grace in the calling of a priest.

Articles
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BATTLING CRIME

John Thomas Kottukappally[1]

Globally crime and consequent number of prisoners are rising. The world prison population has reached 10.35 million, of which US accounts for 2.2 million. The rate of recidivism (re-offending) is about 45% in US and UK and exceeds 63% in Denmark. The growing crime is a result of intellectual and societal misconceptions by global leaders and others.

The Two Realms of Crime

Globally crime occurs in two realms – Bureaucratic or social and individual. Bureaucratic crimes are those perpetuated by bureaucracies of Governments and Institutions, Islamic, Hindu, Socialist and other Ideological Terrorisms and Mafias. Individual crimes are those committed by individuals, some of whom may be organized into gangs.

1. John Thomas Kottukapally is a Planter, Farmer activist, businessman, evangelist and apologist, belonging to the Kottukapally family of Pala. He was educated in St. Thomas, Pala, Bishop Cottons, Bangalore, Loyola College, Chennai and University Dept. of Mathematics, Mumbai. While in the family business, he had a Christ Experience and founded the Catholic Gospel Society, taking Gospel to tens of thousands and distributing hundreds of thousands of Bibles. He has served on the Boards of Prison Fellowship International, PF India, been a member of Jesus Fraternity, national Chairman of Galilean International Film & Television. More than five million people have attended the Gospel Meetings, Conventions, Crusades and programs in organizing which, he played a pivotal role. He has addressed North American Conference on Evangelization, Notre Dame, USA and along with wife Thressi, addressed the European Conference on Evangelization, Dublin. The couple has a son and a daughter, both married and three granddaughters.

Spiritual Cause of Crime

Bible says: "the whole world is under the control of the evil one." The Evil One controls the world through Bureaucracies, which Satan influences through twisted and perverted philosophies. These philosophies feed on the basest human frailties and drives – lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life (1 John 2:16) and collective or mob wickedness. Individual crime is caused by individual human failure and iniquity. In both Bureaucratic and individual realms, crime is essentially contravention of principal codes of ethics. Though society may disapprove of breach of minor codes of ethics, the contravention of these minor codes is not considered a crime. Even though these principal codes of ethics may have changed from age to age and race to race, most societies have held certain Eternal Principles, Sanadhana Dharma, as Indians call them. These Eternal Principles have God as the author. As God is immutable, these Eternal Principles are immovable.

Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship International and Templeton Prize winner, said in his talk at Harvard Business School that "the word ethics derives from the Greek word ethos, which literally meant "stall" – a hiding place. It is the one place you could go and find security. There could be rest and something that you could depend upon; it was immovable". God also empowers humans to observe these ethics. As the principal codes of ethics originate in the spiritual dimension, the cause of crime is also rooted in the spiritual dimension. Renowned Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner SJ says: "No matter what may be the immediate cause of prisons and the plight of their inmates, the one ultimate cause is the guilt of mankind from its beginnings onwards." Man is not a sinner because he sins; but he sins because he is a sinner. David Wilkerson says: "We have learned that drug addicts are not sinners because they are addicts, but they are addicts because they are sinners." The Bible says: "Surely I was sinful at birth,

sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psalms 51:5). "Every inclination of the thoughts of (human) heart was only evil all the time" (Genesis 6:5). "There is no one righteous, not even one; … there is no one who does good, not even one" (Romans 3:10,12).

The Bible says that the Eternal Principles are known to all, and distress comes by their breach. "There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile (Romans 2:9a) … All who sin under the law will be judged by the law (2:12b). Indeed, when Gentiles, …do by nature things required by the law, …they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witnesses, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them (2:14a,15)." However, conscience is a very tricky thing, as it can become hardened and easily mislead. The Bible says that this occurs when sensitivity to values is lost, resulting in indulgence in every kind of impurity with a continual lust for more. This in turn causes a hardening of heart, leading step by step to ignorance, separation from life of God, darkening of understanding and futility of thinking (Ref: Ephesians 4:17-19). The Bible also says that divine empowerment is needed to observe the law as humans have a propensity to sin. "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing (Romans 7:19)." Essentially, a person commits a crime because (1) he is ignorant of or questions the code of ethics and (2) he has lost the divine empowerment to honor the code of ethics. This itself is a result of what may be termed (1) Fostering Biblical Ignorance and (2) Questioning Biblical Inerrancy. Both Bureaucracies and individuals are responsible for this. The established religious, political, economic, cultural and other Bureaucracies everywhere foster Biblical Ignorance and question Biblical Inerrancy. This process has been further promoted by the rise of rationalism, which disbelieved the supernatural, emergence of theory of evolution, which discounted a Creator, and misapplication

of theory of relativity in social sciences, which discarded ethical absolutes. Biblical Truths are shut out both by wicked ideologies of Bureaucracies and hardening of human heart. Satan also plays his sly role in this. The Bible says: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Hardening of hearts separates one from life of God, depriving one of the divine empowerment that is required to honor the code of ethics. Bible describes the spiritual dynamics of this process: "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools…. Therefore, God gave them over (to) the sinful desires of their hearts." (Romans 1:21,22,24a)". The Bible says that the purpose of God is "that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each of us" (Acts 18:27). History proves that those who search for God with a pure heart, unprejudiced mind and intellectual honesty, find the Creator God.

Social Causes of Crime

1. Proliferation of Unjust and Violent Ideologies

The principal social cause of Bureaucratic Crime is proliferation of Pagan, Islamic, Socialist, Hindu and other Ideologies which foster injustice and violent behaviour. They in turn recruit individual cadre who have criminal tendencies and protect them by required legal frameworks and complicit criminal justice systems and officials.

2. Disintegration of Family

The principal cause of individual crime is breakdown of families. 90% of prisoners come from problematic or broken families. The dysfunctional family fails to inculcate the ethical

values in children. Many of these children become the cadre for Bureaucratic Crime system.

3. Drug Abuse

Statistics show that up to 80% of criminal offences are connected to drug abuse, including consumption of alcohol. The Bureaucratic Crime system abets and promotes drug supply.

4. Deficient Literacy

Illiteracy levels range up to 80% among prisoners. A 2003 study of inmates of the four rehabilitation centers associated with Jesus Fraternity in Kerala, showed that 74% had only primary school education or no education.

5. Defective Self-Esteem

Inferiority complex arising out of low self-esteem is a significant contributor to crime.

6. Deprived Economic Condition

Poverty is a major cause of crime. 84% of the inmates at the Jesus Fraternity's centers were from the lower economic strata. The poor are used by the Bureaucratic crime system – political parties, religious vanguards, mafias etc. Exposure to Abuse in certain prisons, 50% of the inmates themselves had been subjected to physical or sexual abuse. Many inmates at the Jesus Fraternity's centers stated that others had often treated them unjustly, which led them to crimes.

7. Urbanization

The breakdown of the rural society and urbanization contribute to crime. Disgruntled young urban poor is the most potent arsenal of the Bureaucratic crime system. Intergenerational Curse One of the causes of crime is inherited curses. The Bible itself says: "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,

punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me" (Exodus 20:5). A study of the decedents of a Christian and a Criminal in USA over a period of hundred years, showed that while the Christian's family line produced vice presidents, judges, businessmen and pastors, the Criminal's decedents included murderers, thieves, swindlers and prostitutes. Individuals may also come under curse resulting from the collective sins of the community in which he lives. Spirituality of the Ministers Before we deal with the horrifying Bureaucratic crime and minister to individuals caught up in crime, it is most important to evaluate the qualification and character of the Minister. Most fundamentally, anyone involved in a Christian Ministry ought to have had a mystical or supernatural experience of Jesus. This is often called the experience of being "born-again or saved", a "God experience" or "mystical experience of Christ" or "Christ experience". Holy Spirit grants this experience, when one humbles oneself before God, repents of one's sins, believes that Jesus paid the penalty for one's sins on the Cross and invites Jesus into one's life as Savior and Lord.

The following are the steps for obtaining a mystical experience of Christ. 1. We should believe that each of us is a sinner and ought to be sorry for our sin. 2. We should believe that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin by dying in our place and we are forgiven of our sin, because Christ has paid for our sins. 3. We should believe that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and is now alive. 4. We should believe that we will experience true life in God only by accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. We could pray as under to initiate this spiritual process "Dear God, I thank you for creating me in Your love. I admit my relationship with You have been cut off by my sin. I am sorry for all my sins. Forgive my sins. I believe that Your Son Jesus bore my sins and died to pay the penalty for my sin. I believe Jesus rose from the dead and is now alive. I accept Jesus as my personal Savior and

Lord and invite him into my life. Show me the life, you want me to live and grant me the grace to live that life. I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen".

Growing in Holiness

Next step in the spiritual ladder is growing in holiness. We are to be repentant, obedient and holy people. We obtain holiness by our new creation in Christ (ref: 2 Corinthians 5:17), and by our transformation by the renewing of our mind (ref: Romans 12:2). This holiness must be reflected in every pattern of our thoughts and style of living. We must imitate Christ and learn from Him for He is "gentle and humble in heart" (Matthew 11:29). We should not bask in the in the comfort of our good deeds or be proud of our humility. The basic qualification of a Minister is faith in the providence of God and hope in the eternal success of God's mission. It is God who called us. He is Lord of all human situations and human effort. We can trust Him to meet every one of our human, financial, or other need. Every area of our thought should reflect our faith in His faithfulness. Our strength does not come from who we are; but from whom we serve.

In fact, we have two clients: God and the whole humanity, including the prisoner. And we receive a mystical empowerment from both these constituents. Obedience and faithfulness should be the hallmark of our ministry. We ought to be obedient to God and the Holy Spirit who leads us. We ought to be faithful in spite of persecutions, oppositions, misunderstandings and failures, which are sure to occur "for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the spiritual powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). The kingdom of the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6) can be established only by consistent and constant battle with "the prince of this world" (John 12:31). Prayer is the most important source of power

for those who battle against Bureaucratic crime and who minister among prisoners. The battle against Satan is won in the battlefield of prayer. Being filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered by the gift of tongues is very helpful in our prayer life. St. Paul writes: "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Rom 8:26). Praying in Tongues, Jesus Prayer and Divine Mercy Chaplet are methods of praying without ceasing (Ref:1Thessalonians 5: 17). Word of God is another source of power. Bible says: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). As we meditate upon the Word of God, the Holy Spirit convicts our spirit of smallest sin and grants personal revelations. Eucharist is a very important source of mystical power.

Sources of Divine Empowerment

The main sources of divine empowerment are: - Constant conversation with the Lord in Personal Spontaneous Prayer. Daily study and meditation on the Bible. Daily partaking of the Eucharist Curing Crime Biblical knowledge decreases crime and injustice. This can be observed in the macro social level as well as in the individual level. Charles Colson writes: 'Reformation's biblical world view and vision of justice drove John Wesley, William Wilberforce, Lord Shaftesbury, Elizabeth Fry and thousands of others in their crusade for abolition of slave trade, the reform of values, and prevention of exploitation of children and workers in the mines and prisons.' Bible inspired William Carey to fight for abolition of Infanticide and Sati (wife burning) in India. On the individual level, studies show prisoners who attended more Bible studies in the year before their release were significantly less likely to be re-arrested. Those who had attended regularly had a recidivism rate of 14% compared to 41 % among the other inmates. 'Medical studies are confirming that those who attend church regularly and act consistently with their faith are far

better off, both physically and mentally.' Studies show that high level of religious commitment reduces depression and stress. Only 1% of the inmates of the faith based Humaita prison in Brazil had suicidal thoughts, compared to 28% of the inmates of other prisons in Brazil. Larson and Larson found that lack of church attendance is likely to contribute more to suicide than any other factor, including unemployment. The Larsons suggest that stress caused by the contradiction between belief and practice may contribute to alcoholism. Charles Colson says: "Inconsistent Christian suffers even more than the consistent atheist. The most miserable person of all is the one who knows the truth yet doesn't obey it". Recidivism level is 5% in faith based the Humaita Prison against usual rate of recidivism of 86%. Only 17% of Offenders completing all phases of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative in USA were rearrested and only 8 % were incarcerated compared to 35 % arrest and 20 % incarceration of the comparison group. The Alpha Biblical Course in UK, has made valuable contribution to the spiritual life of UK prisoners and has helped many make the change to a new life, free of crime and drugs.

Battling Bureaucratic Crime

Bureaucratic Crime, being created by nefarious Ideologies, has to be fought with proclamation of undiluted Gospel. We battle using the weapons of forgiveness (ref: Jesus in Luke 23: 34, St. Stephen in Acts 7:60, Mahatma Gandhi, Gladys Staines), payer in unison (ref: Acts 12:5, Timisoara Christians in 1989, United Prayer Meet, Kottayam 1991) and mutual assistance. Unity of Christians in spite of diversity of denominations is absolutely necessary to win this battle.

Reintegration into Family

In the APAC system of Brazil, family plays a crucial role in rehabilitation. In addition to or instead of the direct family, a foster family takes care of the inmates. Here again faith is important. Research indicates a clear 'relationship between

family health and church affiliation and activity'. 84% of strong families say religion a contributes to their strength.

Release from Drug Dependency

In addition to psychological and psychiatric help, faith is key to drug rehabilitation. Joseph Califano of Columbia University says: 'Every individual I have met who successfully came off drugs or alcohol has given religion as the key to rehabilitation.'

Impartation of Literacy

APAC and other programs have a regular instruction schedule to impart literacy.

Reinforcing Self-Esteem

Enabling inmates to realize that each of them is a special creation of God, created in His image, reinforces his self-worth. Those who have accepted Christ has the added advantage of becoming a child of God. "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12-13).

Economic Empowerment

In APAC and other programs, the inmates are trained to equip them for employment. Healing Hurts of Abuse The inmates ought to be given psychological counseling. More importantly, he should be led to forgive those who hurt him and be led through a prayer of inner healing. As early as 1923, Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur, who rescued children sold for sexual abuse in India, 'would pray that the Lord would erase painful and polluting memories from their minds'.

Reversing Urbanization

Though all negative effects of urbanization cannot be negated, considerable benefit is rendered by having the rehabilitation center, built in a well landscaped rural setting, using earthen colors for buildings. Here again the Amy Carmichael's Dohnavur center is a classic model.

Intergenerational Healing

Intergenerational healing can be effected through prayer, especially prayer for breaking of the curse.

Integration into Society

The foster family could nurture the inmate and guide him to full integration into society. While the growing crimes alarm us, recent research and positive results of various rehabilitation programs comfort us. In all these, the key element is the spiritual dynamics. Inmates in Jesus Fraternity centres vouchsafe the spiritual element of their rehabilitation process. 84% of them said that the prayer and meditation was very useful, and the rest agreed that it was useful. The spiritual dimension heals the socials ills and liberates the prisoner. Only societal prejudices prevent the fruition of this dream.

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Can I Set the Caged Bird Free?

Augustine Khrawlang Warbah

Jesus' Dreams

Dream dreams until they come true! Have you ever dreamed dreams? What do you dream? How have you made efforts to fulfil them? Are you aware that you are capable of dreaming the impossible dream? With Jesus every good thing is possible. Let us enunciate what Jesus' dreams are and what His dreams for me are. Jesus had dreams and visions to renew the Law and the prophets. He longed for the fulfilment of His ministry of bringing Good News to the poor, remission of sins, comfort for the mourners. The overshadowing of the Holy Spirit at His conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the descent of the Holy Spirit at baptism, the guidance of the Holy Spirit into the desert were true evidences of the "unction from the Holy One" (1 John 2:20) which made Him the Christ, the true anointed of the Lord.

Awareness of Who I am

Before I condemn any prisoner for any deed of his, I should first be aware of my own bondage to sin and evil. I owed a huge debt to Satan. I should admit that I need redemption. Then, I should gratefully accept and recognise that Jesus paid it all for me. In gratitude to Him I should be a channel of God's grace to the captive. By virtue of our Baptism, we too are given unction of the Holy Spirit. This mission is to enable us to carry out the very mission that Jesus undertook: We are called to help the recovery of sight to the blind - "the opening of the prison to them that are bound." The blindness is that of those who have been imprisoned in the darkness. Even

as Jesus was rejected in His days, so is He still rejected by multitudes who hear the same message from His words even now. We crucify him afresh by our sins. Every moment I heed not His word, I crucify Him anew. It is time to realise that we should honour Him as the Son of God, our Saviour and seek to show that we do so by our obedience to His word.

