

Appendix 1. Seminary Speaker Transcripts

to my book ***How Nationalists Scam Evangelicals:***
Prison Seminaries Mock Our Constitutions with
Sex, Cover Ups, Big Bucks, and Psychopaths Prostituting Faith (2021)
www.PreciousHeart.net/Seminary >



This is the combined version of an appendix. The **first** contained nearly 20 pages of a radically condensed version of the following speeches. The **second** contained over 100 pages of the full dialogues of the following in the typeset of the book. The main reason for preserving these was to prepare in case the hosts **take down the original videos** after exposure of what they said in the light of the Seminary Scam devastated in the book. Perhaps an unreasonable fear, but not truly if one looks at the documents. Some Christian Nationalists and Dominionists have little real concern for Christian ethics and love to cover up. As we finished the book, space was a premium, and so we put all online.

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I. Introduction to CONDENSED Transcripts

This is a *radically* condensed version of the 100-page original Appendix 1 for this book, mostly just quotes pertaining to the Seminary Scam. In the brackets [] my comments. Prisoner Minister Biermann's is the scariest, vis-à-vis chapter 2 on psychopathy. The degree of NOBTS naïveté is clear: after 20 years, they chose Biermann from hundreds. The five videos were uploaded to YouTube by Claude V. King, which adds naïveté, for *both* NOBTS and the *Experiencing God* co-author King chose these. While there are issues with all four, Biermann exhibits many marks of a psychopath: absence of empathy, poorest pastoral care, and more. From the standpoint of a Dominionist dominating spiritual building tender, Biermann is *the* man. His pastoral care on the *death* of a prisoner's loved one is not present even after six years on the job, and that being one chief *example* of the 20-year-old program belies an almost categorically deep naïveté.

1. Texas Gov. Rick Perry Endorses Seminary Program

Looks like an ad from Gov. Perry's PR team, posted on 9-18-2012.¹ *Perry*. Howdy.... I'm honored.... That's a program that's changing lives and saving souls where the help is needed the most.... That means they can earn their trust and light a clear path to salvation. [Even Perry knows this is *not* neutral, but an Evangelical missionary program.]....

2. Grove Norwood – 2014 at Freedom Center Church

On 11-14-2014, Norwood spoke at The Freedom Center Church in Missouri City, Texas.² Greg and Linda Crawford are the senior pastors. About halfway through, Norwood presents a video from Angola's radio KLSP 91.7 that by itself got 220,289 views, 731 likes.³ I got a call ... Chaplain Billy Pierce, "I am the head chaplain for the whole state of Texas.... We want you to come up.... Heard about the story.... Would you go into every prison in Texas, and give that talk [applause] and share that message." ... Come.... I realized at that moment that God was calling me out to something.... alternating wonderment and tears that I had done nothing ... **respond to tap after tap**. And they truly were [taps on podium] ... somebody **coming up behind and tapping**.... **So, we started the Heart of Texas Foundation**. [Actually, he merely re-tasked his old 5.01(c)3 that had nothing to do with the seminary⁴].... God opened favor, to me, because of little Joy. You know, that's all it was, this **little four-year-old seed falls to the ground**. And God starts bringing this massive, massive thing out. We're birds of the air take shelter.... **I got a call from Angola, Louisiana, America's bloodiest prison**, it was said.... [Video Segment of Angola Played for Church⁵] *Warden Burl Cain*. ... **Because we knew that the wardens that came here, all got fired after four or five years. Because you couldn't hold his place together because there was too much violence**.... *Grove Norwood returns*. Night after night, the warden and I, we took a liking each other.... **God ... removed the demons at the gates ... But I wanted to know how**.... He said, "Well ... **thing that really changed everything was when we started the Bible College, the seminary**.".... *Quoting*

¹ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ZwwEbJ8fzZQ&t=5s, accessed on 11-10-2020, 408 views.

² See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ECh2jV2S30A, Norwood begins at 35:30 minute mark, the whole got 118 views, 1 like, accessed at 2-13-2021. See www.FreedomCenterChurch.com and <https://heartoftexasfoundation.org/videos-articles/> for more Heart of Texas Foundation videos.

³ See Angola video segment here: <https://youtu.be/m7Pk2hC3hoM>, accessed 3-1-21.

⁴ See HOTF incorporation papers here: www.PreciousHeart.net/OIG/HOTF-Inc.pdf.

⁵ See this segment <https://youtu.be/m7Pk2hC3hoM>. 220,289 views, 731 likes, KLSP 91.7 broadcasted from Angola Prison by prisoner radio host.

Cain. He said, “I started sending them out as missionaries to other prisons.”... The warden said, “When *they* change, *we* changed.” ...

Norwood continues.... first year that the Bible College seminary started at Angola violence began to drop into prison, noticeably, statistically, and today 19 years later it’s down about 75%.... And, so, we’ve already seen at Darrington violence begin to drop at Darrington. They’re still cautious. They’re wondering is this the result of these men.⁶ ... We’re doing it like Angola. We want them to stay in the system. We want a return on our investment for Christ. That they will be able to minister peer to peer and not have evangelists come in and *leave* and not leave them with the equipment that they need. The seminary equips men of God, to go out and plant churches and lead and teach Bible studies.... We have a very narrow mission.... Baylor University is doing a long-term study ... five years to show the world through books about the transformation that can happen **when the God of the Bible is inserted inside the dark places, where our broken pieces are.... Because what we dream of is one Seminary in every state in the United States, sending out its graduates every year to all of its prisons.... Baylor tells me it’s going to go around the world growth. Now, when we finish this study, we’ve got enough material for 100 books about the transformation that is taking place and has taken place in Angola and Darrington.** [I asked Professor Bryon R. Johnson on “100 books,” he had no idea what Norwood was talking about.] **It’s going to change prison systems around the world, that’s what Baylor is telling you.... we’ll stay focused and that God’s people will step up and help us continue to pay the bills.** [He is speaking a lot for Baylor without Baylor’s key researcher knowing about it, to help raise money with Baylor’s credentials.] Thank you very much....

3. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick at 2016 HOTF Fundraiser Banquet

Dan Patrick speaks at The Heart of Texas Foundation Banquet 2016, Nov 18, 2016—views 202.⁷ Grover Norwood posted several comments on video: Good Evening here we are in 10 years.... **He is now handling a mission. He has raised millions of dollars.... Some of you in here are capable of writing a big check.... whatever you can do, I would urge you to max out.... There’s nothing like this, where you really see a living God at work....** 33 more then graduated the following year ... *The Dirty Dozen*, the devil’s disciples?—this is the group!... Groves said, “Well, they need a field team ... [cost] **million dollars.**”... **Bryan Collier.... I was very glad that Governor Abbott had appointed him. Senator Whitmire and myself both recommended him.... God planned all this....** He knew ... first big check was going to used for something that would create this.... And so **Bryan Collier, because Burl Cain said, “This won’t work if you don’t have Christian men who are gonna believe in the program.”** [No neutrality, thoroughly Christian Dominionism].... We don’t need any wardens walking around; we don’t need any executives still walking around [*saying*], “So you know, okay, another crutch....” **We had to have people who believed and help.** So, Brad Livingston, then the director, now stepped out, and Bryan got in there. And this program would not be a success without the people who wrote the checks. Without the Southwest Seminary Dr. Patterson stepped up. All of it. All the teachers. All the professors, without all the volunteers. Without

⁶ See chapter 21.B, CHART 26. Darrington Violence Statistics 2013–2020, where TDCJ **does not show that** and ask why **TDCJ destroys the statistics** on that after seven years: perhaps simple incompetence and two other reasons, (1) the program’s affect is not truly important and (2) to cover up lies told to Norwood.

⁷ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=FUpmiU33A1s, accessed 2-13-21.

Brenna. **But Bryan is key.... what did God do? [Speaking as God] Said this is going so well, I'm not going to let Greg Abbott appoint someone who isn't going to be able to help it grow.** Many miracles. Thank you all for being here.

4. Exec. Dir. Bryan Collier at 2016 HOTF Fundraiser Banquet

TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier speaks at HOTF Banquet Nov 18, 2016.⁸ It's great to be here tonight.... **We were the first group that was over there [Angola] and saw it. Made a commitment as we left to come back and do that in Texas.** And with Grove leading the charge, and **God actually leading the charge** of that it all happened in, as I said before, Godspeed. [Notice, they “made a commitment as we left” relying upon their observations and Warden Cain’s sales pitch and no research.]... **you can bet we hand-picked one to go the Darrington Unit for the seminary program.... Field Ministers have, they’ve got one thing that not one person in this room has in that population, and that’s credibility. They bring a level of credibility to the table inside those prison walls that none of us have. When they sit down with another offender, and tell a story, that’s a story that other offenders can relate to. And that’s an understanding that they can have, and that’s how they can have an impact that none of us can have....** [Applause]

5. Coffield Warden Jeffrey Coate at 2016 HOTF Fundraiser Banquet

Coffield Prison Warden Jeffrey Coate speaks to the 2016 Heart of Texas Foundation fundraiser banquet (11-18-16).⁹ You know ... I have the best job in the business. I get to watch it happen. I get to watch those Field Ministers make a difference in people’s lives every day.... **We were missing God.... But we’re not sending them back out there practicing their religion. [He just did *not* see all the chaplains and volunteers that have given 100,000-plus hours in the prisons in which he worked for 26 years; or, he was lying and being a mere sycophant.]** So, what I think, Grove, that is going to happen.... I’ve always wondered, how are we going to rehabilitate the community? ... they’re creating is a **bunch of missionaries that are going to go into the neighborhood, and they’re going to rehabilitate the neighborhood themselves.... My Field Ministers, I meet with ’em every week....** You ever watch a cellblock when a Field Minister walks in the door [laughter]. Yes. Another peer, you know they’re in the day room, “Hey, here comes the preacher. Put that up” [laughter].... I enjoy watchin’ it [warden watching contraband being put away as *his* Field Ministers entered? If you believe he met with them *every week*, I have ocean-front property in Arizona to sell you. If he truly did, then that is off-the-chart *favor*].... **I use these Field Ministers to my advantage** [to help protect a young prisoner]....

6. Warden Cain 2010 Interview by Calvin College’s Sheila Hoekstra

Shirley Hoogstra interviewed Cain for Inner Compass “Bringing Hope to Prison” from Calvin College in 2010.¹⁰ Imagine being asked to take charge of one of the bloodiest prisons in America.... he is the subject of this book, *Cain’s Redemption: A Story of Hope and Transformation in America’s Bloodiest Prison* [2005] by Dennis Scheer. Welcome Burl....

⁸ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=TVP-6HJqWYU, 344 views; <https://vimeo.com/200013765>, 69 views, both accessed 2-13-6-21.

⁹ See https://youtu.be/ELx7l_okuEw, accessed 12-3-21.

¹⁰ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=zyTfNN8d27k, 27,033 views, 205 likes, accessed 3-7-21. Though the note on YouTube says it was uploaded on 8-7-2012, upon contacting Calvin College in March of 2021, Lislle Miller confirmed that the interview took place in “January 2010.” In 2014, Hoogstra became president of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities www.CCCU.org.

Warden Cain. five years, you would lose control over it again.... Because wardens are paid fall guys; that's what we are.... I was too young to retire.... when I first got there, I realized, the only way to change the place was to get the place to be moral.... true rehabilitation is moral rehabilitation. And so, moral people don't rape, pilfer, and steal.... the seminary doesn't really look at what religion you are ... it determines if you can qualify academically.... There's no one can argue with what we're doing, because we were, we were seeking morality and more rehabilitation. We weren't seeking really God as far as on the surface as it would seem, but in our culture we find morality in religion more than anywhere else, especially in the south. [Perhaps the slickest statement by anyone on the sneaky nature the program.].... the dominant religion was Bapticostal. [If serious, Angola has its own religion; if joking, Cain mocks religion; for an Evangelical audience, it's a Baptist/Pentecostal hybrid *created* by the prisoners that Cain brags about as he has facilitated its dominance.] *Hoogstra.* Bapticostal? *Warden Cain.* Yeah.... **that's the culture**, because it's primarily black, about 75% black.... the other thing was, with the Bible college, all the churches were involved....

7. Warden Cain at 2015 Prestonwood Men's Conference

Warden Burl Cain spoke at the "Stronger" Men's Conference 2015 at Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas 3-28-2015.¹¹ *Warden Cain.* Man, what a program today.... **I turn out to be really the dad in the prison.... anyone of you teachers can run a penitentiary, I promise you** [*laugher.* A joke that demeans wardens?]..... **you can be awful political in Louisiana back at that time.... I had never worked in a prison in my life. I hadn't known anything really about the inside of the prison.... I didn't want this job.... Everybody that goes there gets fired. Wardens are the paid fall guys. Not going.... here's the seminary.... I realized that correction means *correcting deviant behavior*. And I realized that moral people don't rape, pilfer, and steal. So, if you can get people to become moral people, then really have done moral rehabilitation.... where we want to find morality the quickest, is in religion in our culture.** So, if we can get religion in the prison, then we're going to find morality really quick. **But we just can't care what religion it is, or we cross the line.... the seminary folks came to see me. I didn't come to see them.... [Religion *morality's* tool? That is among the slickest way of favoring Christian Dominionism in prison—genius persuasion.]....**

And this is real foreign. When you go to work in prison, they say one inmate can't ever have power over another. But the preacher really doesn't have power over you because you have the freedom to go to church, if you want to. You don't have to go. And it's the same in prison. We don't *make* you go to church.... we're going to show church on our TV station, thanks to the Horners, Andy Horner, Premier Design, And if you don't want to watch the TV on Sunday morning, and you want it to be on something else, and you want to sue us about it, then we'll just have the Learning Channel all day on Sunday. And you'll miss the football game [*laugher*].... There's another way to skin a cat, and just hit him head on [*laugher*—so what did Cain just say? "We don't *make* you," but they will anyway in the *same the breath*. And everyone *laughs!*]....

Now if I had asked the lawyer, "Can I put a cross in a church?" He would have surely said, "No," because lawyers say no more than yes. So therefore, don't ask the lawyer [*laugher*—slam the legal profession, and *laugh*]. So, if you don't ask, you don't know. And

¹¹ See <https://youtu.be/Tc0eiCgKHt8>, 5,167 views, accessed 3-1-21.
See www.PrestonwoodMensConference.org.

ignorance is bliss [*lot of laughter*].... I talk to other wardens, “No, you can’t do that.” I said, “Who said you couldn’t do it?”

“All the lawyers say you can’t do it.” I say, “Why did you ask them?” [*lot of laughter*]....

Now the reason we built this, **this is a non-denominational Catholic Church** [*lots and lots of laughter*]. Okay. **You can’t have a denomination, or the ACLU will get you** [*laughter*].

Somebody say, “Whatcha going to do next?” I’ll say, “I don’t know. He hadn’t said yet” [*laughter*]. But he does. And he will.... **God’s blessin’ what we do.... I have to be the father of these inmates, cause they didn’t have one....** We have a sign that says, “Askable.” **You have to be askable.** That’s a new word, we made that up.... Knowledge is power. We know what they think when we talk to them. We want to know what they think. [Best explanation for the old prison adage, “walk and talk,” that the best wardens in TDCJ have done forever.].... **In our prison, we have no profanity....**

8. Warden Cain at 2016 Florida Justice Summit V

Warden Burl Cain spoke at the 2016 Justice Summit V in Florida, 4-14-2016.¹² **That picture came from *Mother Jones* magazine.** Hey, y’all ever heard of *Mother Jones* magazine. **It’s liberal to the liberal....**¹³ reporter wanted to come ... wouldn’t let him ... sued ... because I let other people.... then I left ... wouldn’t have to talk to him.¹⁴ He made me really look good, because his catch was when he left that, “If he came down Angola, you had to find Jesus, or he wouldn’t let you go.” And so, that was a good deal. [Cain did not tell how he tried to extort Bergner].... **we come up with a term, “moral rehabilitation.” We don’t say faith-based, we don’t say any other word about God, or what have you. We just talk about moral rehabilitation....** I didn’t want the job.... **didn’t want to do it.... too violent. Wardens were the paid fall-guys, and we are. So, I’d lose my job in a few years....** seminary was a real game changer because when we started, we had a lot of problems.... I explained to the staff, if you’re a Christian and you don’t buy this seminary, you’re fighting God. And when you get to the pearly gates, I feel sorry for you. You better tighten up. Get your attitude right about what we’re trying to do, because this is God’s work and not my work. That kind of brought them all around.... **we have to break tradition. Because if you stay traditional, you do the same thing you did....** good news for me was I didn’t grow up in corrections. I was over trying to teach that school and got run off, and I went to work in corrections.... I never really worked in the prison until I was a warden of one. So that made me very non-traditional. If it didn’t make sense, I didn’t do it; if it was common sense, I did do it.... **You have to really be non-traditional.... So, we have to be non-traditional....** seminary was a real game changer, because it created a culture change.... **we don’t tell’m we’re gonna be Christian.... We don’t care what you are. We care that**

¹² See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=DTvX3UoeNqk, —3,345 views, accessed 3-1-21.

¹³ James Ridgeway, “God’s Own Warden,” *Mother Jones* (July/August 2011), www.MotherJones.com/politics/2011/07/burl-cain-angola-prison/; Ridgeway reported, “If you ever find yourself inside Louisiana’s Angola prison, Burl Cain will make sure you find Jesus—or regret ever crossing his path.”

¹⁴ Daniel Bergner, “God Bless This Rodeo: Louisiana Prison Inmates Illustrate a Warden’s Bible Lessons,” *Harper’s* (February 1998): 33–46, www.Harpers.org/archive/1998/02/god-bless-this-rodeo; and *God of the Rodeo: The Quest for Redemption in Louisiana’s Angola Prison* (New York: Ballantine, an imprint of Random House, 1999; 297 pp.), first published as *God of the Rodeo: The Search for Hope, Faith, and a Six-Second Ride in Louisiana’s Angola Prison* (New York: Crown, 1998; 297 pp.). See www.DanielBergner.com, and this book was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year.

you morally change.... This is probably one of the worst prisons in America at the time I went. I did not change it; it's a God thing. But, if it could change, anybody can.... But the prison ministry folks drive up. They do their little deal; they get in the car, and they leave.... [slams volunteers, makes *his* prisoner preachers saints, nullifies *untrained* prisoners, and credentials Bible program as a *counseling* program.] **With an inmate preacher that's trained for four years, has been trained in counseling** [apparently Cain never actually looked at the curriculum], **has been trained like any preacher. He's really got some good training. He goes in there, he is the preacher....** ... we wanted to research this program wanted Baylor University to do it.... **Tim Horner ... Premier Design, Premier Jewelry?.... we need \$1.3 million for Baylor to research this seminary: \$1.3 million, five-year research....** fly over to Dallas ... I know him real well.... I say, "...Byron Johnson from Baylor ... Senator Patrick.... We need some money." ... He [Horner] said, "Well, I'll tell yah one thing: if I pay for any research, I don't want any student doing a research. If I'm gonna pay that kind of money, I want a PhD doing it." ... Johnson kinda perked up ... got excited ... I [Cain] said, "We're gonna prove his seminary worked.".... Tim Horner said, "Well, I tell you what"; he said, he said, "Dr. Johnson, do you think it worked. What do you do?"