Anointing Meant for Kings, Prophets and Priests

The anointing refers to kings, prophets and priests who are set apart to their work (1 Kings 19:15-16; Exodus 29:7; 1 Samuel 9:16, etc.) This oil or ointment was made of various substances, and it was forbidden to imitate it, Exodus 30:34-38. Hence, those who were set apart to the work of God as king, prophet, or priest, were called the Lord's anointed, (1 Samuel 16:6; Psalm 84:9; Isaiah 45:1). Hence, Jesus, the Son of God, is called the Messiah, because God had set him apart for this work of redemption. We too are set 'apart' and called to have 'a part' in His mission.

Filled with Immense Graces and Gifts

Christ was filled with all the immeasurable gifts and bountiful graces of the Spirit, in that, sinners might be loosed from the bonds of guilt, and by His Spirit and grace from the bondage of corruption. He came to bring light to those that dwelled in the dark and to give sight to those that were blind. He now invites me and all sinners to share in His graciousness. I am called to proclaim to people the good news, the good communication that Christ heals, restores all those who are deprived of the comforts of this life, the poor or the miserable (Matthew 5:3), the afflicted (Isaiah 58:7). Jesus preached to 'the poor' the Kingdom of God (Matthew 11:5), whereas the Pharisees and Sadducees despised the poor; Jesus wants us to seek to bless them – to give comfort where it is needed, and received with gratitude. The poor, the downtrodden and the forlorn "feel" their need of some sources of comfort that the world cannot give, and accordingly our Saviour meet with His greatest success the gospel among the poor. He wants us now to continue His good news of shedding blessings

purest joys to their hearts' content. Jesus wants us to reach out to the periphery and bring them to the mainland of God's Kingdom, where every created being is welcome without any neglect or partiality.

Chase my Dreams ...

Jesus wants us to heal the broken-hearted – to console those who are deeply afflicted, or whose hearts are "broken" by external calamities or by a sense of their sinfulness, or by their feeling of being forgotten. He needs us to deliver the captives – figuratively captives into Babylon, and in our lives, captivity to sin. They are miserable and helpless. We need to lend a helping hand to them – concretely to grant deliverance to those who are in prison and restore them to their families – to give liberty to the slave and restore him to freedom, was to confer the highest benefit and impart the richest favour. In this way we are gracious to them, we literally open prison doors for them, release the mind captive under sin; we give comfort to the prisoner, and finally open all prison doors and break off all the chains of slavery, and, by preventing "crime," prevent also the sufferings that are the consequence of crime. I am called to set at liberty them that are bruised – The word "bruised," here, evidently has similar signification as "broken-hearted" or the contrite. They are "pressed down" by great calamity, "pressed" or "bruised" by the consciousness of sin. To set them "at liberty" is the same as to free them from this pressure, or to give them consolation. Our mission is also to help them heal of their scars, so that they truly become redeemed. They in turn should be 'sharers' and 'ripples' of that same grace they have received: of healing, being redeemed, being forgiven, being accepted and being loved.

It was "the Spirit of the Lord" the third person in the Trinity, to distinguish Him from all other spirits. The Spirit strengthens and qualifies and Him and all of us to do His great work: He pours abundantly all His gifts and graces: of wisdom and of understanding, of counsel and of might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. Just as that Spirit was upon Jesus,

and in Him, the first moment of His conception, which was by His power, so also He visibly descended on Him at His baptism. This proves the permanency and continuance of Him (Holy Spirit) with Him (Jesus): So too the same Spirit of Adoption which we have received at our Baptism will be upon us and within us. Fired by this Spirit, we will possess all the qualities we need to feed and free the caged birds.

By God's Power ...

Thus it is by the power of the Holy Spirit and in Jesus' most holy name that we will be able to set free the caged birds. In which way can we do that? We should offer relief, comfort, and salvation to those who are in distress, providing them with strength and hope. In this manner we are also called to continue His mission and participate in the work He started. Along with Jesus, in the following manner we can help set the cage bird free:

1. Witnessing the Anointing of Jesus

The presence of the Spirit of the Lord within Jesus signifies that Jesus is not acting in His own strength or authority but is empowered and led by the Holy Spirit. The anointing of the Spirit sets Him apart for a special purpose and equips Him for the work He is about to embark on. By Baptism we are also charged with the same power of the Spirit.

2. Preaching the Gospel to the Poor

Jesus was anointed to preach good news to the poor. This goes beyond just material poverty; it encompasses those who are spiritually impoverished, broken-hearted, and in need of hope. Jesus brings the message of salvation, restoration, and the kingdom of God to those who are in desperate need. We are called to be agents of hope and good news to the poor.

3. Healing the Broken-hearted

Jesus identifies His mission to heal the broken-hearted. He came to bring healing, comfort, and restoration to those who are emotionally wounded, grieving, or burdened with sorrow.

Through His ministry, Jesus offers hope and wholeness to those who are suffering. Our herculean task is thus to bring healing to the scarred ones.

4. Bringing Release to the Captives

Jesus came to proclaim release to the captives, not only to physical imprisonment but also to spiritual bondage. Jesus came to liberate people free from the bonds of sin, shame, guilt, oppression and all the forces that hold them captive. He frees and liberates through His sacrificial and redemptive work. Can we be partakers of this salvific work, through our little sacrifices?

5. Restoring Sight to the Blind

Jesus' role was to give sight to the blind, both physically and spiritually. Jesus came to open the eyes of those who are spiritually blind. He came to the truth of the Kingdom of God and His redemptive plan. He proved this by performing many miracles of healing the physically blind. He demonstrated His power of bringing light into the darkest places, to clarify doubts of the mind, to tell us that God the Father is LOVE and He loves us no matter how sinful we may have been. It is our mission too, to proclaim out loud this immutable truth.

6. Setting Free the Caged Birds

Jesus' purpose of coming into this world was to deliver the caged birds like you and me, crushed as we are many a time. We are burden laden, oppressed, persecuted and weighted with life's difficulties and struggles. In such moments of distress and sorrows, Jesus comes to us as relief, comfort, and salvation and provides us with courage, inspiration, strength and hope. In our turn we are called to carry out His mission and participate in the redemptive work He started.

Conclusion

We may wonder if that caged bird can once again fly. We have to strengthen its wings; we have to affirm it that its wings are powerful enough to flap once again. We need to tell our

prisoners and those who are oppressed in any form that they are meant to be birds not just chickens. They can soar high. The sky is their limit. They have the Abba Creator and Father Figure and that Jesus is their brother. Can you and I be instruments of bring change into their lives. We can begin now. The grace of the Lord, just as His Spirit hovers over chaos, will accompany us all through our endeavours! In fine, Jesus' mission and purpose calls us, His disciples, to continue His work in the world today. By preaching the Gospel, "setting the caged bird free", bringing healing, advocating for justice, sharing truth, and offering comfort, we take part fully in the mission of Jesus. Let us embrace the anointing of the Spirit and walk in the footsteps of Jesus, impacting lives and extending the kingdom of God. Let Jesus' Vision and Mission be ours too! With Jesus, "IMPOSSIBLE" will become "I'M POSSIBLE" (Lk 1:37; Mat 19:26), for truly, "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me (Phil 4:13). He can make our crooked lines straight. He can erase all our mistakes. He can wipe away our sins, and then "He also says: Their sins and evil deeds I remember no more" (Heb 10:17).

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David's Redemption: Insights on Psalm 51

Sr Santan Nago, FS

Introduction

He was rich. He was famous. He was powerful. He could do anything and he did what he wanted. He sinned. He sinned by desiring a beautiful woman whom he saw from a distance. He got her to his house and committed adultery. To cover this act he had her husband killed in the battle. He may have felt guilty but kept all these things hidden within his heart. He felt imprisoned by these acts and though living in a palace made of the best wood, he was imprisoned within himself and within the walls of his palace for many months, until one day the prophet of the Lord confronted him. This was David, the king of Israel. David was the youngest of seven sons of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah, whom God had chosen from the sheepfold to be the king of Israel. As a king, he committed these public offences. But once he came to his senses he begged for God's mercy and forgiveness with such depth of compunction pouring his heart out repeatedly and unashamedly, seeking God's pardon for his many sins, through the 19 verses of this well-known Psalm - Psalm 51.

Have Mercy upon me

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your steadfast love, according to Your abundant mercy… blot out my transgressions: David had sinned in adultery, in murder, in covering his sin, and in hardness against repentance. It took the bold confrontation of Nathan, the Prophet to shake him from this (2 Samuel 12). Yet once stunned, David came in

great honesty and brokenness before God. It is the prayer of a man who knows he has sinned, stopped all self-justification. In different words, he repeatedly pleaded for God's abundant mercy, to blot out his transgressions. To blot out means 'to wipe away', like the writing from a book. Blot me out of the book that You have written (Ex 32:32).

Wash Me from my Iniquity

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin: The Word of God through Nathan the Prophet, worked like a mirror to show David how dirty and stained he was. He had lived in that condition for about a year without an acute knowledge of his iniquity and sin. Now the sense of stain drove him to beg to be cleansed. To be washed by kneading or beating not by simple rinsing. (Alexander Maclaren)

I Know My Transgressions

For I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me: David used several words to speak of his offense against God. Such as transgression - meaning crossing the boundary; Iniquity - meaning twistedness or perversion; Sin - meaning missing the mark. As a king, David suffered this agony as a prisoner within himself and within the walls of his cedar wood palace. But David does not throw the blame on the timing, or allurement or circumstances, but takes personal responsibility and reiterates as 'my transgressions, my iniquity, my sin.

I have sinned against You

Against You, You only have I sinned: (In a way, it is not true). David had sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, their families, his family, his kingdom even against his own body. Yet all that faded into the background as he considered the greatness of his sin against God. He rightly felt that he had sinned against God and God only. And done evil in God's sight: David realized that God was there and God was looking when he

did his evil deed with all its filthiness. He was not absent from the bedroom of adultery or the place where the command to kill Uriah was given. So that You are justified in Your sentence and blameless, when You pass judgment: David's confession of sin was not only to relieve himself of the great burden of his sin and guilt, but to give glory to God. In confessing his sin, David hoped to confirm God's justice and holy character, proving that God's commands were good and just even when David broke those commands.

I was Born Guilty

Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me: (The idea is not that David was born of a sinful relationship.) The purpose is to show the depths of his sin, that it went beyond specific sinful actions all the way to a stubborn sin nature, one he was born with. The act of sin is traced back to its reason in the pollution of the nature (G. Campbell Morgan). From this and similar passages we gain the Biblical idea of original sin – the idea that all humans are born sinners, receiving a sinful nature as children of Adam and Eve. This verse is both by Jewish and Christian, by ancient and later, interpreters, generally and most truly understood of original sin. (Anthony Poole). You desire truth in the inward being, therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart: Though the sin nature was deep within David, God wanted to work deeply in him. God wanted a transformation in David all the way to the inward parts, to the hidden part that would know wisdom. David did not cry out for a superficial reform, but something much deeper.

Purge Me with Hyssop

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: David looked for God to do a work of spiritual and moral cleansing, and to do it in connection with the atoning sacrifice of a substitute. Hyssop was used to apply the blood of the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the

basin, touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside of the door of your house until morning. (Ex. 12:22). Hyssop was also used to sprinkle the priest's purifying water. Then a clean person will take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent, on all the furnishings, on the persons who were there, and on whoever touched the bone, the slain, the corps, or the grave. (Num. 19:18). In the Levitical law it was the priests who used the hyssop to sprinkle the purifying water. Here the psalmist petitions the Lord to be his Priest by taking the hyssop and by declaring him cleansed from all sin (Willem Van Gemeren). Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow: David knew that God's cleansing was effective. His sin was a deep stain but purity could be restored. We sense that David spoke with the voice of faith; it can be difficult for the convicted sinner to believe in such complete cleansing. It takes faith to believe God despite the doubt and difficulty. "God could make him as if he had never sinned at all. Such is the power of the cleansing work of God upon the heart that he can restore innocence to us, and make us as if we had never been stained with transgression at all" (Charles Spurgeon).

Let the Bones that You have Crushed Rejoice

Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that You have crushed rejoice: David felt his sins were so severe that he felt as if his bones were broken. Confident that this was the work of the Holy Spirit, David could pray that it would lead to joy and gladness that out of his brokenness David would rejoice. It is a terrible thing to be so directly confronted with the blackness of our sins, yet God means even this to be a prelude to joy and gladness. The restoration of joy is the goal.

Hide Your Face from my sins

Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities: Repeatedly, David asked for forgiveness and restoration. In the repetition we see that this was not a light thing for David.

It was not easily expressed or easily received by faith. There was a sense in which he had to contend both with God and himself to bring him to the place he should be.

Create in me a Clean Heart

Create in me a clean heart, O God: David felt that it wasn't enough if God simply cleaned up the heart he had. The plea indicated he needed a new heart from God, a clean heart. In this David anticipated one of the great promises to all who believe under the New Covenant: I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). And put a new and right spirit within me: Along with a new and clean heart, David needed a steadfast spirit to continue in the way of godliness. This expressed a humble reliance upon the LORD.

Do Not Take Your Holy Spirit from me

Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me: Once again David expressed his on-going reliance upon God. For him, the whole point of cleansing and restoration was to renew his relationship with God. David didn't want a God who cleansed him yet remained distant. Do not cast me away from Your presence: "Cain's punishment, which possibly David might have here in mind, as being guilty of murder" (John Trapp). Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me: "The likely background to this fear of being a castaway was the example of Saul, from whom the Spirit of the Lord had departed (1 Sam. 16:14)."

Restore to me the Joy of Your Salvation

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation: In his many months of unconfessed sin, David felt the misery of spiritual defeat. He wanted once again the joy appropriate to salvation, to those whom the LORD rescues. And sustain in me a willing Spirit: This expresses again David's confidence in God for

his future. He did not dream of upholding himself. Such self-confidence is what typically leads even good people into sin.

I Will Teach Transgressors Your Ways

Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You: In the dark days before this confession of sin, David was not able to teach those who were far from God and saw none converted to God. (We don't know if David never made the attempt because of a sense of guilt, or if he attempted and saw no blessing on his work. One way or another, getting this right with God was key to effectiveness in his spiritual work.)

Deliver me from Bloodshed

Deliver me from bloodshed O God, O God of my salvation: David was deeply aware of his sin of murder against Uriah (2 Samuel 11). Though he makes no specific reference to his adultery in this psalm, he felt that he must make specific mention of this great sin. Such a request presented to the God of my salvation would surely be answered. "The unhappy criminal entreats, in this verse, for the divine help and deliverance, as if he not only heard the voice of innocent blood crying from the ground, but as if he saw the murdered Uriah coming upon him for vengeance, like an armed man" (Bishop George Horne). And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your deliverance: David knew that with his guilt dealt with before God, he would again be able to sing aloud.

My Mouth Will Declare Your Praise

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise: David asks the Lord to open his mouth, perhaps, because his mouth is shut due to this sin and the guilt he carries with. Unless the Lord wipes out the blame of his sins, he is not able to on his own declare the praises of God.

No Delight in Sacrifice

For You have no delight in sacrifice: He understood that though animal sacrifice had its place, what God really desired was in the human repentant heart. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart O, God, You will not despise: David had a great love for the House of the LORD and had sponsored great sacrifices unto God. And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling (2 Samuel 6:13); They brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before the Lord. When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. (2 Samuel 6:17-18). Yet he understood that one could sacrifice an animal or many animals to God without a broken and contrite heart. Perhaps David had offered many sacrifices at God's altar in his months of unconfessed sin. He recognized the emptiness of all that, and the value of his present broken spirit, broken and contrite heart.

You Will Not Despise

These, O God, You will not despise: It's easy to imagine that many in David's day would despise his broken and contrite heart. What he did – taking whatever woman he wanted and killing anyone who got in his way – these were expected conduct for the kings of the world. Perhaps his neighbouring kings were mystified as to why any of this bothered David. To him, it did not matter what others thought; God did not despise his broken and contrite heart, and that was enough.

Do Good in Your Good Pleasure

Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem: David realized that in his sin he did not only fail as a man, a husband, and a father. He also failed as a king over

God's people. He humbly asked God to restore His favour to the kingdom. We don't know if there was an obvious demonstration of God's displeasure against the kingdom of Israel in the period of David's unconfessed sin. Whether there was or was not, David understood that there was an aspect of restoration in terms of the kingdom that needed to be addressed.

Delight in Right Sacrifices

Then You will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on Your altar: Under the First Covenant, David knew that God was not yet done with animal sacrifices. They would still offer bulls on Your altar. With the heart issues addressed, those sacrifices could be full of meaning and benefit. It's also possible that David had in mind the sacrifices that were regularly offered on behalf of Israel, and that they could be restored to meaning and benefit on behalf of the nation.

Conclusion

As a person confined within the thick walls of a prison, that incarcerated David, as a result of his sins, David's repentance and reconciliation, elevated him to a higher level. With the outpouring of the amazing verses of this psalm from his contrite heart, God reclaimed him as person after God's own heart. This psalm has been long beloved by believers: *It was recited in full by Sir Thomas More and Lady Jane Grey when they were on the scaffold in the bloody days of Henry VIII and Queen Mary. William Carey, the great pioneer missionary to India, asked that it might be the text of his funeral sermon.* (James Montgomery Boice)

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Foucauldian Incarnation Spirituality

Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS

Incarnation Spirituality

Incarnation is a Mystery. And mystery is something that is beyond human comprehension. Brain Hebblethwaite describes incarnation spirituality as the belief that God has made known his love and reconciled men to himself by coming amongst them in the person of his Son and by making himself vulnerable, not only to the physical and mental conditions of human life, but also to hostility and a cruel death, was bound to shape, if not to determine, a specifically Christian way of life in the world1. Incarnation is a mystery of descent, a mystery of kenosis, of nothingness and of humility. In Bethlehem, Nazareth and at Calvary, Jesus humbled Himself and became absolutely nothing. "Who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being; he was a humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross" (Phil 2, 1-16). Bernard Clairvaux's mystical theology explicates that Christ became incarnate in order to open a way access to the unsearchable depths of God who otherwise would have remained entirely hidden from us. St Thomas Aquinas illustrates that as the human is weak, it must be led to knowledge and love of God through sensible objects, of which the chief are the humanity and passion of Christ. Julian of Norwich wrote in his book *Revelations of Divine* love that Christ in his body bears us up to heaven. Karl Rahner states

1 Brian Hebblethwaite, "Incarnation*", A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed., Gordon s. Wakefield, SCM Press, London 1996, 210.

that in the end it is Christ's glorified humanity that is for all eternity, the permanent openness of our finite being to the living God. In the same way, Mary, mother of Jesus strove to be nothing by being humble and simple.

Foucauldian Incarnation Spirituality

Charles de Foucauld who had great attraction towards the mystery of incarnation is a best example for this simplicity and humility. He believed that Jesus was the One who always took the last place. In imitation of the humility of Jesus, Charles, who won the gold medal from the Paris Geographical Society, worked as a servant at the convent of the Poor Clares in Nazareth. Let me quote from his meditation on Incarnation: "God the infinite, the almighty, becomes human, the least of all human beings. For myself, let me always seek the last place of all, so that I can be as lowly as my master". For Charles incarnation is an expression of unconditional love. "For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn 3,16). It is an expression of unconditional love of Father God, Son God, God the Holy Spirit, Mary, and Joseph, because all of them unconditionally co-operated in the realisation of the incarnation. For instance, when angel Gabriel came to Mary with the good news of incarnation, Mary generously responded: "You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said" (Lk 1, 38). During one of his Nazareth retreats, meditating on the incarnation Charles wrote:

> See in this Incarnation the love for men, the love which God has for them and, consequently which you must have followed His example in order to be as perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect [...]. This love, as it is active, acting and deep, made Him cross in one leap the distance separating the finite from the infinite and made him employ for our salvation this means, exterior and unheard,

that of Incarnation: He, God and Creator, comes to live on this earth.

Nazareth Virtues

Charles de Foucauld developed the incarnation spirituality in a special way which later came to be known as Nazareth spirituality. Nazareth spirituality is nothing but the imitation of the toilsome, humble and hidden lives of Jesus Mary and Joseph at Nazareth. Their life styles become one's model. Those who wish to follow this spirituality regularly contemplate on the activities and words of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Nazareth. From the prolonged contemplation of Jesus' life in Nazareth Charles developed certain virtues to practice called the Nazareth virtues and I hope a brief description on these virtues may help you at this juncture of your commitment.

Manual Labour

Manual labour is the first virtue of Nazareth spirituality. We know that Joseph was a carpenter. Mary had to do household works. Of course, Jesus might have helped both of them. During a meditation at Nazareth Charles asked: "O God, inspire me with the knowledge of manual work". The answer from the Lord became his philosophy of work:

> Work hard enough to earn your daily bread, but less than ordinary workers. They work to earn as much as possible. You and I work only so as to earn a very frugal diet and the poorest of clothing and lodging, together with enough to give a small sum as alms. We do not work more than this, because our detachment from material things and our love of penance lead us to want only the poorest possible clothing, lodging and food, and only what is absolutely necessary. We work less than other workers because on the one hand we have fewer material needs, and on the other, we have greater spiritual needs.

Jesus' daily labour in Nazareth was an expression of the work of salvation which was completed on the cross and in the resurrection. In the same way, our work should lead to the salvation of the humanity. How is it possible? The Lord's answer was to work in constant recollection of the Lord, working with the Lord and for the Lord. Brother Lawrence

Charity

Charity is another feature of the Nazareth spirituality. This is a determinate and concrete manner of loving men and women. Jesus, by his incarnation, united Himself to each human being (GS 22) and invites us to be united with every member of the Mystical Body (RH 13-14). Mary gives us an example for this. She visits Elizabeth, immediately after the annunciation. Let us imagine the journey of Mary to the house of Elizabeth and let us meditate how Mary helped Elizabeth. "Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth… Mary stayed with her some three months and then went home" (Lk 1,39-56). There is a extraordinary stillness or silence in her. She is helping Elizabeth in a meditative way. Isn't it? Her style of doing charity has a hallow of serenity. She does not want to proclaim it everybody.

Poverty

Poverty is the next virtue of Nazareth spirituality. Were Jesus, Mary and Joseph poor? I think, they were. At least during their exile in Egypt. Poverty has a body and a soul. The soul of poverty is poverty of the spirit as seen in the beatitudes. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs" (Mt 5,3). The body of poverty is the concrete manner of living as a poor person. R. Voillaume, the first follower of Charles de Foucauld and the founder of Little Brothers states:

> Father Foucauld, fixing his eyes on Jesus at Nazareth,

> said to himself: I have to be poor like Christ was. And he deduced two conclusions: his poverty would be based on daily manual work and would also be a complete detachment, in union with the heart of Christ detached from everything and only caring about redemption, which was His work as a Redeemer.

Why Charles wanted to be poorer than the poorest worker. It was because he came to teach men to despise honours, and to despise this world's goods. He himself wanted to give them an example of the most extreme poverty and the most profound abasement. He took the decision to live in poverty, abjection and suffering so that in everything in his life he might be beside his Master. We could say that maximum inconvenience was the maxim of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Nazareth. We know that Jesus had neither a house to be born nor a tomb to be buried. But modern disciples of Jesus, like we religious the so-called close imitators of Jesus have everything. This is what is called counter witnessing and especially in countries like India this will produce counter results. This is what the missions of Catholic Church lack today. Here I would like to share my own experience in the field of prison ministry. The success behind this mission was this principle of maximum inconvenience.

Personal Holiness

Personal holiness is another characteristic of the Nazareth spirituality. Angel Gabriel greeted Mary: "Hail Mary full of Grace" which we recite every day in our Rosary: Mary's life was a life of grace. She lived always in sanctity, that is, without the stain of sin. According to our Catholic faith Mary, even from her conception was immaculate, that is why we celebrate and prepare for the feast of the immaculate conception. It is because of this purity of life that she was taken up to heaven with body and soul which we remember during the feast of assumption on 15 August. In his Ephraim Retreat Charles

wrote: "The magnitude of the favours I have done for you is a sign I myself have given you of the magnitude of the sanctity that will be asked of you. So then, do not be as foolish to believe that it is pride to long for, hope for and wish to attain a very high level of sanctity"2. This personal holiness is not for our own sake but this is for the sanctification of mankind. The *Ephraim Retreat Notes* continue:

> Sanctify souls by silently carrying me among them. To souls in silence, leading the hidden life in solitude far from the world, I tell all, all, all of you to work for the sanctification of the world, to work in the world as my mother did, wordlessly, silently; carry me among them by setting up an altar among them, a tabernacle, carrying the gospel to them not by word of mouth but by the persuasive force of example, not by speaking, but by living; sanctify the world, carry me into the world, all you pious souls living a hidden and silent life as Mary carried me to John3.

Obedience

In the Nazareth spirituality obedience is a significant virtue which we find in all the three personalities of the Holy Family. In Lk 2, 51-52 we read: "He went down with them then and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and in favour with God and with people" (Lk 2, 51-52). In Lk 1, 38 we see the obedient nature of Mary: Let it happen to me as you have said". Matthew explains well the obedience of Joseph: "When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do" (Mt 1, 24).

Sacred Scriptures

We experience the presence of the incarnate God in the Word of God. The Word of God is not merely a book but is a living

2 *ES,* 162 ff.

3 *ES*, 128 ff. See also *Autobiography*, 80.

person4. Church has always venerated the Word of God and has always regarded and continues to regard the Word of God as her supreme Rule (DV 21). To read and reread the Word of God should be one of our important daily duties. "Read the holy gospels over and over continually in order to have Jesus' action, words and thoughts constantly in mind. In this way, come to think, speak and act as Jesus would, and not by the examples and modes of the world, whose practices we quickly fall back into if we take our eyes away from our Divine Model". We should not be satisfied merely with reading the Scriptures. It should be our daily routine to meditate and to meditate again on the Word of God. A true biblical spirituality can never be complete without a sincere attempt to live out the Word of God, to live out the Word of God in its maximum concreteness until the Incarnation occurs in us. As St Paul writes until Christ takes birth in me. He became filled with the spirit of Jesus in the gospels by reading his words and meditating over and over again on his deeds. It did to his soul what a drop of water does when it falls always at the same place over and over on the same paving stone. Charles writes that our whole existence, our whole being, should cry the gospel from the rooftops. Our whole personality should spell Jesus; all our acts, our entire life should proclaim that we belong to Jesus and mirror the gospel life.

Jesus' Presence

We experience the presence of the incarnate God especially in the Holy Eucharist. As Vatican Council II in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy affirmed, it was to the Holy Eucharist that his whole life and apostolate was directed and it was from the Holy Eucharist that he received the power for his apostolate. "Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity

4 "Ma per Carlo il Vangelo non è soltanto il libro che dona la conoscenza di quel Signore che egli adora, ma anche "il modello unico" […]. Per Carlo il Vangelo non è un libro, ma una persona vivente: è Gesù, è il suo Maestro, il suo unico Maestro". *Il Piccolo fratello Carlo di Gesù*, 10.

of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows. For the goal of the apostolic endeavour is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the Sacrifice and to eat the Lord's supper" (SC 10). Wherever the Sacred Host is to be found, there is the living God, there is the Saviour, just as surely as when he was living and talking in Galilee and Judea, as real as He now is in heaven. Holy Communion is the most important moment in our day to day life where we touch, taste and feel God Himself. The second article of the commentary on the statues for the *Lay Association* states the need for adoration of the most Holy Eucharist:

> The brothers and sisters shall endeavour to spend everyday at least a quarter of an hour in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle or exposed. They must have a thirst for exposition and for the benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament and must profit from it. The brothers and sisters shall also try to propagate among others the adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament for the glory of God and for the good of souls.

This Eucharistic communion if it is genuine and profound will not exhaust itself in the adoration of the Holy Eucharist in the Tabernacle, the Head of the Body of Christ, instead it will invite us to go out of the chapel to see the other members of the Body of Christ, that is, to see the presence of the Holy Eucharist in the faithful of the Church. By His incarnation, the Son of God has in a certain way united Himself to each human being (GS 22; RH 13-14)5. Charles saw the presence of the Holy Eucharist in all others, particularly in his spiritual Father, in his family members, in the superior of his Trappist monastery and in the faithful. In his letter to Louis Massignon, Charles well expressed his liturgical spirituality:

5 See C. De Foucauld, *Seul avec Dieu*, 12-15.

> I think there is no saying in the gospel that made a deeper impression on me and more transformed my life than this one: "Whatever you did to one of the least of these you did it me". It is important to remember that these are the words of Uncreated Truth and come from the same lips that had said: "This is my Body […] this is my Blood".

This compelled Charles to seek out Jesus and love Him in the "least ones", the sinners, the poor.

Fraternity

The fundamental principle behind the virtue of fraternity is that every Christian is an apostle and as an apostle, he/she must consider every human being as brother or sister. This is true since mankind has only one Father. So all must see every human being as a child of God created in the image and likeness of God, a soul redeemed by the blood of Jesus, a soul Jesus loves, a soul we must love as we love ourselves and whose salvation we must work for6. The first trait of fraternity is the infinite respect for each person and a true, humble and close intimacy with others. Simple acts of shared living and fraternal service to others is the sign of fraternity. Charles is known as a universal brother. He became universal brother not by serving the whole of humanity but by welcoming with a smile the visitors who came to his fraternity, giving them time to chat, helping them in whatever way possible, being ready to receive help in his own necessity, showing interest and learning the customs and traditions of the Tuaregs. To be a member of a community means to be a brother or sister to one and all. It implies the recognition of the other as equal - equal in dignity and worth. This attitude towards the other as equal is both an act of natural justice, giving the other the respect which is due him, and looking upon him in faith as an image of God, one redeemed by Christ.

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6 From an unpublished letter to J. Hours, on 3 May 1912. See A. De Jesus, *Brother Charles of Jesus*, 51.

Fraternity means the spring of friendship. Perhaps the synonym for fraternity may be communion. The model and the source of every fraternity is, first of all, the Trinitarian communion, where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit enjoy equality, fraternity and liberty; secondly it is the holy family where Jesus, Mary and Joseph. We should experience this Trinitarian communion and fraternity in the Holy Eucharist. Our friendship with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is the foundation of our friendship with others. Therefore we learn brotherhood of Jesus from meditations on the gospel and from his adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This is also the best answer or solution to the loneliness of religious life.

Being Spirituality

Incarnation spirituality reaches its summit in the spirituality of being, of bearing witness by becoming another Christ. This invites us to become more than a "doer" - or a person of doing, instead to become a "be-er" - a person of being. It is a spirituality of being; a spirituality of silent example; a spirituality of preaching not by words but by life witness. This is a spirituality of presence like that of the Eucharist where life witness is the most important characteristic. This means to be with the people as a fragrant flower and a burning candle. The gospel proclaimed by Charles from the roof top was his own life. During the 1897 Nazareth Retreat, he heard the Lord's words: "It is part of your vocation to proclaim the gospel from the roof tops, not by what you say, but by how you live"7. In a letter to his cousin Louis de Foucauld, he expressed, "The Word is mighty, but example, love and prayer are a thousand times more so. We must give them the example of a perfect life, of a higher and holy life"8. Article 28 of the *Union Directory* states: "By their example, the Brothers and Sisters must be a living sermon: each one of them must be a

7 *Autobiography*, 57.

8 In his letter to his cousin Louis de Foucauld on 28 November, 1892. *Autobiography*, 23

model of the evangelical life. Seeing them, one must see what is Christian life, what the Christian religion is like, what is the gospel, and who is Jesus"9.

The Church has been preaching, and preaching often without life. The time has come now to preach without words, to preach by life because the world is fed up and polluted with preaching merely by words. Charles de Foucauld preached without words. He preached with his being, with his existence, with his life. During the eight days at Ephraim he wrote:

> It is possible to do good to men - great good, infinite good, divine good - without using words, without preaching, without fuss, but by silence and by giving them a good example. What kind of example? The example of devotion, of duty towards all men, loving kindness to those in one's midst and domestic duties fulfilled in holiness.

Similarly, during the Ephraim Retreat, Charles received the message from Jesus that he should work with Jesus as did Mary the mother of Jesus, without words, in silence and in the midst of people who did not know Jesus. This was a command to carry Jesus to them by setting up an altar, a tabernacle among them. He was to take the gospel there not by preaching it with his lips, but by preaching it with his example, not by proclaiming it but by living it10. It becomes even more clear in his letter to H. de Castries:

9 "Par leur exemple, les Frères et Soeurs doivent être une prédication vivante: chacun d'eux doit être un modèle de vie évangélique. En les voyant on doit voir ce qu'est la vie chrétienne, ce qu'est la religion chrétienne, ce qu'est l'évangile, ce qu'est Jésus". *OS*, 490.

10 Charles writes in his meditation on Mary's visit to Elizabeth: "Elle part pour sanctifier saint Jean, pour lui annoncer la bonne nouvelle, pour l'évangéliser et le sanctifier, non par ses paroles, mais en portant en silence Jésus auprès de lui, au milieu de sa demeure". C. De Foucauld, *Nouveaux écrits spirituels*, 225-226. See also *ES*, 128-129.