Johnson said, "I think it works. But it's not gonna ever work if we don't prove it."

He [Horner] said, "Well, if that's what it takes to get God's word out there, and I'm gonna help you prove it. So you got the money." It took about 10 minutes. Dr. Johnson fell over on a table, just like that. Never had he raised so much money so quick without somebody saying "I gotta go down and get the CFO to look at it" and all this kind of stuff. Got the money.... research is over. The book is coming out in July. It worked. We can prove it worked. It worked phenomenally well.¹⁵ ...

When people say, "What are you going to do next?"

I said, "I don't know. God hadn't told me yet.".... I got the missionary program in the shower. That's where God spoke to me on that one. I can remember where I thought of it. And I wasn't, it just happened, it just pop in your head, and I know that's God talking to you. Guys, it's crazy, but I got the hospice thing on a Sunday morning, sitting at the table. And all of a sudden I thought hospice. I need to do hospice, have all the preachers.... Remember, Muslims have the same God we do, we just forked off back up there with Abraham, way down to the deal. So, we talking God, everybody.... I had an inmate it would walkin' and preaching. And he has, he has the towel in his hands propped up on his deal. **You'd think he put T. D. Jakes out of business; he can preach a paint off the wall....** it's all about talk and communication. It's all about make 'em human....

We want you to give us some, we want to get some bang for our buck.... It's all about non tradition. And it worked. And it worked into one of the worst prisons in the country....

Man asks. How about the Paper? [*The Angolite.*] *Warden Cain.* [dodges question.]....

9. NOBTS Professor John Robson 2017 Seminary Promo

PART 1: John Robson, Director of the NOBTS Seminary Extension at Angola

PART 2: Dannie K. Johnson, Inmate Minister, 00104404: <https://vimeo.com/217575725>.

PART 3: Kyle M. Hebert, Inmate Minister, 00256437: <https://vimeo.com/217575497>.

PART 4: Stanton Easley, Inmate Minister: <https://vimeo.com/217577462>.

PART 5: Donald "Carolina" Biermann, Inmate Minister: <https://vimeo.com/217575624>.

¹⁵ Michael Hallett, Joshua Hays, Bryon Johnson, Sung Joon Jang, and Grant Duwe, *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation* (NY: Routledge, 2017; 248 pp.).

PART 1: Professor John Robson, Dir. of NOBTS Extension at Angola¹⁶

Robson. In our school we have 16 different denominations ... Muslims.... **every single Christian is extremely, extremely in touch with the authority of the Scriptures.... they know more about the Bible, per se, than probably most people ever will** [Goodness, that is an effusive statement].... **Angola was the bloodiest place in America that was considered to be a prison....** blood on the walk *almost every single day*.... They're normal now here.... **This church now sends missionaries to nine other prisons.... But I predict that state lines and legislatures are going to tear down the barriers, and that some of our men will go farther than the borders of Louisiana....** I believe with all my heart [*breaks into tears*] sorry [*whimpered*]. [*Long pause, deep breath*] That this's what it's about. [*Long pause, deep breath*] Excuse me [*whispered*]. [His tearful naïveté betrays his knowledge of prisons and legislators; not merely convinced, he's severely emotionally attached.].... took *Experiencing God* felt called to preach. [Call to preach after *that*, goodness?]..... been going on 10 or 12 years. We have over 200 ... May 22nd ... BAs and associates.¹⁷ ... **these are all in Christian ministries.... inmate ministers keep records** ... eight years ... averaging between 22- and 25,000 contacts per month. Is that phenomenal? ... [Prisoners keep records on *themselves*? Hah!].....

PART 2: Dannie K. Johnson, Inmate Minister¹⁸

Where's all started probably in 1988 or '89.... I come from a background of, you know, a Christian home.... a workbook that we was working through ... *Experiencing God*.... I begin to really ponder on what I was really here for ... my purpose for God, you know. I knew God I had a planned purpose for me, but I never could understand what.... I began to go out ... being a servant ... evangelizing, you know, and experiencing God at that point. And want other people to experience him....

PART 3: Kyle M. Hebert, Inmate Minister¹⁹

The dramatic change ... he's placed in my heart from the brokenness. At age five, I was blown up in a serious house explosion.... By his grace, he allowed me to survive.... Right then and there, he had a call on my life, a purpose for me to live, for him to fulfill his purpose through me....

PART 4: Stanton Easley, Inmate Minister²⁰

Well from the beginning ... raised in Christian homes, never really come into the understanding of what a relationship with Christ ... or ... this awesome and magnificent God that ... I've come to know now in my life. My whole life I was, I guess you would call kind of slow, special education. I don't grasp things real quick.... took me basically, maybe 40 years to ever really come to know Christ....

¹⁶ For Robson see <https://vimeo.com/217559694>. See <https://vimeo.com/217549452> for all five, accessed on 2-13-21. They were uploaded from LifeWay Christian Resources by Claude V. King, 5-15-17, and tagged #Burl Cain, #Claude King, #Richard Blackaby, #Henry Blackaby, #Angola Prison, #correctional ministries, #prison reform, and #Experiencing God.

¹⁷ Since the video was uploaded May 15, 2017, that likely means this was shot in May 2016.

¹⁸ Johnson, #00104404, <https://vimeo.com/217575725>, accessed 3-14-21.

¹⁹ Hebert, #00256437, <https://vimeo.com/217575497>, accessed 3-14-21.

²⁰ Easley, <https://vimeo.com/217577462>, accessed 3-14-21.

PART 5: Donald “Carolina” Biermann, Inmate Minister²¹

I came from a troubled background, alcohol ... a hard family.... good people.... The only two emotions I experienced for 44 years of my life were hate and indifference.... There was no middle ground with me; it was just one way. I either completely hated you or was completely indifferent to you. And I’ve gone through four prisons in three states with the same attitude.... they were telling me about their problems: their wife run off with the mailman, or they were addicted to pharmaceutical drugs, or something like this. And I said to myself, if you want problems, I’m just about to give you some real problems.... I had already had an act of violence planned out after that weekend.... it was premeditated.... I thought that I had just gone over the edge.... I started talking to myself.... “What’s going on?” And I was thinking clearly. I could hear myself ... “What’s going on?” ... I’m crazy.... I’ve lost it.... as I started to look around again, it was almost like I was seeing the people seeing the room from a different perspective.... I *actually* see the people. **And then Jesus said, “I love you.” And it was like, it was like standing by these big speakers ... very air reverberates with the sound. But it wasn’t so much a sound as it was a feeling.... I mean I’ve *never* heard that ... “I love you.” I’ve had people tell me, “I love you.” But I’ve never *heard* it. I mean it’s kind of like putting on rain suit, and somebody sprayed it with water hose, you know. I’d heard it, but I’d never felt it.**

And 44 years—everything that I believed crumbled right around my feet.... scared me.... **I’ve never been afraid of anything, never. I’ve never felt fear. I felt fear. And that was the first thing I said was, “Who are you? Who are you?” And he said, “I love you.” ... I started crying. I hadn’t cried since I was seven years old. Not cried—I mean, we all shed tears, but I’ve never felt it....**

He [God] said, “Well, who you talking to?” “I haven’t the slightest idea, but I wish you’d leave me alone.” ... the hate and bitterness was gone; this, the hate and indifference was gone. This was the thing that was probably the thing that scared me the most, because I would ask God, “How am I going to live in this environment without my, without my hate?”

He [God] said, “Trust me.” “How can I trust you. I don’t even know you. I don’t know who you are.” And he said, “Well, who you talking to?” I said, “Don’t know. I’m crazy. That’s who I’m talking to.” This is all day.... But one day God asked me, he said, “Ask me for anything you will. Prove me,” he said.... Two days later, my mother called this prison....

... nobody on my phone list ... girl in Seattle. And Laurie ... she was the first person I’d ever met I wouldn’t hurt. Now, I didn’t know, that’s the only way I can explain that. Is she was the first person I had ever met, that I would not hurt.... the best way for me to put it....

And he [God] nagged me all day... I got up, wandering around.... looked at the phone. And I said, “Not a chance.” God said, “Go call.” ... I just walked over to the phone, picked it up and got it a dial tone—couldn’t believe it. Two o’clock in the morning, roughly 2:30, now. And I said, “Well, I’ll fool God.” I turned around and dial mom’s number direct. It rang.

She answered on the first ring; 2:30 in the morning. I said, “Ma!” She said, “Yeah.” I said, “What are you doing.” She said, “Sitting here waiting on you to call.”