> They would live strictly cloistered, in penitence and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and not go out of their enclosure or preach, but offer hospitality to all who come, good or bad, friend or foe, Moslem or Christian. This would be evangelization not by the word but by the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, the offering of the Holy Sacrifice, prayer, penitence, the practice of the evangelical virtues, and charity, a brotherly charity offered to all.

In Nazareth the words of Jesus came to him, revealing his personal vocation: "Preach the gospel silently as I did in my hidden life and also as did Mary and Joseph"11. In the *Oeuvres spirituelles*, there is another beautiful statement that expresses the idea: "The amount of good we do does not depend on what we say or what we do, but on what we are. It depends on the grace that accompanies our activities, to the extent that Jesus lives in us and that it is Jesus himself who acts in and through us".

Conclusion

We have been discussing the spirituality of incarnation and the virtues that evolve from this spirituality like simplicity, manual work, poverty, holiness, obedience, habit of reading and meditating the Sacred Scriptures and the company of Eucharistic Jesus, fraternity, or friendship etc. All these we could summarise into one word, that is, to be. Just being, being like a flower in the garden and like the Holy Eucharist in the Tabernacle.

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11 *Autobiography*, 46. René Voillaume writes that the mission of the *Little Sisters and Brothers* is to be a witness and a leaven and a modest sort of prefiguration of what we shall all be like when in the fullness of time all has been consummated. It is a vocation to be a light; a call to others remaining in the world. See R. Voillaume, "The Spirituality of Charles de Foucauld", 31.

Article
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Pages 65-72

Right to Wages behind Bars: Prison Wages are far Below the Minimum in Nearly Every State

Abhinay Lakshman[1]

It was a jet-black Jaguar one week, a Mercedes the next; sometimes, a drive within the city or a cross-country trip to Goa. Surender Singh was 27, working for a private cab service, doing what he loved - driving. His days were spent ferrying magistrates and lawyers around the city but the nights he reserved for his friends. "We were a large group of friends who were into bikes and cars. Some of them were dancers. And at night, I would use my friends' bikes for stunts. They would bet on me," he says. Born into a cross-cultural home - with a father from Delhi and mother from Tamil Nadu - Singh had just got married and had his first child. "I stopped the stunts after a few accidents. I just kept my head down and got more driving work and soon I started driving people across the country," he continues. "I also liked to sing, and had started scoring gigs at local pubs or neighbourhood functions. Beyond that, the memory fades a little. It was 10 years ago." Singh is sitting at a cafe in West Delhi, a month after being released from jail on permanent bail. He is wearing a crisp white shirt, tucked into a pair of jeans, and is sporting a black cap. He takes a deep breath, as if in preparation to talk about the worst decade of his life - the time he spent inside Tihar Jail on murder charges in a road rage case.

1 Hindu, March 15,2024.

"The first two months, I was asked to sweep the prayer field, clean the toilets, mop the floor, and so on. It took me a while to find the rhythm of the prison," says Singh, explaining how he worked through the various departments at Tihar Jail No.1. "It did not really seem like work until I started needing the money to send back home." That's when Singh realised that as an undertrial, he had to write to the prison authorities asking to be put on the payroll. "I submitted the papers, and earned a little over ₹2,000 the first time. It took a while for the money to start coming in, however. The first few years, the wages would be staggered and we would get the accumulated amount only every other month," he recalls, his smile fading away. India's roughly 1,400 prisons house 5.73 lakh inmates (as of 2022), over 75% of whom are undertrials. All of them have, at some point during their time inside, worked in one capacity or the other, irrespective of whether or not they were paid for it. This is despite the landmark Supreme Court judgment from 1998 that states no inmate can be put to work without pay. In addition, the Model Prison Manual, 2003, which is the guiding principle for prison management in India, stipulates that "the salaries given to workers should not be minimal or trifling, but rather fair and equitable. These rates, which must be paid to employees, must be standardised and frequently changed in compliance with government notices clarifying/ changing the appropriate minimum wages". And, it is up to the individual State governments to fix minimum wages for prison inmates based on their broad classification as skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled workers. As of 2022, in at least 14 States and Union Territories, the minimum prison wage for skilled work is set at less than ₹100 per day. Thus, a convict in Maharashtra, Goa, Haryana or Assam earns just about ₹70 (average) a day for skilled work, while his counterpart in Delhi's Tihar Jail makes between ₹194 (unskilled) and ₹308 (skilled). For comparison, the regular minimum wages in the Capital are ₹495 and ₹600, respectively; it is ₹307 and ₹417 in Goa; and ₹292 and ₹338 in Haryana.

Rehab and Skilling

The idea of prison as a place for correction and improvement has its roots in the early 20th century global human rights movement, and paid work is possibly the most important part of jail reform and rehabilitation. Not only do wages accord dignity to prisoners' labour, they also incentivise good behaviour and productivity besides fostering emotional well-being. Prison labour also helps these institutions reduce their daily operating costs besides equipping those incarcerated with skills or training for gainful employment upon release. Retired IPS officer Kiran Bedi, who won the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1994 for her reform measures at Tihar Jail, says that prisoners with professional skills, whether undertrials or convicted, must be identified to train others. "We can build on time in hand with prisoners, and create an ecosystem wherein prisons can become rehab and skilling centres. When a prisoner enters the system, a work profile with details of his education and employment must be created and shared across jails. His skills must be marketed so work orders can be accepted from anywhere," she says, adding that such systems may already exist in some jails in the country.

Most prisons have manufacturing units for daily grocery items such as oils and spices, workshops for woodwork, metalwork, candle-making units, garment factories, and so on. Some like the Meerut District Jail have a unit that produces cricket kits, while prisons in Maharashtra and Kerala have inmates operating bakeries and eateries. In Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, inmates run petrol pumps. In 2022, prisons all over India sold products worth ₹267.03 crore. Says Balram Kumar Upadhyay, Director General of Prisons & Correctional Services in Kerala, "We are in the process of synchronising the work of prisoners and vocational courses in tune with the requirements of the local economy. Inmates are also made aware of the assistance they can get from the social justice department to set up small-scale entrepreneurship on their release."

There's Room for Creativity in Indian Prisons

However, it is in the physical day-to-day running of the prisons themselves that most inmates are engaged in - from cooking and cleaning to managing wage rosters, phone booths, volunteering for legal aid, and running libraries. Lawyer and activist Sudha Bharadwaj, who spent three years behind bars in Pune's Yerwada Jail and Mumbai's Byculla Jail after her arrest in the Bhima-Koregaon case, speaks highly of the women convicts at Yerwada whose daily toil keeps the jail machinery running. "These women grow the rice, green leafy vegetables, onions and radishes that are a wholesome part of our diet in jail. There is also factory work, sewing, weaving and some auto spare parts jobs. The most unskilled is the rolling of agarbattis, again earning paltry wages. What the women earn allows them to buy some items such as soaps, shampoo, nappies for their babies, notebooks, etc.," she says, adding, "But work is also important to fill up time, to maintain sanity, to feel worthwhile and useful."

Choice to Work

Most prisons across the country largely put only convicts to work compulsorily - about 25% of the prison population - as part of their sentence. The undertrials are given the option to either work (without pay) or go for vocational training. For instance, in Bihar, only the convicts are entitled to wages in exchange for the work they do. Undertrials may choose to work but this will only be counted towards "good behaviour" and will not get them any wages. But, in Uttar Pradesh, both convicts and undertrials are paid for their work. In Telangana too, both are entitled to equal wages but undertrials have a choice of whether they want to work or not, just like in Delhi's Tihar. According to G. Thangavelu, a former life convict recently released from the Central Jail in Salem, Tamil Nadu, "Prisoners get work at the whims and fancies of jail officials. Also, we are paid poorly and not as per the Minimum Wages

Act. In 1990, after conviction, I was assigned to work at a boot workshop in Vellore Central Prison though I was not skilled at the job. I got 50 paise as wages per day. In 1992, the government hiked it to ₹2 but there was a delay in payment. We went on a strike demanding our wages and all of those who agitated were shifted to different prisons in the State," says the 67-year-old. Currently, convicts engaged in prison industries in Tamil Nadu are paid between ₹160 and ₹200 per day. The wages are modified by a Wage Fixation Committee every five years.

The arbitrary categorisation of work as skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled is another point of contention. "Imagine this, for three to four months, I was the librarian at Tihar jail. I had to open the library, bring the books, categorise them, do the lending, and maintain the space. I also managed to write and send requests for books, newspapers, magazines and other reading materials for inmates to use. And this work was categorised only as semi-skilled," says Natasha Narwal, a student activist who was jailed for 13 months under UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967), in a case related to the anti-CAA protests in New Delhi. Says Thangavelu, "I had to struggle a lot to mark myself as a skilled labourer. I worked at a clothes store for the last six years before joining the laundry service, which was newly introduced."

Prisoners also bemoan the fact that a sizeable portion of their wages goes towards deduction under various heads. "Earlier, 70% of my salary used to be deducted. Towards the end, only 20% was deducted. We would take ₹4,000 or ₹5,000 when we went home on parole. Despite the meagre sum, it was a solace for our family members." As per the 1998 judgment, a part of prisoners' wages must be deducted towards two heads: one, towards a victims' compensation fund and the other towards the maintenance and upkeep of the jail and amenities used by the inmates. "In essence, this second component is asking the inmates to pay for their own incarceration," says Narwal.

According to a senior officer of the Prison and Correctional Services in Tamil Nadu, the percentage of deduction from convicts' wages is very low now when compared to previous years. "The wages are increased by the State government from time to time. The prisoner can choose to pocket his earnings or have it sent home. They are also permitted to use the money for purchase of articles of personal use from the prison canteen," he says. In Delhi, Tihar's Director-General Sanjay Baniwal says there have been rapid improvements in the Capital's prisons as well. He says that the 16 jails of Tihar now have 34 working units that train and employ inmates. "We're reinventing ourselves to suit the modern market. The inmates are efficient in creating good quality products for both commercial and personal use. The task right now is to approach retailers and online markets to scale up our business," he says, adding that most orders they get are from the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court for stationery items.

Yet, according to data, in Delhi where undertrials outnumber convicts 10:1 in a prison population of over 19,000 inmates, only 3,174 undertook vocational training in 2022. Senior prison administrators in Bihar, Telangana, Delhi and Tamil Nadu who spoke to *The Hindu* insist that they maintain the highest possible standards of working conditions within the prisons in an effort to turn punitive labour into rehabilitative labour. But rehabilitative to what extent, ask ex-convicts and former inmates, who allege that the labour is far from useful for employment after their jail term. Also, the working conditions within continue to be punishing in nature. "So much of the work that the inmates do is under some form of duress. When we first walk in, the cleaning work begins, and after that, almost everything that you are assigned is dependent on how the people in power perceive you," says Narwal. "Most days, we would work for six to seven hours but only four hours would be clocked. The jail officials would decide that a particular task takes 'x' number of hours and

the inmate will get paid only for those hours, regardless of how much time the task actually takes. And they would assign cleaning duty on Sundays, so they could say it is a holiday and not have it count towards paid hours." According to Thiyagu, a former life-convict-turned-writer and social activist, and coordinator of the Joint Action Committee Against Custodial Torture, "The labour assigned to a prisoner is not useful for him after his release. The government should have a plan for rehabilitation and employment of released prisoners. In the absence of such a plan, will any private entity give him a job? The government should set an example by giving employment to such persons."

Second Innings

Santosh Rao is not a very large man. Dressed in blue jeans and a black jacket, he might be just another face in the crowd at West Delhi's Pacific Mall but a few kilometres away, inside the jails of Tihar, his voice is legendary and unmistakable. "I came to know about Rao after I first heard his voice on the PA system inside my jail," says Singh. "This man had started a radio station inside the jail and was running music classes, accepting inmates into his cohort. I remember thinking to myself that I could not have asked for a better opportunity." Rao, a freelance recording artist, who has worked with Akashwani Bhawan, FM stations and recorded music, had the idea of working with prison inmates of Delhi and set up the Lakshay Foundation in 2011. "We started the first radio station in jail that year itself," Rao says, adding the response was not what he expected at all. "You see, in prison, there is not much entertainment. The few inmates who had the chance to provide it were treated like gods. They were in charge of playing music through the PA system, taking requests, and performing on special occasions, so there was a lot of interest in the programme," he says, adding that he admitted only talented inmates.

"Not everyone inside the jail will be able to pick up things like music - careers where a criminal past might not necessarily be a deterrent. And even in my class, it is not possible that all inmates will be able to learn and use their talents outside," says Rao, adding that he continues to help his students once they are released. "The moment I was accepted to Rao's class, I knew this was my place," Singh says, beaming. "I used to just sing before but I learned to play the guitar and the keyboard at these classes." Singh is now looking to rebuild his life - this time with a career in music, "mostly for my family, my wife and daughter, and my mother". As part of Rao's group, he was among the first batch of prison inmates to score a show at the India Habitat Centre two years ago. "All I can say is that I got lucky finding the people I did when I did. I can only hope others on the inside have the same luck." For Madhavan (name changed) too, his time inside the district jail in Kerala's Ernakulam district - where he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for murder nearly two decades ago - was not completely in vain. He found respite in farming after he was assigned the job, and now following his release from jail, makes a living doing the same. "Though the prison department has no system for following up on prisoners on their release, I went looking for him. He now runs a vegetable farm on a leased land at Kolancherry (along the eastern suburbs of Ernakulam). There are many such ex-prisoners who have found a decent living inspired by prison labour," says O.J. Thomas, Welfare Officer at Ernakulam District Jail.

Rehabilitation & Reintegration
Reformative Explorations
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Pages 73-79

Lord, I Wish Whatever You Wish

Sr Adele Korah SCCG

Introduction

Man proposes, God disposes is a popular statement we come across often in life. People state it when some unforeseen event occurs in one's life. This is what once I heard from a lady, Monica, the mother of Jayson. Mrs. Monica wept uncontrollably each time she thought of her son thrown behind the bars. She prayed on her knees for her son she bore in her womb. As I was listening to her, I could understand that she was speaking in great pain and disappointment. She wanted her son to become great whom society will look up to. But tragically at an 8nexpected moment in the life of her son's life and of her family Jayson was thrown in to the prison cell. I comforted her saying that I would sit by her son's side and give him the needed help in his moments of loneliness and pain. God who is merciful and forgiving has His own ways to redeem him.

Childhood

Jayson was the younger son of two in the family. Jayson's parents had retired and they had purchased a new house where they were well settled. The elder son Joel had a very good job and was married and he had two kids. Jayson, the younger son was employed in a firm after he graduated himself. The parents brought up both the sons with love and care. The elder brother was smarter and very intelligent. Jayson had a low self-image and developed an inferiority complex before

his elder brother. His parents noticed that Jayson longed for companions outside his home. He had many girlfriends and used to spend a lot of time with them in clubs. He also was using drugs very often. He used to return home late and so his parents questioned him whenever he came home too late and advised him. "Do not get carried aloft on the wings of passion, or you might be torn apart as by a bull. Evil passion destroys those who have it and makes them laughing stock of their enemies" (Sirach 6:2). "Let those who are friendly with you be many, but let your advisers be one in a thousand. When you gain friends, gain them through testing and do not trust them hastily" (Sirach 6:6 & 7). Jayson's parents were a devoted and pious family.

Marital Life

Jayson was growing stubborn, yet thinking of his own safety and welfare, his parents warned him about his friends and suggested a good-natured girl by name Joyce and asked him to try to know more about her whereabouts. He found that she was a good girl working in another company. But he was finding it difficult to part with the one whom he had dreamt to be his life companion. With much hesitation he accepted his new choice and tried to get acquainted with her. She accepted his friendship and both used to go out together. When he felt that they are compatible with each other, after finding out the girl's family back ground, parents decided to take the next step and to arrange for their Engagement and Wedding. His parents did all that they could to make all the arrangements according to his ideas and preferences. The function was well organized and all complemented the newly married couples Jayson and Joyce.

An Unexpected Blow

As customary, they had made several honey moon trips to various places. The elder brother saw to their comforts to get good place to stay wherever they went. After they spent a few

days journeying and visiting places, Jayson felt that his wife is becoming very indifferent in her relationships. When he asked her what was happening, Joyce gave him the most unexpected and upsetting reply, "I don't like you." That was on the sixth day after their marriage. His dreams and fantasies collapsed in the twinkling of an eye and Jayson was downcast, as it was disheartening to hear it from a girl whom he accepted as his life partner. He had no one to share his disappointment and distress at that moment as they were just two of them sharing the rented room. He was unable to accept such a statement and he was dispirited and wondered how he would spend the night. He was so despondent and crestfallen and he could not sleep.

He felt being tortured within and the thought of spending his whole life with this girl was a nightmare he was unable to face. In that moment of desperation, his mind turned criminal and reckless and took the hasty impetuous step of attempting to put an end to her life by smothering her to death in bed as a last resort. Her voice was resounding in her ears- "I don't like you… I don't want you." The anger churning within him could not be calmed and he gave vent to his rage and fury by squeezing her neck until he made sure that she was breathless. He had just committed the heinous crime of murder, but his cruel act of vengeance did not give rest to his soul. He felt broken hearted and desperate. In that dark and gloomy night, sitting by the side of the lifeless body of his wife, he was blank, dumfounded, and bewildered.

Self-Attack

He who had already fallen in the trap of the evil one was led to despair. "No reason for you to live now" he heard the whisper of the evil one in his ears. .He got up and found the blade he had in his bag with his shaving set. He started cutting the veins in his wrist and thus to end his life. The deep cut in his wrist was bleeding badly and having lost a lot of blood,

he fainted. In the morning when Joel, his brother called up Jayson could not hear or lift the phone. He had come with breakfast for Jayson and his wife. Though he phoned to his brother several times, since there was no response from inside the room, he had no other way than breaking the door open. One can imagine the shock his brother had at the dreadful and appalling scene he witnessed in the room after breaking open the door. Joel stood frozen on the spot for a moment and then tried to wake up his brother. Noticing that Joyce had already turned blue and cold, he doubted whether she can be revived at all. He tried to shift them both to the nearby hospital with the hope of saving their life.

Shattered Dreams

Nothing could be done to save Joyce. In the course of an hour, with the needed blood transfusion, Jayson was revived because of the prompt action taken by Joel. Jayson slowly woke up as though from a frightening dream. With a perturbed mind, Joel gave the news to all concerned as well as the police for taking legal action. After his recovery Jayson was brought under custody and I met him in the prison during my regular visit. He was waiting to pour out the heavy burden in his heart to someone who would listen to him patiently. Jayson spoke to me with a broken heart all about his life and a few days earlier, how his dreams were crashed down and his future got collapsed all on a sudden due to his own grievous and disastrous action which resulted in the loss of an innocent person's life. He grieved over his impulsive and reckless action and felt within him hatred for himself.

Imprisonment and Redemption

When I entered the prison, I met him and helped him to accept himself and the situation in which he was. Being a Christian he was able to spend some time in prayer before the crucified Lord asking forgiveness from the Lord. I read out to him words from prophet Isaiah, "Come now, let us argue it out,

says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Jayson wrote down the words in the book he had. I reminded him that Jesus who came down to save sinner is near... "God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John3:16). He accepts even the wicked sinners who turn to him in repentance as his precious child. Jayson gradually regained his calm. He had deep pain within him of having lost all the plan he had made regarding his future. The thought of losing his name, his job, and the shame he has caused to his parents and his family, loomed large in his mind. When I read out a passage from Jeremiah "For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart I will let you find me" (Jeremiah29:11-13) I was happy to see Jayson writing down every word he heard in his book and reflecting on them.

Visit to Parents

When I visited his parents, Jason's mother hugged me and wept on my shoulders for a few minutes. "Sister, all the plans we had for his welfare and future, fell flat". I understood how much pain all the family members were going through. It was very difficult for all of them to accept the unfortunate turn of events in the family. The presence of us sisters in the house in their pain was a relief for them all. We assured them of our support to them and also for his son under custody with our presence and prayers. We were able to take the needed clothes and other essential things needed for their son and provide him. The family felt happy to know that there is someone whom they can rely on to know about Jayson as we are serving the prisoners during our daily visits. They tried to take him out on bail but they did not succeed. After a few

months the case was admitted for trial, but they could not get him acquitted either. When the judgment was out, they were all the more disappointed because he was convicted for life imprisonment. Still, his brother kept on trying to bail him out but all their efforts were of no avail.

Total Surrender

When he came to know that the appeal for release was dismissed from the court, Jayson tried again to commit suicide even while he was under custody by cutting his veins. Since the wound was visible, he started wearing a shirt with long sleeves until it was healed so that the marks on his hand would be hidden. He revealed to me that he attempted to harm himself again because he got in to despair again. When he came for prayer in the prison chapel, I asked him whether he is capable of making a total surrender of his life in the hands of his loving Heavenly Father who loves him as his own son. I sat with him for some time, reading and reflecting on God's living WORD. "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God…In hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. But who hopes for what is not seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (Romans 8:18, 24, 25). Now his question was- "How long a period have I to go on with my surrender?" So I gave him just two lines to repeat. Try to say this to your Father God in heaven "Lord, I wish whatever you wish, I wish it because you wish it, I wish it in the way you wish it, I wish it as long as you wish it. Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me yet not my will but yours be done". But Jesus accepted his father's will. Reflecting on all these points, Jayson made a sincere surrender to God and built-up trust in God. He accepted his situation as God's plan and to make reparation for his sins by living a renewed life. Jayson said with

the psalmist. "Before I was humbled, I went astray, but now I keep your word… It is good for me that I was humbled, so that I might learn your statutes… Teach me O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I will observe it to the end… Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with all my heart...Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm119).

After spending about eight years in prison, during one of my visits, he came to me and said, "Sister, please wait a moment, I want to show you what I have l-preserved in my small purse." He showed me the lines on surrender which I had given to him eight years ago, along with the Word of God I had given to him when he was in distress. With a grateful heart I raised my grateful heart to God and praised him along with Jayson. God's mercy never comes to an end, it is everlasting.

Bearer of Good News

Jason utilized his time in the prison to deepen his knowledge of God's word and has become a sharer of the good news of Jesus with his fellow companions in the prison. He learned the word of God so thoroughly that he can clarify the doubts of others and is able to guide others who are in doubt or in trouble. He sits with a group of new comers to prison daily and helps them to learn the word of God and to apply to their life. Thus he has become an evangelist within the prison. As a Good Shepherd he helps his companions who have walked in the wrong path to return to the right path. He is dreaming to become a full time Evangelist later. With a grateful heart I raised my grateful heart to God and praised him along with Jayson. God's mercy never comes to an end, it is everlasting. "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. For his steadfast love endures forever. O give thanks to the God of Gods, His steadfast love endures forever" (Ps 136:1&2).

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From Death to a New Life

Sr Adele Korah SCCG

Introduction

Have you ever met a person who was condemned to punishment to spend the whole of his life in a prison as a convicted criminal? When I met Jenny in the Central Prison, Bangalore, he was in distress because he was brought in to the prison with a court order which stated that he was convicted to imprisonment till the end of his life. He could see before him the wording "Life imprisonment unto death"!

The Past

Jenny was a very popular person, admired by all his friends and comrades as a helpful person. He was a good husband and a loving father to his children. He was successful in his business, and he was known as a good social worker in the parish. He was closely associated with all the activities of the parish and cooperated with his parish priest in organizing programs in his parish. In short all knew him as a good catholic, and a successful business man though his business was in a small scale.

Fatal Evening

When Jenny was returning home after his work, he made some purchases of groceries for his family and returned home later than usual. After parking his car, as he entered the front yard of his house, he was surprised to see that someone had emptied a lorry load of mud and sand in his

yard. He was infuriated, and his neighbour's action with no information to him made his blood boil with anger. Jenny felt that it was an infringement by taking advantage of his land with no intimation to him. On contacting him rather than apologizing, he was irritated with Jenny for having made a call to him and blaming him. He had brought a group of his friends to defend himself. Some of them spoke rashly and the argument between them grew in to an altercation. The people who were brought there were growing quarrelsome and started raising their tight fist to attack Jenny. As the fighting spirit in the group got worsened, Jenny felt that he was all alone on his side. For a moment Jenny was puzzled. He was gripped with fear of being attacked by the gang. He was scared of the whole group and dreaded the thought that they would pounce altogether on him suddenly. The one responsible for the whole event was enraged and charged at Jenny moving towards him. At this point, Jenny felt the need to defend himself. He had a folded knife in his pocket which he had taken for his needs in his house. He took it out to threaten the crowd, but in an impetuous action he thrust the knife on the man who moved towards him. It was a fatal blow and the man fell flat. Jenny was shivering and was trembling with fear, not knowing what would be the consequence.

An Unpredicted Event

The friends lifted the wounded man and rushed him to the hospital where he was declared as brought dead. Consequently police was informed and jenny was taken hand cuffed to the station and kept under custody. Later he was shifted to the local sub jail. Jenny's wife and children were disheartened and dejected as Jenny was the breadwinner of the family. His wife along with her relations assisted them in employing an advocate to plead his case. The advocate assured that he would help him to obtain a bail and later to get him released. But the victim's family and friends were over smart to see that his bail application gets rejected. They were able to pay large

amount to their advocate and succeeded in seeing that Jenny was given a very severe judgment in the Sessions court, so that he would never return to the family or town. He was punished to undergo imprisonment until death.

Jenny Enters the Central Prison, Bangalore

Jenny was shifted to the Central prison and was admitted in the Convicts section. One can guess the feelings of a prisoner who receives a judgment that says that he has to be in prison till the end of his life without any ray of hope of returning to his family. He felt totally cut off from all those whom he held close to him and was deprived of the presence of all who loved him, wife children and friends and he missed them all. In such a situation he felt that God alone can be close to him. He came to the prison chapel for getting some consolation in prayer. That was the time I met Jenny. I gave him assurance that I will be in touch with his wife and children and will help them in accepting their situation and offer them the help that they need. He was not in depression, but the thought of living in the prison for the whole life, kept haunting him.

Prayer Meeting in the Prison

I had started weekly prayer meeting as a spiritual help for the inmates of the prison who came to the prison chapel. Seeking for mental peace and rest in their distress and frustration. I believed that besides counselling, spirituality can give strength to the suffering brethren and prayer and meditation on God's personal, unconditional love can lead persons out of despair. It is in the presence of a loving and forgiving God that people languishing within the prison can find consolation. Or else having been deprived of human help from their dear ones who were their main support, there is every possibility of persons going in to depression and despair. In such circumstances, the presence of a person of compassion and understanding who can lead them into prayer, can be of great help. In the deep experience of the love of a living God of forgiveness

and mercy, who accepts them with an unconditional love, they receive the needed strength to face the loneliness and deprivations. God assures, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you, for I am the Lord your God the Holy One of Israel, your Savior" (Isaiah 43:1).

A Ray of Hope in Jenny's Life in the Prison

At every prayer meeting Jenny was the first person to start his prayer. I recall the times when I started the prayer meeting with one single person with Jenny. On some days, it was when Jenny started singing praises of God the others joined in prayer one by one. His faith was deepened in prayer. Gradually he was drawn to repentance of the crime he has committed. In the counselling sessions he realized his weakness which led him to the heinous crime of murder. He recalled the many occasions in his life when he caused pain and hurt his own wife and children by his angry words and unruly, defiant actions. He came to an understanding that he had not made any serious effort to control his anger. He got convinced of the necessity of having control of his temper. It was when his anger got the better of him at the wrong time, he ended up in stabbing his opponent committing a serious crime, facing serious legal predicament and criminal charges. When he became angry: resentfulness and irritability followed and made him to strike out verbally and physically. "Refrain from strife and your sins will be fewer for the hot-tempered kindle strife." "In proportion to the fuel, so will the fire burn and in proportion to the obstinacy, so will strife increase" (Sirach28:8,10)

Determination to Take New Turn

Jenny started reading and meditating on God's word regularly, as he felt the need to get his anger issues under control. Jenny turned to the Lord in repentance and prepared himself for a good confession. True repentance is decision to amend one's ways. Believing that he needs the power of the Holy Spirit to control his temper, he started reading the books available about the power of the Holy Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit that can bring peace and joy in his life. He borrowed my book on Holy Spirit and got a photo copy of it as it was not available for purchase. So firm was his determination to begin a new life led by the Holy Spirit. He was strengthened and with the reception of Holy Communion, he received a new anointing of the Holy Spirit. Jenny's main regret was the thought about his wife and children who need his support for their maintenance and education. The fact that the judgment he received was to undergo punishment in prison unto death loomed large in his mind threatening him of his blank future without any hope. It is then I gave him the following passages for reflection. "For surely, I know what plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations where I have driven you, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you in to exile" (Jeremiah 29: 11-14).

Jenny placed his hope firmly believing in God's promises and started reciting the Creed, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty' 33 times a day. He believed in the words spoken by Moses to Israelites, "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still" (Exodus 14:14). Trusting in God, I approached a good advocate to help him to appeal in the High Court, as he is the only bread winner of his family. Jenny's

judgment copy was submitted to him. I agreed to arrange for the expenses of his court case with the help of his relatives and other benefactors. The advocate studied scrupulously the judgment meted out to him by the Sessions court and consented to do his best. In hope and prayer, we waited for a few months. During this interval I was able to visit his wife and children. The youngest son pleaded with me "Sister, please bring back our daddy soon." I told them to pray believing in the Almighty God, "For nothing will be impossible for God" (Luke 1:37). Meanwhile Jenny started studying the Word of God deeply and sharing the same with his companions in the prison for their benefit.

Prayers Answered

The Lord said to Hezekiah who prayed to him with faith, "I have answered your prayer" (2 Kings 20:5). Jenny's prayer too was answered. Jenny who called out to the lord in his distress was consoled by the Lord through the revision of his judgment. The judgment given to Jenny by the Sessions Court was to undergo imprisonment until his death. The Lord in his mercy granted him reduction of his punishment. He received the happy news that his punishment was reduced to just seven years as per the judgment at the High Court. Great was his joy when the Lord rewarded his faith in His mercy and forgiving love. The Lord who brought his people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, was merciful to Jenny, and brought him out of the prison as he had already completed seven years by then. Jenny returned to his family as a new man. He was no more the man who once burst out in anger at any one who thwarted his path. As one strengthened by the Holy Spirit he entered his family and the society as one specially blessed by the Lord. Jenny believed and felt that Jesus who welcomes every stray sheep back in to his fold has accepted him as his son and blessed him with His own Spirit. He began a new life relying on God who alone can strengthen him in his weakness. He realized that he must "Make every

effort to support his faith with goodness and goodness with knowledge and knowledge with self- control and self -control with endurance and endurance with godliness and godliness with mutual affection and mutual affection with love" (2 Peter1:5-7).

A New Life in Christ

Jenny had to face the people in his surroundings being aware that he has on him the stigma of a criminal, who has come back from the prison. But in his behaviour every on looker could sense that he is a man renewed in Spirit. He noticed how his wife was cheated by business men in his absence and how hard he has to work to make up for the big loss. But he accepted everything with total self- control. He thanked the Lord for the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit he received during the period of incarceration through prayer and the study of the Word of God. In calmness and patience, he made up for the loss in a short period of time. He built a new house and I had the privilege of rejoicing with him in the blessings he received from God's abundant goodness and mercy." Jenny said with gratitude, "And my God will supply all my need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and father be glory forever and ever, Amen" (Philippians 4:19, 20).

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Prison Ministry India: Volunteers Training Program 2024: An Appraisal

Sr Santan Nago FS

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thes 6:18). As we recount the graces and blessings bestowed on us, these past 13 days, we extend and expand our hearts in gratitude to our good, great God. God called us here and has journeyed with us teaching us what we ought to know and do for our brothers and sisters behind bars. In good and bad times, let our lips and hearts proclaim God's power and glory for it is the will of God that we dedicate and commit ourselves for the transformative expedition of our incarcerated sisters and brothers. Prison Ministry India, organised the Volunteers' Training Programme from 10 to 22 April 2024, to equip more people to work for this ministry. This was a clarion call to invest one's time and energy for the lost and least and to serve those who need us most. Jesus reminds us saying, "I was in prison and you came to visit me." (Mt 25:36).

Overview of the Training Program

All the 12 days of the training were well used by which the participants were given plenty of information, knowledge and acquaintances through input sessions by experts and experienced people. The participants were exposed to various meetings and activities both inside and outside the class room. The morning time was devoted for input sessions in the hall and most of the afternoon time was for visits and exposures to neighbouring Catholic institutions such as Swanadana

- a home for children with special needs run by Sisters of St Camillus; Jeevodaya - a rehabilitation Centre for released women prisons run by HCM Sisters.

Reformed Prisoners

Fr Francis Kodiyan the PMI National Coordinator welcomed and honoured the released prisoners, Mr Prasad, Mr Anthony, Mrs Lilly and Mr Lawerance. Their personal testimonies were heart-touching as to how God intervened in their lives, while in and out of prison. They expressed their gratitude and joy to the Almighty God, for their release with the assistance of the PMI national office. One of the incredible inspiring stories is of Mr Reni George, a transformed released prisoner, who, himself, took up the service of providing educational scholarships to 200 children, in the past 14 years.