I said, “You’ve been sitting there since you called here earlier today.”

²¹ Biermann, <https://vimeo.com/217575624>, accessed 3-14-21.

She said, “No.” She said, “I just woke up about a half hour ago and knew you were going to go.” And I got mad again. She said, “What happened to you?”

I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “A little over a week ago, something happened to you.” She said, “Have you hurt somebody again? Somebody hurt you?” She said, “What’s wrong?”

And I got mad, I just asked her, “What do you care?” Hung up the phone. Just like that. What do you care? Hung up the phone. [God told him to violate the rules, and still he hangs up on his own mother.] And, I just, it was really hard for the next two, three days. God and I argued, and we talked. And finally I just realized that I couldn’t fight him anymore.... I mean, they’re just, this thing with my mom pales in comparison to the things that God has done in my life....

Guys, actually, they love for me to come, because I don’t pull any corners.... If I have to deliver a death message, I’m not really ... not a crier. I’m not a sympathizer. You know, we made our choices ... some bad decisions.... God’s not responsible for us being here. He didn’t put us here. He didn’t allow us to come here. He preserved our life onto salvation. He raised us up here. Get a grip. Live with it. It’s bad, but it’s not *really* bad.

[Zero empathy whatsoever *after* six years of ministry! Is that the NOBTS training?]

I read the Martyrs books all the time: *Foxes Martyr* books and *World Jesus Freaks*.²² And I think this [*pulls cross from under his shirt*] this martyr’s cross a friend of mine made this for me, because I, I’m a radical. I just don’t, it’s Jesus, and that’s it. There’s no other way. There’s nobody else, and he says to obey.... we become slaves to the new master....

10. Prof. Bryon Johnson 2016 Radio Interview

Neil Stavem interviewed Prof. Bryon Johnson on 8-29-16.²³ *Johnson*. ... professors at [NOBTS] ... said, ‘These guys provide us a model of what the church really should look like outside the prison.’ ... It is the largest study ever conducted in prisons dealing with the topic of religion.... they allowed inmate-led churches, and they’ve been there for, for many decades, but they were weak. When they started the Bible College ... put wind in the sails of these inmate-led congregations there’s been what we would call kind of cultural change in this place that was once known for violence and corruption. It’s a perfect prison. [*Perfect?*].... Professors at [NOBTS] “These guys provide us a model of what the church really should look like outside the prison.” [Then why not set them free?] ... most ecumenical environment you can imagine.... It’s an incredible thriving kind of religious economy in the prison where people are free to, you know, free to be religious.... warden telling me, “You know, you won’t hear anybody preach any better than an inmate that’s, you know, really trained and knows how to preach.” And, and there’s something about a way in which an inmate can minister to another inmate that maybe a free-world person like you or I couldn’t....

²² John Foxe (1516–1587), *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* (John Day, 1563), revised ed. with foreword by Harold J. Chadwick (Newberry, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2001; 482 pp.) and perhaps DC Talk, *Jesus Freaks Revolutionaries: Stories of Revolutionaries Who Changed Their Worlds: Fearing GOD, Not Man* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, an imprint of Baker, 2005; 384 pp.).

²³ Neil Stavem, “The Impact of Inmate-led Prison Ministry,” (8-29-16), <https://myfaithradio.com/2016/impact-inmate-led-prison-ministry>, accessed 3-3-21, with two links there, one for a clip and another for full interview transcribed here.

Stavem. Amazing story..... he’s written a wonderful book called *More God, Less Crime*, and he’s part of a new book that’s just come out, *The Angola Prison Seminary*.....²⁴

Johnson. Neil, what’s happened, **at the Darrington Unit ... modeled after Angola**, there’s a foundation called the Heart of Texas Foundation led by Grove Norwood.... Field Ministers, to other prisons across the state of Texas.... **we’re now tracking these people over time to see what kind of effect they’re having in the prisons where they’re now ministering to inmates.... goal is eventually to have Field Ministers ... at every prison in the state of Texas ... over 100 prisons in Texas....** in West Virginia, in Michigan, in Florida, in Georgia, in Mississippi, New Mexico—they’re launching these.... We’re sitting back right now just trying to keep tabs, because we keep hearing about a new seminary that’s popped up in a prison, and we didn’t know about it.... **not a faith-based publisher, this is Routledge ...** in their innovation series.... **We can’t tell you how many inmate ministers have told us the level of counseling that they provide.... [really now? They cannot tell, not with one course in counseling, though Johnson meant the opposite].... because they’ve had these counseling courses—while in the seminary are able to minister to others [Curriculum has little counseling. Johnson never looked at the curriculum?²⁵]....**

II. Introduction to Original Draft of Transcripts

This is the full version of the original Appendix 1 for my book, *How Nationalists Scam Evangelicals: Prison Seminaries Mock Our Constitutions with Sex, Cover Ups, Big Bucks, and Psychopaths Prostituting Faith* (2021), which became too large for the book, at a 100 pages in 10 point type. In the book, with the exception of Gov. Perry and inmate minister Donald Bierman, we cut speeches down to quotes concerning the major issues of the Seminary Scam.

Norwood gave a mesmerizing presentation over an hour long. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, TDCJ Exec. Dir. Bryan Collier, and Coffield Warden Jeffrey Coate waxed effusive with their praises. Former Angola Warden Burl Cain’s three presentations likewise captivate as he clearly explains how he beat the system and mocks the Constitutional concerns as God talks to him.

Then we have a five-part series introduced by Professor John Robson, director of the Angola program for NOBTS and four chosen prisoner pastors.

Inmate Minister Biermann’s presentation was the scariest. In the context of the book, we devoted chapter 2 to psychopathy, and noted that question was not *if* but *how many* of the Field Ministers were psychopaths, so said the world-wide renowned experts on psychopaths. The degree of NOBTS naiveté is manifestly clear in that after 20 years, the NOBTS/Angola folks chose Biermann as one of their many graduates to interview on video. Indeed, the Angola program has helped market the Henry Blackaby’s *Experiencing God* workbooks and cottage industry, and Warden Burl Cain sponsored the class and it is a requirement for all those who enter the NOBTS program at Angola—for 20 years now! Apparently, the five videos were made for LifeWay Christian Resources and uploaded to YouTube by Claude V. King. That says a lot, too much even, including that *both* NOBTS and *Experiencing God* co-author King chose these four prisoners. Yet everyone should listen to Biermann, who is at the time of the interview an

²⁴ Byron R. Johnson, *More God, Less Crime: Why Faith Matters and How It Could Matter More* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2011; 312 pp.); and Michael Hallett, Joshua Hays, Johnson, Sung Joon Jang, Grant Duwe, *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation* (New York: Routledge, 2017; 248 pp.).

²⁵ See www.PreciousHeart.net/Seminary/SWBTS-Curriculum.pdf.

example for NOBTS and Claude King of a graduate who has been *ministering* for years—*years!* What you will hear in Biermann is man with *all* the marks of a psychopath, no conscience, no empathy, *still* struggling with self-control, and *still* convincing in his presentation as he tells us *how poorly* he delivers pastoral care. It is a scary presentation, for those with eyes to see, with even an elementary understanding of empathy and psychopathy.

What an experience I had in editing these. It is one thing to listen to a speaker live and quite another to attempt to write down precisely what they said. In that exercise, I had to replay many times, a process which gave extra insights into the speaker. All the “ahs” were removed. We left intact the repetitions, where for instance *that is, that is* may or may not have been intentional and is often accidental. Surprisingly, Grove Norwood was the clearest. Warden Cain was among the hardest, because he often compressed his speedy thoughts. Part of what makes Cain such a great speaker is his flow. Even though he repeats his popular message in different venues, he *sounds* as though he is always fresh for a new audience—not an easy task, doubtlessly empowered by his energy, sincerity, and the conviction he conveys.

When italics do not refer to an obvious publication, they refer to a speaker’s voiced emphasis. Brackets [] indicate a clarification as in [*unclear*] indicates even after listening several times, what was said was unclear, or could be construed in a variety of ways. We bracketed [*applause*] when there was a significant applause, and we bracketed a few other items for clarification, or when a stagehand interrupted a speaker or when there was a change.

We did not want to mis-quote anything and endeavored to portray every speaker as they presented themselves. I take responsibility for the punctuation, that may not always reflect exactly, my interpretation. Moreover, do not view any mistakes in dictation or run-on sentences as grave errors from the speaker. Speaking is difficult, and even the very best will waver or digress at how they feel the audience is receiving.

1. Texas Gov. Rick Perry Endorses Seminary Program

Looks like an ad from Gov. Perry's PR team, posted on 9-18-2012.²⁶

Texas Governor Rick Perry. Howdy. This is Rick Perry. I'm honored to join you in celebrating the Heart of Texas Foundation and the Darrington Prison Seminary. That's a program that's changing lives and saving souls where the help is needed the most. The Darrington Seminary has already accomplished great things in a relatively short amount of time, spreading the word that true spiritual transformation is not only possible, it's the purest form of moral rehabilitation ever known to the world. By focusing on long-term inmates, the seminary is helping train people who know what their fellow inmates have been through in their own lives. That means they can earn their trust and light a clear path to salvation. That will not only turn younger inmates lives around, it'll enable the Field Ministers themselves to experience the joy that comes from helping others. When this seminary reaches its full potential, people coming out of our prison system will have a stronger spiritual foundation and be better prepared to deal with the challenges of life, back in the outside world. That means they'll be ready to contribute to society. Be a fuller participant in the lives of their families and communities. I commend everyone involved and Heart of Texas and the Darrington Prison Seminary. The word here spreading will help make a better Texas for all of us. God bless you. And through you, may he continue to bless the great state of Texas.

2. Grove Norwood – 2014 at Freedom Center Church

On 11-14-2014, Norwood spoke at The Freedom Center Church in Missouri City, Texas—118 views, 1 like.²⁷ Greg and Linda Crawford are the senior pastors. Over halfway through, Norwood presents a video from Angola that by itself got 220,289 views, 731 likes, beginning with KLSP 91.7 intro.²⁸

FCC Pastor Greg Crawford. Well, he's here today. I told him in the first service, yah know. Outside of talking about the Father, Son, the Holy Spirit and my family from the pulpit, probably Grove Norwood is probably next to the line for how many times I share that amazing story of what the Lord is doing in our prison systems. It is one thing for me to tell you, but it's another thing for yah to come meet him, and, ah, it's awesome. And so I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna delay it any further, but just, Bro, we love you and just come, come do your thing, man.

Grove Norwood. Thank you. Good morning and thank you so much for the honor of sharing this sacred desk this morning with my dear friend, your pastor. I want to thank my dear friends Tracy and Tony Baskin for coming alongside and adopting me. These folks, you all have adopted Brenna and me, and the work we're trying to do. And so, God's in the business of adoption, isn't he? So, we thank you very much. I don't know if there are some of you here who come because you're drug here, or because you're going to lunch afterwards. And, you know, there are a lot of weird Christians here and I'm one of them, where we like to talk about Jesus and we like to read the Bible and I don't think there are any study groups where people read *Moby Dick* over and over and over and memorize long passages from *Moby Dick* or *Gone*

²⁶ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ZwwEbJ8fzZQ&t=5s, accessed on 11-10-2020, 408 views.

²⁷ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ECh2jV2S30A, Norwood begins at 35:30 minute mark. Accessed at 2-13-2021, and then it had 111 views. See www.FreedomCenterChurch.com for the church's website, on which there is no doctrinal statement, except to love God and love others, which says a lot to those who value their religious heritage. See <https://heartoftexasfoundation.org/videos-articles/> for more Heart of Texas Foundation for more HOTF videos.

²⁸ See Angola video segment here: <https://youtu.be/m7Pk2hC3hoM>, accessed 3-1-21.

with the Wind and make marginal notes, But there are people who do that with this book. And I used to think they were weird Christians. I was normal I didn't do that. I just went to church occasionally and I believed in God and everything. I didn't know that something else happens. And it's clearly explained, over and over in so many different ways in Scripture. And Christians will say, "Come to Jesus and just walk down here and accept him and it's all done." Well, that's great that you do that, but what you're doing is asking for this something else. Because he says, "Ask and you will receive. He then seeks me will find me when they seek me with all their heart."

I'm telling you that I went from the normal Christian who didn't live it, who didn't have the compelling reason to talk about Jesus in public, to the weird kind of Christian that loves to be with people like you, loves to read the word and just can't get enough of it. And I use it now, as my rule for faith and living. And I'm suggesting if you're a normal Christian, and you know all about the Lord; and you see us as being different and kind of strange, then I invite you to do something after our service today. When you go home tonight, I want you to sit down in your chair somewhere and open this book, and just say, "God, if there is something else that you do for a human heart that I haven't had, if you can do that for me so that I don't have to fake this. Yeah, I think all these Christians are kind of faking it. And I don't really believe that this is really real." That's what I thought. So I'm asking you to just sit down and ask the God of the Bible, "if you're real, show me. Come in. Show me. Knock on my door. Do whatever you have to do but show me that you're real, reveal yourself in such a way, Lord"—and you can talk to him like this, he's happy to hear this prayer—"in such a way, Lord, that I won't have to fake it, that it will be real for me, that I won't have to make stuff up and try to be a Holy Roller. I don't want that. I want you to show me if Grove Norwood is right in saying that the whole Bible is filled with the revelation that he will come, and it's something that he does, it's not something that you do." All you and I can do is just ask for it: "Ask! You have not, because you ask not."

So that's my opening prayer for you as we start. If you're one of those normal Christians, like I was before God showed me.

Ex-fighter pilot—I was convinced of all that I knew about Christianity was the right part. I had read a lot, memorized long passages of Scripture when I was little. But as I grew up, the bridge never occurred, because I had never as a grown man asked for it. I had never as a teenager, *asked* for it. And he had to break me, completely, before I cried on the floor one day beating in a little farmhouse in Kentucky, "God helped me!" And for the first time in my life as a grown man, oh, I was praying to the God of the Bible that I knew all about, but I had never asked him to help me as a grown man. And everything changed in just a few days, when he came and showed me in things that happened, and he will do it to you in a foxhole, he'll do it to you on an airplane, a vacation, a summer camp, a business meeting. He does it in all sorts of ways in all sorts of places to people, because it's an individual visitation. When God decides that your heart is ready, he will show you that he's real. And so you'll meet people that you know they have something that you don't have, this is what that is, the knowledge.

Paul the Apostle is a perfect example of this. He knew all about the God of the Bible. Now, didn't he? But it wasn't until Jesus Christ revealed himself to Paul that everything changed. Little Samuel grew up in the church, just like many of you kids are. You know, his mother gave him to the preacher. She was so happy that God had answered her prayer, and she came and visited him every year to Jerusalem and made him little uniforms that look like the preacher's. When my son was little, I bought him a little flight suit, it looked like daddy's, so when daddy used to fly airplanes in the Air Force, see. So that's what she did.

But the Bible says in Second Samuel, that the Lord, First Samuel, that the Lord God did not reveal himself to Samuel at that time. But Samuel was growing up knowing all about Jesus, or knowing all about the God of the Bible, and maybe even studying a little bit about Jesus because Jesus is in the Old Testament as the one who has to come. But the Bible says God did not reveal himself to Samuel at that time. And you read a little bit further and little Samuel's life, and then the Bible says, "and then God revealed himself to Samuel," and it almost gives us the address at Shiloh. It's a personal revelation that he's gonna do for you, for you, for you, *when* your heart is ready and hungry enough to ask for it with the heart of a child. Show me. Prove to me. I'm willing, if you'll just show me. I beg you to think about that prayer.

And let me tell you something, while I was doing that not long ago, one of these rare times when you get to be by yourself and just read the Bible, and a lot of times I do this as a part of my devotional when I'm getting ready to do my radio show on Sunday nights at KKHT here in Houston. And I'll get off by myself and our little farm up there, and Brenna will say, "Tata," and I climb the stairs and I go up there and I sit down. And I was reading one night in Matthew, and I came across an old story that I've heard many many times. Jesus feeding the 5,000. Matthew 14. And as you open and read that, and you don't have to turn unless you just want to because I'm gonna tell you the story you've heard thousand times. They all got fed. And I'm reading along, and if you ever had it happen where something just stops, the railroad arms just come crashing down—*eerch!*—you come to a stop right there in Scripture. And it said, "And they brought 12 baskets of," it says in the ESB, "broken pieces." They collected 12 baskets of broken pieces after everyone had been fed—5,000 people! And I stopped, and I thought, "Well, why in the world did they do that?" Was it, "Don't mess with Texas over there," maybe they had a no littering deal. And somebody had to go and clean up the hillside after 5,000 people went home. And so the disciples, there were 12 of them, and so all they could carry were 12 of these big baskets that they wove out of cane, still do over there. And they're over picking up 12, and they, they gather them up. And I look to see what, what did they do with them, and why it said nothing about that. Who told him to; it said nothing about that.

Now when you're a pilot, you like to know how things work. And it kind of helps you, you know, have a career where you can survive. If you know how things work and supposed to work, and I wanted to know why this happened, I thought, well, let me just go to Mark, and wait a minute, here's feeding of the 4,000 ran across the other page, and I read down feeding of the 4,000, said exactly the same thing. The disciples went and gathered up 12 baskets of broken pieces.

But it doesn't say why. It didn't say who told him to do it. Who asked them what they did with it. Well, let me just see if Mark, if this is even in Mark. So I went to Mark. Guess what? There it is again. Twice. The 5,000 and the 4,000; 12 baskets of broken pieces gathered up by the disciples and taken somewhere. What about Luke? Oh, it couldn't be Luke, I mean, what stories in all three of these gospels the same thing. And sure enough in Luke 5,000, the broken pieces gathering them up 12 baskets full. But it doesn't say why, and it doesn't say who asked him. I thought, well, this by this time, I'm on a tear, as we say in East Texas, I went over to John, and bless his heart. John gives me the answer. He says, and this is in red, in my Bible: "Jesus said, 'Pick up the broken pieces and do like you did when you brought the five loaves and two fish to me. Bring me the broken pieces and show the disciples.'"

Thank You, Lord, I had my answer. But I never knew, and to this day have yet to find one story in the New Testament, that is six times told in the Gospels. Four Gospels. This story is told six times. For me this got my attention now, I don't know if it's going to get yours or not.

But I'm just telling you what this did for me. Jesus was interested in those broken pieces. And I realized that I was a broken piece. And for him to say bring those broken pieces up here to me, mean the world to me, it meant the world to me.