Exposure Programs

The trainees were taken to visit few Correction Centres such as the Open-Air Prison and Empowerment of Children and Human-rights Organization (ECHO) – A Juvenile Justice Centre. Fr Anthomy Sebastian, a Norbertine priest, a lawyer and a former Judge, explained to us his stupendous work with young prisoners. He is the founder of ECHO where young prisoners are rehabilitated and equipped with job-oriented courses. At present there are more than 30 boys who are taken care of and being trained for a better future. Beginning on 11 April, the First Day of the training programme Most Rev. Mar Jose Pulickal, CBCI Chairman for PMI gave an encouraging homily, stating that we need to renew our spirit and trust in God who can make the impossibilities into possibilities.

Inaugural Session

At the inaugural session, Most Rev. Mar Jose Pulickal, Fr. Francis Kodiyan, PMI National Coordinator, Sr. Amala DC, PMI National Secretary, Fr. Varghese Karippery, PMI Cofounder, Fr. Martin Thattil, the South Regional

Coordinator for Kerala State, Fr. Benny Pachanal CRSP, PMI Assistant National Coordinator and National Treasurer, and Sr Irene, UFS, the co-ordinator of the Northeast Region were facilitated for their immense contribution to PMI. Sr. Adele Korah, SCCG's book titled, My Journey with Brethren behind Bars was released by Bishop Jose Pulickal. The Bishop said that the prison ministry is very dear to the heart of Jesus, and we should apply the three "C's": Companionship, Compassion and Commitment. He taught us a slogan: "Hey Problem, get away from me, I have a great God." In his benedictory message, Fr. Varghese Karippery, the Co-founder of PMI, said that Jesus had his counselling centres under trees, at the seashore, at Jacob's well and in open places, where Jesus could easily address large crowds. Later, in his session Fr Karippery gave a brief history of the conception and development of the PMI. In his message, Fr. Maritn shared about the origin of Jesus' Fraternity and PMI. He also briefed us about the Kerala Modus operandi, which is a model for all other states.

General Introduction

Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, the PMI cofounder and national coordinator introduced the general concepts of PMI. Jesus Christ, who came to save the lost and the least is the root of PMI. Our task is to search, serve and save the lost. St Maximilian Kolbe is the PMI Patron. St Charles de Foucauld and venerable Francis Xavier van Thuan are PMI Co-Patrons.

Liturgical Aspect

On the whole there was an emphasis on the spiritual aspect, which began with the Morning Prayer followed by the Holy Eucharist. The day ended with praying the Rosary and the Evening Prayer. There is a chain of intercessory prayers throughout the day where participants have selected different timings suitable to them. The Blessed Sacrament is being exposed throughout the 24 hours of the day. These prayers are repeatedly encouraged by Fr Francis Kodiyan. Fasting is

also very much encouraged by the PMI. The group members from various parts of India shared their experiences in the prison ministries in their particular jails and sub-jails. To encourage participants to be more involved in the training they were asked to write stories, poems, songs and essays on the prison ministry. These activities were evaluated and prizes given. The food that was served by Sr Pushpa and her team, was good, tasty, nutritious and on time. The accommodation was good enough where we never had shortage of water. We enjoyed an uninterrupted electricity supply.

PMI Genealogy

Birth of PMI took place at Kottayam, Kerala, with the vision of the two founders. Fr Varghese Karippery and Fr Francis Kodiyan, in the year 1981, as Jesus Fraternity. The oft repeated sentence was: Love Bomb is Jesus. The Love Bomb was shattered so that others get life. We are to be the love bombs. Let the love bomb heal the broken hearts. In 1986 they made all Kerala Prison Pilgrimage. In 1994 they had the first National Convention in Bangalore and it was at this convention that the name Prison Ministry India was given. In 1995, a small office was set up in Bangalore. In 2000 the ministry was recognized by the CBCI.

PMI Spirituality

Overwhelmed by the love of God, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit, empowered by the Word of God, nourished by the sacraments, enlightened by spiritual exercises and strengthened by ascetical practices.

PMI Methodology

Reach out, Release – through lawyers, legal aids, Repentance through Word of God, Reconciliation with family members and friends, Reformation – renew by God's grace, Rehabilitation at centres, Reintegration – finding jobs, small business, getting them married, Redemption through the blood of Jesus and

the Redeemer being Jesus.

PMI Lifestyle

1. Weapon - Prayer and fasting. Prayer is the prayer Tower.
2. Mantra - Thank you Jesus
3. Action - Search, Serve, Save the lost
4. Bank - Bank of Divine Providence
5. Style - Maximum inconveniences
6. Mode - Begging and blessing

PMI's Types of Funds

1. Prayer Fund
2. Suffering Fund
3. Penance Fund
4. Self-Sanctification Fund

PMI Economics

Bless others with your wealth and Be Blessed. No Foreign contributions or FCRA Accounts except our lifestyle – Begging.

PMI Prominent Concepts

1. Outsider's Concept – Once in jail is always in jail
2. Insider's Concept – Give me one more chance
3. Jesus's Concept – Leaving the 99, went in search of the lost one.

Input Sessions

All through the 12 days, the programme was well prepared, methodically planned and systematically carried out. All the resource persons who came were highly qualified, spiritually deep- rooted and committed to share their learnings and experiences from their convinced and confident hearts. The source of PMI is the Super-dynamic love bomb that Jesus exploded at calvary. The power of PMI is "O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine". PMI is a passionate adventure (Ex 3:9). Someone cried to the Lord, that is why you received a call and you are here. Prison ministry volunteers are people of fire and people with fire. Meet your sisters and brothers behind bars with the fire of God's love. People of the lost, for me are called by the God of the lost, said Sr Lini. We are each a particle of God.

We need to understand the outsider's concept is - Once in jail, always in jail. And insider's concept is 'Give me a chance'. We are all sinners and deserve to be punished. They are caught, we are not caught. We must believe that God is never tired of forgiving. PMI is a Word of God ministry; PMI has Biblical foundation. Sr Inigo in her caring and compassionate sharing highlighted that prison ministry is Biblical, moral, ethical spiritual, human and universal ministry. Prison ministry starts, continues and ends with the Word of God. Sr Inigo says that Jesus is the founder of prison ministry. He founded prison ministry hanging between two thieves.

PMI Biblical Foundations

Prison ministry begins with the Word of God ministry was elaborated by Fr Jaison Puthenpurakal. It starts with Adam and Eve put out of Paradise into the open prison as it were. 1) Joseph of the First Testament, 2) Samson, when lost the power due to his weakness was caught and imprisoned, 3) Daniel and the three young Jewish men, 4) John the Baptist,

5) Jesus is prison before his execution, 6) Peter, Paul, Silas, Apostles and the early Christians, 7) Modern-day Christians – Fr Stan Swamy.

Popes who Visited Prisoners

1. Pope John XXIII
2. Pope Paul the VI
3. Pope John Paul II
4. Pope Francis

PMI Projects

Fr Francis Kodiyan emphasized the role of PMI volunteers in prisoners' transformation, urging them to aspire to be miracle makers and to focus on release, reformation and rehabilitation. He shared his insights of the Prayer Tower and its inspiration by being sensitive to listen to the voice of God and to implement. Fr Kodiyan encouraged the participant to read his thesis on the Religious Conversion Trajectory and of Charles de Foucauld for guidance on moral and religious renewal for criminals. He lighted the image of St John Paul II with the prisoners Mohammed Ali Aga as both capturing and uplifting. Fr Kodiyan also has taken up the projects of construction homes for the needy released prisoners, providing job opportunity and helping for self-employment. So far 40 houses have been constructed and his goal is to reach 50 houses for the golden jubilee of PMI. It was very inspiriting to hear the tremendous and challenging services of Sr Anisha who undertook constructing homes for the impoverished and marginalized communities with the tribal population in Wayanad, Kerala. Fr Francis Kodiyan lauded Dr Michael Noronha from PMI Mysore for his yeoman services to the prison ministry in the diocese of Mysore. He is a role model to reach out to the needs of the prisoners inside the prison itself, by his example of setting a dental clinic for the prisoners.

Battling Crime

Mr John Thomas Kottukapally spoke on the topic of 'Battling Crime'. Extensively quoting the holy Scriptures, he said that the cause of crime is rooted in the spiritual dimension. He quoted Karl Rahner, SJ "No matter what may be the immediate of prisons and the plight of the inmates, the one ultimate cause is the guilt of humankind from its beginning onwards. A human being is not a sinner because he/she sins, but he/she Sins because he/she is a sinner". (Ps 51:5). There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who does good, not even one. (Rom 3:10,13). Essentially a person commits sin because of ignorance: the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of the Chirst, who is the image of God (2 Cor,4:4). He spoke of the various social causes and curing the crime. He stressed on the spiritual ladder of growing in holiness, obedience, faithfulness and repentance with faith and hope in God.

All-Kerala Prison Pilgrimage

Fr Alexaander Kureekkattil, CMF, who was from the very beginning, 1981, had joined the All-Kerala Prison Pilgrimage has strenuously worked for the hired killers ministry. He said, Light is painful, death is comfortable, knowing is painful. Jesus came to know humanity, the result is the cross, pain and suffering. Likewise coming to PMI is painful and knowing is painful but that pain and cross gives joy and life. Fr Alexander is the founder of Snehashram, a Claritian Centre for rehabilitation. Dr Tito Paul advised on the concepts of bail and what PMI can do and not to get offended by anyone. He also alerted us not to give a surety for bail, etc and to contribute and help to genuine people. Fr Michael Francis of Aurangabad, son of a Police Officer and co-ordinator of Aurangabad diocese, explained about Special Task Force. Subsequently 40 such Task Forces have been formed, which

are being worked out, where members have selected to specially pray and for these task forces

Counselling Tips

The participants were given sessions by Fr Jaison Puthenpurackal, MST, on effective prisoner-counselling techniques, exploring various personality types and approaches. Free legal support system: we were delighted to know that PMI has a set of advocates, who willingly extend their free legal services to rescue and release the poor, needy and abandoned prisoners.

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In a Male-Dominated World, Women Prison Officers Make a Difference

United Nations on Drugs and Crime[1]

Prison work has been traditionally regarded as a male preserve in many countries. Yet according to the UNODC Handbook for Prison Leaders, there is no reason why this should be the case. Experience in a number of countries has shown that women can carry out the regular duties of prison staff just as well as men. On International Women's Day on 8 March, learn why gender equality can make for a more balanced, just, and humane criminal justice system. "They say that prison systems must take into account the special needs of female prisoners," says Sabine, a prisoner from Germany. "As a woman and a prisoner, I can assure you it is true. I feel that every day."

An Alarming Increase

While still forming a minority of the global prison population, the number of women prisoners has increased at an alarming rate of 60 per cent since the year 2000 – almost three times the growth of the male prison population over the same period. At the same time, it is broadly recognized that the incarceration of women is closely linked to marginalization and poverty, gender discrimination as well as prior trauma and abuse. As part of the United Nations' commitment to advance the gender-responsive treatment of women prisoners, and

1 https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2024/March/in-a-male-dominated-world--women prison-officers-make-a-difference.html

to enhance the use of non-custodial measures for women offenders, the Bangkok Rules recognize the essential role that female prison officers play in this regard. At a strategic and policy level, women's involvement at all levels increases the likelihood of a gender lens being applied across all prison management practices to meet women's needs, rather than minor adaptations being made to a predominantly male-oriented model. At a one-to-one level, women prisoners, in particular those in vulnerable situations, tend to feel more comfortable talking or raising concerns with someone of their own gender. International minimum prison standards, such as the Nelson Mandela Rules, are clear in calling for female prisoners to be attended and supervised only by female staff to foster prospects for a safe and inclusive environment.

The Value of Inclusivity

However, the role of female prison officials goes far beyond working in women's prisons. In all facilities the presence of women staff can often defuse potentially volatile incidents when confrontations arise. According to Ioana Morar, Deputy General, Director Romanian Administration of Penitentiaries: "The strength of women officers in prisons lies not just in their ability to enforce rules, and in their courage and resilience, but also in their innate capacity to empathize, making a profound difference by fostering a more rehabilitative atmosphere." Women's involvement also promotes a culture that supports female officers more effectively in the workplace. Despite the above, male-oriented prison environments, cultures and practical obstacles often prevent prison services from benefiting from the distinct expertise and insights of women throughout their ranks.

Women Working in a Male-Dominated World

Karin Andersson has over 20 years' experience in the prison service of Sweden. "About 21 years ago, when I started working as a prison officer, I developed an interest in working

with conflict resolution and physical interventions in prisons – an area that was, and in many countries still is, dominated by men." "It has often been a struggle being a woman in a male-dominated environment," she says. "I have received comments like, 'You're good at this, even though you're a woman'." As well as having to deal with discriminatory attitudes, Karin highlights practical obstacles, such as using equipment designed specifically for men. "You cannot expect riot gear fit for men to provide proper protection for women." Rona Barrameda-Suyu, Jail Officer 2, Bureau of Jail Management & Penology in the Philippines, agrees. "When I entered the prison service, it wasn't geared to women. During training, we all had to be physically ready and fit to meet the same standards that were set for everyone, regardless of gender. "We had to carry heavy firearms securing PDLs (person deprived of liberty) during escorts," she continues. "We had to be tough but also show compassion and care to these PDLs who needed us." But, Rona adds, "Being tough and compassionate at the same time makes a woman correction officer unique." And this inequality extends to career development, where it's not uncommon for women to be passed over for promotion. According to the UNODC handbook for prison managers and policymakers on women and imprisonment: "In the male dominated, hierarchical prison environment, female prison staff may face unfair competition as well as overprotection. Often, they have less authority and decision-making power, and they themselves may suffer from sexual harassment and discrimination in their workplaces."

'Every Day you Feel Like a Pioneer' - The Importance of Good Role Models

Bibigul Munaitpasova, Head of the Educational Department of the Prison Committee of Kazakhstan, demonstrated real determination: "At the beginning, my relatives were scared to let me go to work in the prison system, but I said: 'Somebody has to do it, why not me?'" Bibigul has come a long way. Her

work experience at all levels gives her an in-depth knowledge of all the practical aspects of the prison system. "There haven't been many female predecessors in our system, and every day you feel almost like a pioneer," she says. "I enjoy my work and feel the responsibility and need to pass on my experience to younger prison officers." Alongside over 2,500 prison officers in Kazakhstan – a third of them women – Bibigul has taken the UNODC-supported e-learning course to better understand and apply the Nelson Mandela Rules (UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners). This was combined with in-service training on specific topics, such as the management of violent extremist prisoners and prevention of radicalization.

Shattering Stereotypes: Women Leading Change in the Prison Service

Encouraging more women to join the prison service is not just about increasing numbers; it's about breaking through traditional barriers and helping women to excel in the sector. By promoting inclusivity and gender diversity within the prison service, Member States can leverage the unique perspectives, skills, and talents that women bring to the table. "While women staff members in prisons contribute significantly to a more balanced and humane correctional system, facing challenges head-on, they exemplify courage and adaptability," noted Kathleen Van De Vijver, Director General of the Prison Service in Belgium. To achieve this goal, it is essential to implement recruitment strategies that actively attract, support and retain female candidates. Providing mentorship programs, leadership opportunities, and creating a supportive network can help women navigate potential challenges and advance in their roles within the prison service. By championing initiatives that promote gender equality and diversity, we can create a more inclusive and effective prison system that benefits both staff and prisoners alike. UNODC works closely with Member States to integrate gender

considerations and the empowerment of women into penal and prison programs. One dedicated initiative – "Renewing our promise: Fostering progress and investments to advance the application of the Bangkok Rules" – is undertaken by the UNODC and Thailand Institute of Justice. A key aim of this work is to situate women impacted by the criminal justice system as a much more integral part of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality.

What Women Prison Officers Say…

"Empowering women within the prison service is not just about equality, it is about harnessing the unique strengths and perspectives they bring to create a more humane and effective correctional system" Jo Dedeyne-Amann, Chief, Secretariat to the Governing Bodies. "Women staff members in prisons contribute significantly to a more balanced and humane correctional system. Facing exemplifies courage and adaptability" Ms Katahleen Van De Viyver, Director General, Prison service, Belgium. "Female staff in correctional services are key to establishing safe and supportive environments, using their diverse skills to dismantle stereotypes and advance a culture of equity" Ms Nadya Radkovska, Head of Department of International Cooperation and Prison Staff Training, Bulgaria. "In Bremen, Germany, we uphold the principle that gender equality enriches not just women, but society as a whole. The inclusion of competent women in our prison service enhances the quality of prison management and operations" Dr Claudia Schilling Senator for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Free Hanseatic City of Bremen. "At the beginning my relatives were scared to let me go to work in the prison system, but I said: 'Somebody has to do it, why not me?' Now they understand and respect my choice" Bibigul Munaitpasova, Head of the Educational Department of the Prison Committee of Kazakhstan. "On the international Women's Day, I pay tribute to all the women working in the prison service. They are an extraordinary asset in this sector

and their struggle and contributions should be recognized by society" Fauzia Taj Assistant Inspector General of Prisons Regional Office of Pakistan. "They say prison systems must take into account the special needs of female prisoners. As a woman and a prisoner, I can assure you, it is true – I feel that every day" Female Prisoner, North West Germany.

"Empowering women within the prison service is not just about equality; it is about harnessing the unique strengths and perspectives they bring to create a more humane and effective correctional system" Jo Dedeyne-Amann Chief, Secretariat to the Governing Bodies UNODC. "I have received comments like 'You're good at this, even though you're a woman', but over the years many women prison officers have said to me. If you can do it, I can do it". This shows the importance of having role models you can relate to, and how important it is to continue to support and promote women prison officers" Karin Andersson Prison Office, Sweden. "The strength of women officers in prisons lies not just in their ability to enforce rules, and their courage and resilience, but also in their innate capacity to empathize, making a profound difference by fostering a more rehabilitative atmosphere" Ms Joana Morar, Deputy General Director, Romanian National administration of Penitentiaries. "When I entered the prison service it wasn't geared to women. During training we all had to be physically ready and fit to meet the same standards that were set for everyone, regardless of gender. We had to be tough and ensure presence of mind, but also show compassion and care to these prisoners who needed us. Being tough and compassionate at the same time makes a woman correction officer unique among others" Rona Barrameda-Suyu Jail Officer, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, The Philippines.

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Prison Ministry India National Training Program: Report

Sr S Amala DC

Introduction

The PMI national volunteers training program took place from 10 to 22 April 2024 at RRDC, Bengaluru. 40 volunteers from different Indian states participated in it. The inaugural event commenced with Mrs. Jacinta Aneja as the Master of Ceremonies. Following her, Sr. Marina Gulati CSJ delivered a moving prayer. Fr. Francis Kodiyan MCBS, PMI National Coordinator, extended a warm welcome to the dignitaries, highlighting the significance of dreaming big and embodying the spirit of service inspired by Jesus. Sr. Amala DC, PMI National Secretary, provided valuable insights into the dynamics of the course, setting the tone for the day's discussions. Most Rev. Mar Jose Pulickal, PMI Chairperson, emphasized the Ministry's alignment with the Church's mission, stressing the values of companionship, compassion, and commitment among volunteers. Most Rev. Mar Jose Pulickal released the books My Journey with Brethren Behind Bars written by Sr. Adele Korah SCCG, Fr. Varghese Karippery's book on Inner Healing and the 10th volume of Reformative Explorations edited by Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS.

PMI Evolution

Fr Varghese Karippery, PMI Co-founder, delivered the benedictory message. During his talk, Rev. Fr. Varghese Karippery emphasized the importance of thanking God

for our unique creation. He provided a brief history of the conception and development of the prison ministry, shedding light on its evolution over time. Fr. Karippery also elucidated the methodology of the prison ministry workstyle, which can be summarized as follows: Methodology of Forgiving, Thanking, Trusting the Lord completely, Faith Methodology. Fr. Dion Issac, PMI Telangana State Coordinator, explored the reformative approaches in the journal Reformative Explorations. Felicitations were extended by Fr. Martin Thattil, Sr. Fidelis, and Sr. Irene. The key to the autorickshaw under the employment scheme was presented to Sagayanathan by Mar Jose Pulickal. Sr. Marina Gulati CSJ inaugurated the PMI Musical Academy by donating a guitar and Keyboard to PMI. Fr. Benny Pachanal CRSP proposed the vote of thanks.

PMI North East

Sr. Irene D'Souza, the North East Regional Coordinator, elaborated on the various activities being conducted in different jails across seven states. She highlighted the scope and impact of these initiatives, demonstrating the ministry's commitment to serving incarcerated individuals. Fr. Francis offered words of encouragement, urging Sr. Irene and her team not to lose heart but to persevere in their efforts. He emphasized the importance of prayer in sustaining their mission and overcoming challenges along the way.

Redeemed Prisoners

Mr. Prasad, an ex-prisoner, gave a wonderful testimony about his conversion of heart towards Jesus. He shared his faith and God's experiences in his life that made him be called Jesus in prison. Mr. Antony shared his predominantly biblical journey in prison, focusing on God's protection and developing a deep understanding of scripture. Mr. Reni George shared profound insights from his 14 years of renewal experiences, recounting how his encounter with Jesus transformed his life, leading him to become a beacon of hope for prisoners.

He emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation and recounted his efforts in assisting hundreds of individuals to break free from bondage, providing support to 250 children in need. His testimony highlighted the miraculous intervention of grace in his life.

General Introduction

Fr. Kodiyan began his lecture on PMI General Introduction telling us about the initiative for this movement started in 1981, as a prayer group. The motto of which was 'Be a love bomb. Let it explode to all but heal the broken-hearted.' The spiritual aspect stems from Jesus Christ at its Root. He told of the 7 steps in the lifestyle required to transform a member of the ministry steps ultimately ending in Christ the Redeemer.

Battling Crime

Mr. John Thomas gave a talk on Battling Crime. He spoke of his personal experience

of prayer and the work of the spirit in preventing people from moving into sin and thereby crime. With statistics and quotations from the Bible he emphasized the factors that led to crime- be it bureaucratic or individual. An experience of God- of a supernatural or mystical nature- leads us to be strong in providing support to prisoners.

PMI Spirituality

Fr. Francis elucidated the PMI's administrative structure, stressing the pivotal role of volunteers in prisoner transformation. He urged volunteers to aspire to be miracle-makers, focusing on release, reformation, and rehabilitation. He shared insights on the Prayer Tower's significance and encouraged participants to read his thesis on moral and religious renewal for criminals. Fr. Francis highlighted the powerful image of the Pope with prisoner Mohammed Ali Aga as symbolizing hope and upliftment.

PMI Funds

Sr. Amala conducted a session on PMI Fund Raising, elaborating on the five funds: Prayer Fund, Suffering Fund, Penance Fund, Self-Sanctification Fund, and Material Fund. She emphasized the principle that when individuals offer themselves for the sake of others, God provides through his stewards, ensuring the accomplishment of his mission. Sr. Amala highlighted the reliance on God's Providence, noting that he consistently surprises PMI with the resources needed to continue their work effectively.

PMI Fire

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC, online presentation on prison ministry, focusing on topics such as Christian calling, the importance of PMI volunteers meeting prisoners with the fire of God's love, and changing societal perceptions about prisoners. Sister Lini Sheeja emphasized PMI's emblem representing those opposed, imprisoned, bonded, neglected, and rejected, illustrating the ministry's vital role.

PMI Central Region

Fr Wilfred Fernandes, the coordinator of PMI central region, shared initiatives undertaken in Pune, including vocational training, health camps, and various activities for inmates. His efforts, especially during the COVID pandemic, to ensure the dignity and care of prisoners were commendable.

Ministry Inside the Prison

Sr Adele SCCG's session reiterated the mission of PMI to bring Christ's light and mercy to prisoners, emphasizing unconditional love and service. She highlighted PMI's diverse services, ranging from medical camps to educational opportunities, showcasing the holistic approach to rehabilitation.

PMI in Madya Pradesh

Sr. Sherly OSB, shared her profound insights into the core of prison ministry as a manifestation of Jesus's teachings on compassion, forgiveness, and redemption in MP.

PMI Kolbe Homes

Sr. Pushpa SCS provided enlightenment on the transformative efforts of Kolbe House, a sanctuary offering refuge and support to children from vulnerable backgrounds.

Counselling Tips

Rev. Fr. Jaison Puthenpurackal MST conducted a session on effective prisoner counselling techniques, exploring various personality types and approaches.

PMI Jharkhand

Sr. Julia, the Ranchi coordinator, shared her inspiring experiences and encouraged everyone to persevere in their ministry despite challenges in Ranchi. Sr. Anisha SD shared her inspiring mission experiences, particularly her involvement in constructing homes for the impoverished and marginalized communities, as well as her work with tribal populations in Wayanad, Kerala. Despite facing challenges in direct interaction with tribal communities, she expressed unwavering commitment to her dreams of serving the underprivileged.

Delhi Voice

Sr. Inigo SA, shared her deeply moving involvement in prison ministry, inspired by the lives of Mother Teresa, Fr. Stan Swami, and Kiran Bedi. She recounted her journey to Delhi, stepping into the unknown with faith and determination, and tirelessly dedicating herself to the welfare of prisoners. Revered by both children and inmates alike, she is regarded as an angel for her selfless service.

Legal Matters

Advocate Reni Sebastian, elucidated the Legal Services Act 1994. She highlighted the availability of legal services for marginalized sections of society and the role of NGOs in assisting those unaware of their rights. Dr Tito Paul's counsel on legal matters, including bail, emphasizes the importance of supporting genuine causes rather than offering sureties, reflecting ethical considerations in advocacy efforts.

PMI Methodology

Fr. Francis Kodiyan addressed the audience on the topic of "Prisoners Reformation Trajectory." He emphasized the need for a paradigm shift to bring about positive change in prisoners' lives, urging PMI volunteers to dedicate themselves to prisoners' development.

Mysore Voice

Br. Michael Noronha, a PMI Karnataka State secretary, and Mysore coordinator enlightened the group with 23 years of experience. He shared his journey and highlighted the impact committed volunteers can have on prisoners' lives, citing examples such as establishing a dental clinic and de-addiction center in Mysore prison.

Ministry Outside Prison

Fr. Benny Pachanal, CRSP, highlighted PMI's holistic approach to prisoner rehabilitation, emphasizing support for both prisoners and their families beyond prison walls. He advocated for inclusive environments to enable individuals to rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose. Fr. Benny also provided insights into the legal complexities of parole and bail procedures, contributing valuable knowledge to the discussion on prisoner rehabilitation.

Handling Young Criminals

Rev. Fr. Dr. Adv. Anthony Sabastian, leveraging 25 years of experience with ECHO, delivered a passionate presentation on the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 and associated legal frameworks. He explored nuances of juvenile delinquency, emphasizing care and protection, and highlighted innovative rehabilitation initiatives like the Traffic Police Assistance Program. Through compelling case studies, attendees witnessed the transformative impact of rehabilitation efforts.

Exploring Open Prison

PMI Volunteers visited Devanahalli Open Air Prison, organizing a meaningful program to uplift spirits and build community among incarcerated individuals. Following the program, prisoners were provided with cake and essential toiletries as gestures of kindness. Fr. Francis generously contributed Rs. 50,000.00 towards the release of two prisoners, offering hope for their future. His inspiring message highlighted the transformative power of faith and forgiveness, resonating deeply with inmates and staff. The superintendent and inmates expressed profound gratitude for the PMI Volunteers' efforts in fostering rehabilitation and restoring dignity.

Prisoners' Reintegration

Fr. Alexander Kureekkattil, CMF, a pioneer in the ministry since 1981, shared insights during the event. He emphasized the transformative power of embracing pain and suffering, drawing parallels between Jesus' journey and the work of PMI. Fr. Alexander, director of Snehashram, highlighted the importance of rehabilitation in restoring lives.

Biblical Foundation

Fr. Jaison Puthenpurakal, the narrative of imprisonment spans from biblical times to modern-day advocacy, highlighting the

resilience and challenges faced by individuals throughout history. It begins with Adam and Eve and extends to figures like Joseph, Samson, Daniel, the three young Jewish men, John the Baptist, and Jesus, who experienced incarceration before their executions. The legacy continues with apostles like Peter, Paul, Silas, and early Christians, as well as modern-day Christians and activists like Fr. Stan Swamy.

PMI Special Task Forces

Fr. Michael Francis of Aurangabad, chief commander of special task forces elucidated on the Special Task Force. Subsequently, 40 such task forces have been established and are currently operational. PTI members have been assigned to pray specifically for each of these task forces.

ECHO

Volunteers were taken to ECHO (Empowerment of Children and Human Rights Organization), where they witnessed 35 young boys being rehabilitated at the Juvenile Justice Home. They met Fr. Anthony Sebastian, the founder of ECHO, along with another Claretian priest. Additionally, they visited Jeevodaya and met with the sisters and inmates, witnessing the transformation of over 800 girls over 35 years of service. The volunteers also visited the Swanthana home for differently abled children. Participants engaged in sharing sessions, reflecting on their experiences, difficulties, and successes in prison ministry. Solo competitions provided opportunities for active participation and camaraderie among volunteers. At noon, an essay and poem writing competition aimed at publication in the PMI magazine fostered creativity and expression among participants. PMI volunteers also engaged in fundraising activities by going out to solicit to support prisoner initiatives.

Valedictory

The volunteers' training program concluded with a valedictory function on April 22, 2024. The Master of Ceremonies was Ms. Usha, and the prayer was led by Sr. Nikitha SHM. Fr. Francis Kodiyan officially welcomed Most Rev. Mar Sebastian Adayanthrath and all the felicitators. He advised all volunteers to select a special task force and engage in prayer, fasting, contemplation, and chain rosary. He emphasized that the program was a blessing for everyone. Sr. Santan Nago FS presented the appraisal, followed by the inauguration of the redeeming wing by Most Rev. Mar Sebastian Adayanthrath. Mr Prasad was honoured and encouraged to go forward for His ministry. The Mandia group, led by Mini George, was welcomed, anointed, and blessed by Bishop Sebastian Adayanthrath, who prayed for them and wished them well for their PMI ministry. In his message, he emphasized the importance of working for prisoners as enriching one's faith, stating, "It is not your Ego dream but Theo dream, which means God's dream. Working for prisoners enrich your faith. They are helping you, not you are helping them. It is Theo dream." Following the felicitations by Sr. Anjali, Sr. Alisha, and Mrs. Veera, certificates were distributed to all PMI volunteers by Most Rev. Mar Sebastian and Fr. Benny. Prize distribution for the poem competition, essay writing competition, and mono-act competition was conducted by Most Rev. Mar Sebastian. Sr Amala DC concluded with a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all involved. The valedictory ceremony concluded with a short prayer for the prisoners led by Sr. Julia OSU and concluded with a group photo.

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RAINBOW - Theological Foundations of Prison Ministry India

Fr Francis Kodiyan, MCBS

PMI Publications, Bangalore – 2024, 209.
Sr Santan Nago FS

Author

Rainbow: the Theological Foundations of Prison Ministry India has been written by Fr Dr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, the present national director of Prison Ministry India. Fr Francis was born in 1961 at Chendamangalam, a Catholic priest belongs to the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS). He holds a Bachelors' degree in Philosophy from Kerala University, Master's degree in Psychology from Annamalai University, a licentiate and Doctorate in Spiritual Theology from Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. He is cofounder of the Jesus Fraternity and Prison Ministry India.

Background of the Name

The author, while staying at Neuchâtel, Switzerland, had a rare opportunity to witness the beautiful Swiss Expo, the making of artificial rain that created a stunning rainbow effect. Watching that he felt a deep God experience and realized that such spiritual experiences like the rainbows are rare, yet their influence and spiritual power is permanent. Fr Francis quoting the rainbows in the Bible, compared them to signs of God's love for the least, the last the lost. For him the Prison Ministry India was a rainbow, a symbol of God's faithfulness and mercy offered to all. He saw the rays of the rainbow as

Divine Mercy Rays that flowed from the heart of Jesus that proclaimed His infinite divine mercy for the lost.

Structure of the Book

The book has a Forward, Introduction, Bibliography and six chapters expounding each theme richly and remarkably.

Chapter One: Christian Spirituality

Human beings do not just have a biological life but a spiritual life too, and all major religions offer a unique spirituality a way of salvation. Spirituality gives meaning and significance to life and its purpose, provides values, beliefs, world views, standards and ethics to life. The fundamental point of Christian spirituality is the person of Jesus Christ. To experience Jesus is an essential trait of Christian spirituality.