And as I watched this play out in my mind, we've all been to the movies so sometimes we see things in movie fashion, I look back 2000 years to these men. They're sweaty. They're tired. They walk up to Jesus. Everybody's got his basket full of these broken pieces, and probably climbing up the hill was harder than carrying the, the fragments, but they brought him up and they sat him in front of Jesus. And they said, probably, this isn't in Scripture, but think about it: "What do you want us to do with these? You said go get them. Here they are. What do you want us to do?" And the movie stops. And they're all standing, just like this, in my mind. They're still standing there. We're not told what Jesus said next.

This is so cool. And so I felt the Lord said, "What do you think he said, Grove? Tell me about the Jesus *you* know. What do you think he said? Do you think he said, 'Go, take this to the mayor of Jerusalem'? We're gonna be trying to do a special event about another hillside. We'd like to have some security. Take him some broken pieces. Go over to the head of the fire department, and, you know, help those first responders out. We're going to send some, we want to make some friends." The Jesus that I think I know said, "That little lady that's sitting at the gate, begging because she adopted three or four children in her house. She's a widow. She doesn't have two nickels to rub together. Take her a whole basket. And that man at the gate has got no legs, and that woman over there who's caring for our neighbor's children, and some woman who's been abused or hurt or some man who's been beaten—take these things out and do something greater good, than leaving them on the ground for the birds to come and run off with."

That's what I think Jesus did. That's the feeling I got that day. He sent those pieces out and there was a greater good involved in that scene. That's the Jesus that I know. And then I read a little bit further. And the idea occurred to me there's another place where he says the word *broken*. And that's the Last Supper. And I think the Lord was preparing his disciples' hearts for that moment when, as they were all sitting around, and Jesus knew what was going to be happening to him in just a few hours. When he was going to become the world's worst broken piece. The greatest tragic broken piece. And he held that bread out and he said, "I'm a broken piece, too, take this, this is my body broken *for you*."

They couldn't see a greater good at that point. We can now, after the resurrection, the empty tomb. We see his brokenness was for the offer of redemption to all of mankind. It was worth it. And Isaiah says that Jesus looked back on that night, and his soul was satisfied. To me, that means he said, "I don't want to do it again, Lord. But it's been worth it. I don't want to bleed anymore. I don't want to hurt anymore. I wouldn't want to do it ever again. I didn't want to do it the first time. Part of me, the human side, begged you to take it from me. I know how scared I was of the pain, but I wanted your will. And I had promised in that covenant we made before time began, that I would do this as a greater good."

So, when ah, when ah few years ago, my little daughter Joy was killed, and many of you know that story, hit-and-run in Wallace, Texas one night, and the man heart was on. Who would have done this? Left a little child on the side of the road, knocked 73 feet down a little uninhabited, practically road back there, no lights, no center stripe on it, just out in the country-country. Who would have done this. And the next day they found out that it was, "Mr Norwood, it was, we found out who did it. A headlight fragment matched a pickup truck we found in Wallace. And it was your friend, Ulice Parker."

I said, “What?” “Yes, Ulice Parker, and he’s over here crying. And he said he thought he hit something, but he didn’t know it was Joy. He thought it was a, maybe a dog, or a coyote, and he just was going on in the dark.” Well, I knew Ulice didn’t see very well. He didn’t have proper prescription glasses, because he couldn’t read the eye charts, cause he couldn’t read write or tell time, and he hadn’t had a driver’s license his whole life. And his truck wasn’t insured or any of that. But for 40–50 years, he’d been feeding his family. And God had introduced me to him some years ago, and I became kind of a friend to him. And I had \$5, when he didn’t. And I would help him out, and Joy knew Ulice, and he loved her. And so I went over and hugged on him and told him, “We’d get through this together.”

And it was kind of weird, because people didn’t understand. We have wonderful race relations, at least I think we do, out in the country where we live. We don’t have any problems. But to see the black man sitting by the white man, with the black man had killed the white man’s daughter, they just hadn’t seen anything like that in Fulshear. And so they were interested, and they began telling their friends. These men are Christians. They have found they can love one another through something like this; it doesn’t matter the skin color. There is no black and white, there is no [applause]. Yes. And so people began to write, and I’m going to speed up a little bit, because I’ve got some really exciting things to tell you as a result of when that worst night of my life took place. They started writing emails about this weird thing that had happened, and somebody got word of it, then Promise Keepers. Back then Promise Keepers had 16 cities they went to every summer, with a million men all total would see their little special movie; they had one movie they would make every summer, as well as lots of guest speakers. And they called and asked if they could come down and make a little movie of Ulice and me, and the whole story, for 19 minutes. And so, finally, I said, “Yes,” after a couple of times of saying, “No.” And they came down, and they made the movie. And that summer, it got shown in 16 cities beginning in New York and ending in San Diego; they came through Houston and San Antonio, and hundreds of thousands of men and their sons saw this little story.

And it was all about forgiveness.

But to me, it was, I didn’t have to forgive Ulice. it was an accident. He was my friend. There was no offense made. Oh, it was hurting both of us. But I didn’t even think about, well, “Should I forgive him or not?” But they made a forgiveness story out of it, and I can see now how God has used that. He has used that.

And so, my life didn’t change. I’m a nobody from a little cowtown. Brenna and I live so far back in the country we carry the full moon in a bucket up to the farm. When it’s time for the full moon. We do. And, and so there’s no flashing red light in our town, there’s no; there’s a stop sign. And so, my life continued on. Our little church, we have go teach my little Sunday school class.

After all this summer and all these hundreds of thousands, you know they sold this 19 minute movie in the lobbies of these places, and so churches like yours and mine and others and Sunday school classes and people would buy it to go and show their Bible study in this. And I didn’t know that was going on until about four or five months after the summer was over. My life hadn’t changed; nobody was a movie star at my church. We just kept on coming in and learning about the Lord.

And one day, one Sunday morning I got a tap on my shoulder. And I turned around, and it was a black man standing there. And he said, “Mr. Norwood? Are you Mr. Norwood?”

I said, “Yes, I am.”

He waid, “I just wanted to come and thank you.” And his eyes welled up with tears, and he said, “I just wanted to come and thank you. I have a new life in Christ because of the movie of your little girl, and I just wanted to come here and see if all of this was true,” he said. And we started crying together, and we hugged.

And I said, “Well, what church did you see it in?”

And he said, “Oh, no sir, it wasn’t a church, it was, it was a prison up in Huntsville.”

I said, “What?” And I picture Joy. Many of you have heard me tell this story. It’s as true today as it was then, and I love sharing this. I picture Joy flying over the razor wire of one of these prisons in that little DVD and going down the Cool Hand Luke cells, you know, turning left and going in. And this man standing in front of me, would have been sitting there looking at little Joy and coming to Christ in a jail cell. I couldn’t believe my eyes or what I was hearing.

I turned around to greet someone, and they’d come during our church; we Texans interrupt each other all the time. So I got interrupted here. And when I turned around, he was gone. And I’ve never seen this man again. I have no idea what his name was, how far he had driven to come say thank you.

About four months later—by the way, I went and told my friends at my church, the men around me and our little prayer group that we have on Wednesday mornings. And I said, “Joy is in prison.”

They said, “What are you talking about?” And I told them, and they said, “What are you gonna do?”

And I said, “Nothing. There’s nothing for me to do. I’m not gonna pick up the phone and start calling prisons because of that.”

“Okay, well let’s just pray about it.”

So we prayed. And a week went by, and two weeks went by, and about four months went by. And one day at church, honestly, if my pastor were here, he would tell you this is true. I was sitting in about the same chair. Tap on my shoulder. I turned around. It’s a white guy. Older wrinkled face like he’d been pulling on camel cigarettes for a long time, like my daddy he did, you know, you hold ’em like this, you know, up in East Texas, this is how they did it.

See, he was, he was a hard face, but he looked up at me and he said, “Are you Grove Norwood?”

I said, “Yes sir.” And his eyes got watery.

And he said, “I want to thank you, cause I have, I have a relationship with Jesus now, because I saw the movie of your little girl.”

And for this hard face to say the word *Jesus*, kinda got me, you know. And I could tell the suit wasn’t maybe his. It didn’t fit exactly right. And I started crying, and I hugged him.

And then I said, “What church did you see it in?”

And he said, “It wasn’t a church. It was a penitentiary in Rosharon, Texas.”

And I remembered the other guy, and it blew my mind. And somebody interrupted me again. And when I turned back, he was gone also. And I’ve never seen him, either one of those two men again.

I don’t know where they are. I hope one day one will come up out of the audience and say, “I was the black guy,” or “I was the white guy that came to say thank you.” Because in all these years, nobody else has come to say thank you, not that anybody has to, or I even wait for that. That’s crazy. But the fact that those two did, both having seen the story come to Christ in prison, got my attention.

And the fact that I've been tapped twice, so I said, "Well, better go tell the guys at church, you know my prayer group about it."

"And what are you going to do now, Grove?"

I said, "Well, nothing. There's nothing I can do."

And so we continue to pray. In about two weeks later, a friend of mine at church, Terry Witherspoon, came up and said after our prayer meeting, tapped me on the shoulder, I turned around, he said, "Grove," he says, "I saw an ad in the newspaper for a big prison ministry conference going on at a Methodist Church in Houston. And so, I think you should go over there, it's on it's this coming Saturday."

And I said, "Well, Terry I'm not going over there. I don't know anything about prisons, I don't know anybody in prison. That would be crazy."

He said, "No, you have to go. I paid \$10 for it. There's a free lunch."

My third tap! Okay, so I went.

We guys, I said, "Come with me."

He said, "I can't. I have to work. I bought you a ticket."

And so I drove over to Houston, and I went to that event. And I got my coffee and decided I'm gonna be invisible. Nobody's gonna know I'm even here. I don't know anybody, won't embarrass myself. I saw all these booths, must have been 400 people in a big place like this, and everybody had their own booth. And there were lots of prison language, restorative justice, and things like this—I had no idea what that meant.

And I sat down in a chair by myself, sipping my coffee, and I got a tap on my shoulder, about three or four minutes after that. Honestly, you can ask him. I turned around, and of course, I'm looking like this, and he's squatted down, and he said, "Are you Grove Norwood?"

And I said, "Well, yes sir."

He said, "Oh, our men's Bible study saw the movie of your little daughter for Promise Keepers. Would you come and speak to us sometime, speak to the men?"

And I said, "Well, well sure I'd be, I'd be honored to. What church is it?"

He said, "It's not a church, it's a penitentiary over here, and I'm the program director at Carol S. Vance [prison]. I'd like for you to come and speak to the men."

And I stood up, and I think I, I scared to people because I said, "You're invited me into ah, you're invited me into a prison."

He said, "Yes."

I went; 300 men came to their feet crying.

And for the first time in my life I saw those faces [applause]. I had never seen faces like that. I didn't know they were all fathers. Nearly every man in prison is a daddy. Even the 14 year olds, many, many of them. And every Mama, nearly all of them are mothers.

I didn't know these things. And I stood in talked to them, and I don't know what I said, brand new to prisons, didn't know their hearts, didn't know what to say. But I did the best that I could. And when I left, that chaplain, that kind of like how preachers do, you know, they'll call their buddy from another church and say, hey, this guy, they liked him, you might want to bring, get him over to your prison. And so I got a call from another prison, and down I go. And there were 400 men there, and I stood up and I saw the same faces *hungary*. Give me something. What have you got to give me? Can I believe your real? Why are you here, when you could be outside in the free world today? What do you want from us? Are you going to come here and make us feel guilty for what we did? All of those questions, but you can see broken faces on the broken pieces.

And I got calls after that, and I began to go around. My little business is going downhill, and my prison time is going uphill.

And one day I got a call, from this—I always kid Billy Pierce about this—this is Chaplain Billy Pierce, I am the head chaplain for the whole state of Texas, everything from El Paso to you know where, all of it, I am the head chaplain. *And*, he really didn't do that, but I like to tell it like that. And I said, he said, "We want you to come up. We want to talk with you."

I said, "To headquarters?"

He said, "Yes sir. It's up here in Huntsville. I'll get you the address."

I said, "Well, okay, when you want me to come?"

He said, "How about tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock?"

And so I thought, as I drove up there that, that I know they're Christians. This guy's the head chaplain; he's going to be nice about it. But he's going to ask me not to come into the prisons anymore, that what you're saying we're going to get sued by the ACLU. Or some other kind of prisoner rights group or victims right, and so I figured, they were, I was just gonna get fired, you know, and wouldn't be allowed to go in anymore. And what did I know? I wasn't a licensed volunteer or chaplain or anything. And when I got up there, there was a roomful of executives in the chaplaincy.

And they said, "We've heard about the meetings down there. Heard about the story. Heard about your talk. Would you go into every prison in Texas, and give that talk [applause] and share that message."

So here's the head chaplain asking a nobody. A broken piece. Come.

And I said, "Well, how many prisons do we have?" [Laughter]

Somebody said, "113." And somebody else said, "Another 40 federal prisons also. Don't forget the youth prisons."

And I realized at that moment that God was calling me out to something. And all the way back. It was alternating wonderment and tears that I had done nothing to get to that meeting, except respond to tap after tap. And they truly were [taps on podium], just like that, somebody coming up behind and tapping. And, my friend, if we are—I know now—if we're willing to look at it and pray and say, "Is this really him tapping me?" I'll go and see if it is, and that's all you can do. And the door will open here, and another open there; something will shut. And he will direct your paths, as you say, "Yes!" It's more important to do that, than to keep a date with something or some club or some other thing. There's room for that in God's work. But when he taps you for something—oh, Lord, don't let me even miss a tap today.

And so I came back and started trying to figure out how to go around prisons all over Texas. I found that we're the largest prison system in the United States. Somebody call it the Big Kahuna among prison systems. And so I started going around, my men around the church said you got to get organized, you got to start a foundation. And so we started the Heart of Texas Foundation, some little invitations to our banquet October 3 just around the corner, love for some of y'all to come, pick up an invitation. And if we run out back there, go out to our website; Greg will tell you, and you can you can get a ticket to come on the website. And so we organize the Heart of Texas Foundation and began going around to the prisons, and I began to see what's it's like in prison.

And because God opened favor, to me, because of little Joy. You know, that's all it was, this little four-year-old seed falls to the ground. And God starts bringing this massive, massive thing out. We're birds of the air take shelter. You know what Jesus said about the little mustard seed,

and birds of the air come and take shelter in the protection in this thing. That's what I was beginning to see.

And I got a call from Angola, Louisiana, America's bloodiest prison, it was said. Oh, I'd heard stories about Angola among the old timers here in Texas prisons by that time. Yeah, they said, "Grove, when I was a boy up there, before they sent me off out of Angola, I was there on a, on a transition. They were you'd step over bodies on the way to chow in the morning, then they'd hose off blood off the sidewalks *every* morning at Angola. 5,300 men doing life without parole. There weren't enough guards to keep them hold the place together. 18,000 acres! Larger than the island of Manhattan. And all these men with no future and no hope. This is where they, oh, you drive by graveyards at Angola inside the prison. That's where they bury them, cause their families can't afford to haul them out of the swamps in Louisiana, most of them.

So when I got the call, "This chaplain Robert Tony calling for the warden and our chaplains. We'd like to invite you over for three or four days. We've got four or five prisons up the Mississippi. Could you come in and share your message and, and we want to get you in front of our men."

And I said, "You're inviting me to Angola? Okay, I'll come." And so we saddled up and started the drive to Angola.

Now, let me tell you something, that I haven't told you about the night Joy died. This to me is the most pivotal part of my story to me. It's because when we got back from the hospital, and got over there and saw what we saw, and came back, it was maybe midnight or one o'clock in the morning. And the house was filled with lights, except for one room that was dark. And, ah, Christian friends from church in the community and everybody was there that could get in, I guess.

And I couldn't take any more, and I went out the back door by myself down to the little lake behind our house. And by the time I got to the lake, I was screaming at the God I loved. "Where were you? How could you have let this happen? Don't tell me something good can come out of this. I know that verse, and I don't want those Christians coming down here and quoting Romans to me about 'all things work together.'" I said, "It doesn't apply to me, not this, not now."

And I shouted at the top of my voice around midnight or one that morning. I remember tearing my shirt off. I wanted to dig a hole in the ground. I'm telling you this is weird. I don't know if someone would call it hysterics. I now know it was anguish. I have never known anguish. I wasn't angry at my God. I wanted to know *why*! Where was he? What's going on here?

And I said, "Nothing good can come out of this. There's nothing you can do that could ever make me say this would be worthwhile. That it was worth it."

When I finished shouting, I was just about hoarse, I guess; I turned and I walked back up to the house with a tattered shirt. Tried to pull my hair out. I wouldn't got my head shaved almost bald the next day. I understood about the Old Testament grief. Don't ask me why. I've never had that done. I just said cut it all off.

She said, "There'll be no charge. Mr. Norwood."

We have a little town, and Christine was very kind.

As I got halfway up the yard, I turned around, and I said, "But if you can. And I know you can do a good thing here, little thing here and there, with all this. Somebody come to Jesus, and because of Joy being a Christian, and all that. But I mean something so big and so good, that

one day I would look back on this night and say, ‘That it’s been worth it.’ If you can do something that big, and that good. Let me live to see it. Let me live to see you do that.”

And I walked back in the house. That was the last time I said that.

I didn’t realize it was a prayer, but now I do. We were just having a conversation. And I think my Father must have nudged the Deity on His right and say, “We gonna show Grove more about us than he ever dreamed he would know.”

And so, things began to move. And after the first tap and the second tap in church, I wondered, “Is this the greater good?” Two people have come to Christ, and I was so selfish I said, “No, I can’t, ah—I am happy, Lord, these men have come to Christ—but in my heart, I was not ready to swap Joy for them.” I couldn’t do it. But I just said, “Thank you. Thank you, Lord.”

That’s the human heart. I am just so selfish. It took a long time before I was able to say, “It’s been worth it.” But let me tell you, my friends, it has, it has.

When I got to Angola, and I saw the most peaceful and beautiful prison that I had ever seen. Never dreamed that men would be walking around in civilian clothes. That you’d have a roomful of 400 men here, and there wouldn’t be one security guard anywhere. Not like that in Texas. Men walking down death row, you meet him, he’s got a Bible in his hand, the cells are here—he’s outside. He introduces himself as Jerome Derek.