Chapter Two: Spirituality of the Prison Ministry of India

This is the longest chapter in the book with over 50 pages devoted to it. The spirituality of prison ministry has two parts: Jesus-centred and people-oriented. The chapter explains succinctly its seven spiritual rays like the colours of the rainbow; of Jesus-centeredness, which are - i) overwhelmed by the love of Father God, ii) redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, iii) led by the Holy Spirit, iv) empowered by the Word of God, v) nourished by the sacraments, vi) enlightened by the spiritual exercises and vii) fortified by the ascetical practices. The people-oriented seven spiritual rays as – i) divine call, ii) the lost, last and the least, iii) search, serve and save, iv) adorned by virtues of faith, hope and love, v) enriched by fraternity, vi) strengthened by unity, and vii) engulfed by 'being' spirituality. The spirituality is steeped in the absolute trust in God, is eco-sensitive and wholly dependent on divine Providence. Constantly seeking the will of God and with discernment processes, they have realized great dreams dealing even with hard core criminals. This spirituality gives great emphasis on personal prayer, group prayer, intercessory

prayer, personal transformation, contemplation, ascetical practices, and deep God experiences for the success of this ministry. Prison ministry is a call within a call, not just to do something but to be a prophet, a physician, a psychologist, a spiritual director, a scientist, a reformer, a researcher, a good shepherd, a lamb of God, the salt of the earth, the light of the world and to be in love with the last, the lest and the lost. It is to search, serve and save these lost ones. It is the spirituality of being, by one's life and witness. It is not just to be a 'do-er' but a 'be-er'

Chapter Three: Reformative Spirituality

Reformation means to form, to shape, to fashion. Reformation is for those who have gone astray from the right path. It is a way to get them back on track. This spirituality developed by PMI founders, particularly the author of this book, is based on the experiences of more than three decades, with prisoners, prostitutes, hired killers and the like. If Jesus could reform the good thief on the cross at the last moment, it gives hope to everyone who believes in Jesus to be transformed at the last moment. This is a lifelong process as it starts from the prison itself, followed by the release, reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration back into society. The primary source of this spirituality is Jesus Christ and this calls for personal religious conversion. Conversion is a change in the person's fundamental orientation that can lead to self-transformation, self-actualization, self-transcendence that gives meaning to human existence. Every conversion is spiritual revolution in the life of a person. The old sinful ways are replaced by new unworldly and godly experiences, rooted in the power of the Holy Spirit. By this the person is raised to be in intimate union with God, that is deification – to constantly praise and worship God. This whole process has to take the responsibility of influencing the actions and decisions of others, the liberation of the poor and oppressed and for the betterment of all.

Reformation spirituality has to have a lifelong trajectory that goes through different stages such as i) Pre-formative stage with pre-formative spirituality ii) Formative stage with formative spirituality, iii) Per-Formative stage with per-formative spirituality iv) Post-formative stage with post-formative spirituality. Reformation spirituality for the prisoner is an on-going and life-long process. It is the duty of all those working for the lost, the prisoners and others to lead those changed to be led from pre-formative to post-formative stages, so that all have the grace to enjoy the eternal bliss in heaven.

Chapter Four: Spirituality of the Good Shepherd

In this chapter, Fr Francis Kodiyan, elaborately explains the goodness and care of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Quoting extensively from the First Testament (OT) and from the Second Testament (NT) he refers to Jesus' love and attention to the sheep. Jesus leads the sheep to good grounds, first checking and clearing the areas of insects, wild animals, snakes and then watches over them to keep them from being attacked by predators. Jesus leads the sheep through dark valleys and ravines safely. When sheep are injured, Jesus binds up their wounds with oil and the healing touch. Those tired, heavy with young or just born ones, Jesus carries them on His shoulders and offers comfort. When strayed or lost the way, Jesus searches sheep and brings them back to the sheepfold. He does not scold or blame the lazy or lost ones, but embraces them lovingly, giving their places in the sheepfold. The beautiful touching concern and care for His sheep are to be our steps to care and comfort those lost and suffering ones, whether in custody or languishing in jails. The spirituality of Good Shepherd teaches those working for sinners and left out-ones, many workable strategies to bring them back to God. To be good shepherds, to those under our care, we have to first be the sheep, experience God's tender loving care to do the same to others. We have to be courageous in our

conviction for this ministry. The purpose of Jesus taking on human flesh was to live among us and to search, serve and save the lost.

Chapter Five: Spirituality of the Father of the Prodigal Son

The author of Rainbow, here, gives a parallelism that can be adopted at the rehabilitation Centers for released prisoners. He vividly endorses the structures and procedures the rehabilitation centres can adopt. Though the second son of the story mentioned in Luke Chapter 15 verses 11-32 took all his property and squandered in loose living, the father still eagerly waited his return. When this irresponsible son returned seeking his father's forgiveness, the father was overjoyed and called for celebration. From this parable, Fr Francis originates a theology, spirituality and lifestyle of the father of the prodigal son that can be applied to the reformative and rehabilitative centers of Prison Ministry India. Just as the father of the lost son expressed boundless love with open arms of a mother and father to welcome his son so should directors of reformation and rehabilitation centres welcome the lost ones. The atmosphere at the centres, need to be more homely, build trust, faith and confidence in the returnees. The director and others must be able to feel the interior sufferings, aguish and their agony; to understand their grief and show forgiveness and generosity by creating conducive ambience. There would be others like the elder son unable to accept such home-comings, these also need to be brought under God's grace and unconditional love. The heads of these centres can have creative plans and visions that will best suit for those back at the fold. The inmates at the centres shall be considered as sons and daughters. This parable of the forgiving Father needs to be a beacon of light to those who work at the reformation and rehabilitation centres.

Chapter Six: Prison Ministry Prayers

The author attributes, the concept, activities, growth and development that happened, happens and will happen to first and foremost to prayers. As he categorically states that it all began as a prayer group of the Jesus Fraternity and it will be sustained with more prayers and the daily spiritual exercises, for years to come, for the last, least and the lost. It is remarkable that Fr Francis has listed a chain of variety of prayers, some known others unknown. The 19 Prayers printed in the chapter tell the readers about the credence Fr Francis has to these diverse prayers.

Message of the Book

The message of the book is original, powerful, convincing and practical. Written in simple lucid style, the reader is glued to the chair, trying to absorb the innovative and ground breaking ideas expounded in the book. Whether the person is a volunteer or a full-timer at the prison ministry, the book, 'Rainbow' is a hands-on manual for understanding the genesis, growth and progression of the prison ministry in India. It can also set a progressive trajectory towards widening horizons to search, seek and save the lost, welcoming more released and reformed human beings to normal life and reducing the numbers entering inside the huge iron gates of the prisons. We congratulate and appreciate the efforts of Fr Francis Kodiyan, in putting together such a treasured work well engraved in this book. He also deserves our applaud in pioneering such a humanitarian ministry remembering the invitation of Jesus to see Him in the least and the lost and that we visit Jesus, in between those thick walls of the prisons.

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The Idea of Prison Abolition

Tommie Shelby's The Idea of Prison Abolition, Princeton University Press, 2022, 248pp., $21.95 (pbk), ISBN 9780691229768.

Amelia M. Wirts, University of Washington[1]

Many existing prisons are deeply unjust spaces, rife with violence, racial inequality, and inhumane conditions. In *The Idea of Prison Abolition,* Tommie Shelby analyses Angela Davis's arguments that these manifest injustices call for prison abolition. Ultimately, Shelby argues for radical reform over abolition because reformed prisons can accomplish the essential state function of crime control without the attendant grave injustices that plague many existing prisons. The thrust of the book is that the myriad ways that existing prisons are unjust are distinguishable from the essential features of prisons that contribute to crime control. The central argument is a response to three abolitionist objections to prisons: dehumanization, links to slavery, and racial subjugation. Shelby concludes that each of these unjust features are accidental aspects of prisons that can be eliminated through reform, not inherent features of prisons that require abolition.

Prisons and Their Legitimate Purpose

Shelby defines a prison as a state-based institution that "forcibly confines prisoners within an enclosed space, physically separates them from the public, claims custodial guardianship over them, subjects them to the directives of prison officials, and treats them in these ways as a penalty for criminal offenses". Shelby argues that prisons, as described above,

1 https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/the-idea-of-prison-abolition

can serve a legitimate function in a reasonably just state by controlling serious crime through deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation. Crime control is an essential state function because the state is obligated to protect members from serious personal violations, as well as to maintain essential institutions that enable members to thrive, like the economy. Still, incarceration is deeply harmful, so it can only be justified to control the most serious crimes, namely murder, sexual assault, and the most damaging white-collar crimes.

Prisons are not Inherently or Incorrigibly Unjust

Having identified a legitimate purpose for prisons, Shelby considers three major arguments from Angela Davis that prisons are by their very nature unjust. Davis argues that prisons are dehumanizing; they are vestiges of slavery; and their true function is racial subordination. Shelby examines each of these critiques of prisons with the legitimate purpose of crime control in mind. He argues that while abolitionist critiques rightly condemn many existing prisons, they do not apply to prisons as such. Reform rather than abolition will allow us to create prisons that are not dehumanizing, that bear none of the morally salient features of slavery, and that function to control crime without racial subjugation.

Dehumanization

Many of the practices of existing prisons are dehumanizing. Invasive body searches, cramped living spaces with no privacy, lack of medical care and hygienic conditions, violence, sexual assault, and verbal abuse are all too common in existing prisons. These features are all dehumanizing, and we should reform prisons to rid them of these features. But, Shelby argues, if you removed all these practices from a prison, it would still be a prison. Davis could argue that involuntary confinement, even absent the inhumane conditions listed above, is already dehumanizing because it denies the agency of those confined. Against this, Shelby argues that involuntary confinement does

not treat those incarcerated as non-agents when it is used as a proportional consequence of the most serious criminal wrongdoing. When involuntary confinement results from due process, incarceration recognizes wrongdoers as agents who can conform their actions to a moral code but have chosen not to do so. Appealing to a sort of contractualist view, he writes, "Those who wrong others in ways that typically cause great harm cannot reasonably object to the unpleasant and coercive treatment their own wrongful conduct has called forth, provided such treatment is necessary to prevent harm to others". The need to protect members of society from the gravest wrongs of murder and serious assault provides a legitimate basis for the state to use incarceration to deter and incapacitate. Moreover, Shelby argues that neither involuntary confinement nor violence are inherently dehumanizing. Forced quarantining to control the spread of deadly illnesses and detaining prisoners of war until hostilities end are generally taken to be morally permissible, so involuntary confinement itself is not always unjust. As for violence, most abolitionists, including Davis, have expressed support for the violence involved in slave revolts and self-defence by victims of sexual assault. Thus, the fact that prisons include involuntary confinement or violence cannot on its own make prisons unjust or dehumanizing.

Slavery

Davis argues that prisons descended from slavery, noting the way black codes and convict leasing arose shortly after slavery was abolished. Shelby values this genealogical critique as a demonstration that prisons are not inevitable or natural. Still, the historical connections between prisons and slavery do not require abolition unless they also show that the features that made slavery unjust are also inherent in prisons. Shelby argues we can distinguish the unjust features that some existing prisons share with slavery from the inherent features of prisons. Commodification of people, torture, and corporal

punishment are unjust features that many existing prisons share with slavery. They should be eliminated, but they are not inherent in prisons. The central moral wrong of slavery is that enslavers held absolute and arbitrary power over those they enslaved. While the state does claim significant power over those it incarcerates, if due process is followed, this power is neither absolute nor arbitrary. When incarceration is the result of due process in a reasonably just society, the power the state exercises is legitimate and limited, not arbitrary and absolute.

Davis often points to involuntary labor as an obvious connection between slavery and prisons. Shelby argues that involuntary labour itself is not necessarily unjust. If one thinks that community service as a punishment can be legitimate, then it cannot be that involuntary labour is always unjust. Certainly, private profit from the involuntary labour of incarcerated people is disconcerting at least, but Shelby notes that much prison labour is devoted to reducing the costs of incarceration for the state, such as contributing to provision of room and board. What makes much of the labour in existing prisons unjust is the working conditions, not the involuntariness of the labour. Unfair working conditions within prisons must be eliminated if prison labour is to be legitimate. For example, labour in prisons should offer worker protections much like non-prison labour: workers should have the ability to organize unions and strike, safe working conditions, and a fair wage. Moreover, Shelby emphasizes that while we should be attentive to abuses of prison labour, many incarcerated people have reasons to work while incarcerated. Work is a way to combat boredom, earn money, and build skills that are valuable after release. Thus, involuntary labour is not unjust in all cases but should be carefully circumscribed if it is to be just. Shelby also addresses a broader way that prisons can be seen as a legacy of slavery. In the US, descendants of enslaved people are disproportionately subjected to the harms of incarceration. He emphasizes the need for corrective justice for descendants of enslaved people and the elimination of

broader racial and class structural injustices. But he does not see prisons as the source of such injustices nor abolition as an appropriate remedy.

Racism

One common refrain in the abolitionist movement is that the disproportionate racial impact of the criminal legal system is not an unfortunate byproduct, but the point of prisons. Shelby calls this argument a 'functional critique' of prisons, which claims that the true function of prisons is not crime control or justice, but racial subjugation. Shelby analyses the functional critique argument, noting that this claim is difficult to prove empirically and may seem implausible if it is interpreted to mean that the only reason prisons have continued to exist is because they maintain racial oppression. In the end, however, he argues that even if it is true that existing prisons do function with the real purpose of racial subjugation, this does not necessitate abolition. The functional critique does not demand abolition unless there is no legitimate function, consistent with a just society, that prisons can perform better than any other institution. He returns to the argument that, through deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation, prisons can play an essential role in crime control. Because there is nothing inherent in prisons that produces racial subjugation, the functional critique does not justify abolition. The functional critique argument raises the question of how to understand the nature of institutional racism. Shelby posits two ways that institutions can be understood as racist. *Intrinsic* institutional racism is marked by intentional discrimination or uncorrected past intentional bias. Intrinsic institutional racism can be eliminated by removing discriminatory policies. *Extrinsic* institutional racism is where there are neutral aims and policies in the institution, but due to background social injustices, these neutral policies have a racially biased impact. The way to address extrinsic institutional racism is to correct the background injustice.

As the discussion of institutional racism suggests, Shelby argues that it is not prisons themselves that are irredeemably racist. Rather, prisons are conduits for the racial injustices and structural inequalities that are present in the rest of American society. Prisons can be rid of institutional racism by eliminating discriminatory practices and addressing background injustice. Indeed, nearly all institutions in the US reproduce anti-black racism: schools mistreat black students, child services departments disproportionately break up black families, and employers discriminate against black workers. But we do not march in the streets to abolish schools, workplaces, or families. It is thus not prisons themselves, but this background structural racism that must be remedied. "Don't abolish the prison; abolish the ghetto".

Other Topics

This book also offers chapter-length treatments on related themes in Davis's work. Shelby argues that black radical prison narratives served as consciousness-raising tools for fellow poor black people, not as tools of moral suasion for white audiences, as slave narratives did. In response to the perverse incentives from for-profit business in the prison industrial complex, Shelby proposes that non-profits could provide essential prison services when the state cannot effectively do so. He also shares with abolitionists a commitment to building alternative approaches to crime control, including robust economic justice, provision of mental health care and substance abuse treatment, strong rehabilitation programs for those who commit crimes, and restorative and transformative justice. Still, Shelby doubts these alternatives will sufficiently limit serious crimes, so these should be paired with a minimal prison system to deter and incapacitate. Finally, Shelby discusses the utopian potential of the abolitionist vision. The abolitionist goal of a world without prisons can work as a 'regulative ideal' to guide us toward a more just society with economic equality, fair provision of social goods, and

corrective racial justice measures, even if achieving these ends will not fully eliminate the need for prisons.

Abolition and Conceptual Analysis

This book is a valuable contribution to analytic philosophy of criminal law and punishment because it directly engages with abolitionist views from outside the academy. As Shelby rightly notes, too often Angela Davis is "treated as a mere symbol of black radicalism and militancy" instead of receiving "critical and respectful engagement that distinguished white or male philosophers regularly receive". Shelby's treatment has already fostered more nuanced, critical and respectful engagement with abolitionism in mainstream political philosophy. More mainstream philosophical engagement with abolitionism is needed, but it is unclear if Shelby's methodology is the best way to understand the claims of activist abolitionists. His approach is ideal theory in that the arguments are based on the concept of prisons and their conceptually necessary features. Shelby asks whether prisons are inherently dehumanizing, dominating, or racist. The book's arguments are also analytical in the sense of breaking concepts and arguments into smaller component parts. Shelby singles out aspects of prisons to determine if, on their own, each aspect conceptually must result in injustice. Indeed, violence, involuntary labour or confinement, or historical links to slavery might not produce injustice on their own, but prisons include all these features together. Shelby's arguments do not address whether, in existing societies, prisons, with all these features, can control crime without an intolerable risk of injustice.

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