I say, “Oh, Jerome, about where do you live?”

He said, “Well, I live here.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, I’m the pastor of death row. I’m a graduate of the Bible College of the seminary here in the prison, and I’ve been the pastor here for 13 years.”

And I said, “You can just come in like that, and walk out? I saw you come in, and nobody patted you down.” They strip search you in Texas, in most states. When you’re a prisoner and you go in to feed the prisoners on death row, and other secure highly secure areas, you have to show you’re carrying nothing in, and then when you come out, you carry nothing out. I saw an incredible thing. And if I have time, I would show like to show you just a little piece of that. Tom, can you run a little bit of what I saw when I got to Angola. Here we go.

Video Segment of Angola²⁹

Prisoner radio man. We’re here on a beautiful Friday afternoon, and I just want to say no matter what you’re going through, God loves you. God keep you. Remember, that all failure is not final. God wants to deliver you from bondage right where you are. Just keep listening to KLSP 91.7.

[Music] is a real community of people living real life. Experiencing real life issues and real problems. But trusting that God is going to bring them through.

Warden Burl Cain. By the Mississippi River to Tunica Hills to the south, we farm cattle, about 2,000 head of cattle. We have cotton, about 1,500 acres of soybeans, 1,100 acres of wheat, about 800 acres of corn, and everybody’s busy.

Prisoner or Volunteer 1. God is at work the lives of men. And not only that, in this setting, we’re reaching the world.

Prisoner 2. It’s, it’s believed, and it’s and it’s sincerely believed by a bunch of us here that God is not only going to do it, not only doing a work here, but he’s going to do a work quite possibly like the world has never seen.

²⁹ See this segment <https://youtu.be/m7Pk2hC3hoM>. 220,289 views, 731 likes, KLSP 91.7 broadcasted from Angola Prison by prisoner radio host.

Prisoner 3. When you build a community you build it on a foundation. And that community can be safe. With the right attitude and the right frame of mind, you know, that if we just be concentrating on doing the things what God commissioned us to do.

Prisoner 4. What we're doing here is we're taking it back. And we take care of one another. We our brother's keeper here, you know. We help one another. So come on in, and I guarantee you, you'll find this is not normal. This is a community. This is a society with itself. And I guarantee you, you find our society safer than yours. And the unemployment rate is zero. Everybody has a job. [Laughs] This is the ideal community.

Prisoner 5. This is a community of God. But it also is in the midst of a maximum security penitentiary. Louisiana State Penitentiary.

Warden Burl Cain. Angola—average sentence is 88 years. It's the largest maximum security prison in America. 90% of the inmates will die here. One out of every two is murderer, has a life sentence. And you have murderers, you have aggravated sex crimes, armed robbers who get 99 years and habitual felons.

Prisoner 4 again. I've been here 26 years. And this was one of the roughest prisons, bloodiest prisons in the world.

Prisoner 6. Oh, this place was a nightmare. I caught the tail in this really ugly situation, something it was, it was bloody. It was messy, and you know guys you pair up. You know, I sleep half a night, and you sleep half a night. And if I woke up use a bathroom, you fell asleep, I was obligated to make a hole in him. But he was allowing you, you would have allowed me to die. You slept on your watch. I mean this place was a nightmare. [music]

Prisoner 7. This is a cold place. This was a place without hope at one time. You could not get missionaries to come in here. They were scared. Angola was a throwed away, it was a throwed place. It was dangerous.

Prisoner 4 again. Down the line God had a plan. And he had chosen a man by the name of Warden Burl Cain. And he came with a vision. He came with a vision for *this* place, and for such a time as this.

Warden Burl Cain. I didn't want to be the warden here. That was the first thing. Because we knew that the wardens that came here, all got fired after four or five years. Because you couldn't hold his place together because there was too much violence. It turned out that after I got here, well, you know I just felt called to do it. And it was divine intervention, I do believe.

Prisoner 8. I've been down almost 24 years, and I've been under quite a few wardens. And he's the only warden that has brought God's love and his word to us.

Prisoner 4 again. The worst of the worst. He'd say, okay, give'em to me. His mama told him before she died, "You got to watch out for those men souls; you're responsible for those men." And I thank God today he did. Because there are not many men in his position would go as far as he'd go; there is not many men in position that would step up and stand for the gospel like he stand.

Prisoner 7 again. The man has a job, and he knows his job. and he knows the job. And we keeping on. This is a society; this is a community. And it run like that. And the warden want it run like that.

Prisoner 8 again. With Warden Cain, what he done. He allow you to be a man, a man of God.

Prisoner 6 again. One of the good definitions of worship is anything that you can do, you can do it as unto the Lord, you know, and it'll reflect, and not only that you'll carry the power

of the Holy Spirit, with it, consecrating the gifts that he's given me this shop, the equipment, the time he's given me, school and everything to him is a form of worship.

Prisoner radio man again. Everything I do here at radio station at KLSP 91.7 is render service unto the Lord. God ministers to me in the midst of programs. I come in with no set agenda of my own. And then, the Spirit of God takes over and something totally different happened.

Prisoner 4 again. This is our community. A lot of people don't like to say it. This my home. It's been my home for 26 years or so, you know. I know this world is not my home and just [unclear] a stranger. But right now, while I'm here, it belongs to me. And I'm going to take authority over my territory. I shall live and not die, to cloud [unclear] of the law. You know I know he has chastened me so, but he has not given me over to death. That's right. He didn't kill me, put a good whipping on me, but it didn't kill me. Sometime a good whipping is necessary. We need a good spiritual stick on us a lot of times. If it had not been for Angola, I wouldn't be the man I am today. Praise God. I feel like preaching. [laughs]

Warden Burl Cain. We were desperate. People get desperate [unclear]. I had blood and murder and all around me. And so we were desperate and God met our need. Second Chronicles 7:14. That's the one applies to us. He has healed our land. I'm amazed, I stand amazed. Because I didn't, I didn't create all this. I wasn't that smart. It just happened. And we just, I think the lesson here for you is, is open your heart to what God brings your way, and just be ready. And don't be too surprised, but be amazed; because it will come if you'll be a vessel to allow it.

Prisoner 8 again. My name is Eugene [unclear] Junior, and I an inmate here at the Louisiana State Penitentiary serving a life sentence [his photo as a youth pans by].

Prisoner 4 again. My name is Sidney Delouch, prison number 89339. I've incarcerated going on 27 years [his photo as a youth pans by].

Prisoner 10. My name is William Ollis, 101392, I have a life sentence [his photo as a younger man pans by].

Prisoner 11. My name is Charles Ray, number 125002. I live in a trustee dorm. I'm serving a life sentence [his photo as a youth pans by].

Prisoner 6 again. My name is Greg Zumwalt, 114184 is my DLC number, and I'm here on a armed robbery and a first degree murder, doing natural life [his photo as a younger man pans by].

Prisoner 12 . Sivoris Sutton 307571, life [his photo as a youth pans by].

Grove Norwood returns.

Night after night, the warden and I, we took a liking each other, and God just brought us together. We're both about the same age, and the story of Joy really touched with Burl Cain's heart, and God used that to open the lines of communication. And we'd stay and talk late in a special house that he has for guests, late into the night, while my team my guys from church had gone to bed. And I began to ask Burl, as I saw after four days, the miracle of all this. And I'd heard people say it was all Jesus and all the warden and he's Christian and he removed the demons at the gates and opened them up and that all sounded great. And that's what most everybody hears, and it's true.

But I wanted to know *how* did this happen. What exactly would you attribute the number one, the number two thing; I want some rankings and priority. I'm a pilot. I want to know what were the important things, in the, in the emergency procedures are. What did you do first?

And he said, “Well, of all the things we’re doing now, the thing that really changed everything was when we started the Bible College, the seminary.

I said, “What? That little educational classroom we were in?”

He said, “Yeah.”

I said, “Well, How long has that been going on?”

He said, “16 years.”

And I said, “What is it?”

“Well,” He said, “It’s a four-year accredited degree program. PhDs from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary come up here every day. And we enroll lifers into this program, and they go through for years. And when they get out, I make them pastors. I make them Bible teachers. In fact, they start Bible teaching while they’re freshmen, when they start discovering, there’s more to the Bible, than what they’ve heard about on the radio. And over time, Grove.”

I said, “Keep talking, I’m listening.”

[Quoting Cain] He said, “Over time, you know, 15 years down the road, I have so many preachers running around here I didn’t know what to do with them all. We got 25 churches now, going 25 different graduate pastors.”

[Norwood continues] They never go home. They have to live in the prison. All the employees have to go home. Nobody’s allowed to live in a prison, except those who’ve been condemned; the broken pieces live there. And he’s been equipping broken pieces to turn around and bless others for 15 years.

[Quoting Cain] He said, “I started sending them out as missionaries to other prisons in Louisiana.”

I said, “What?”

[Quoting Cain] He said, “Yeah! We’ve got missionaries in all of our prisons here in Louisiana. They’ve graduated, and I send them out there. And now they’re planting churches out in these other prisons.”

I said, “This is the most remarkable thing I’ve ever heard of in my life.” I said, “I know there’s nothing like this in the world.”

[Quoting Cain] He said, “No, there isn’t. We have lifers. That’s what’s made the difference. We’re not training men who are getting out. That’s for others to do, and that’s fine. We need that. But we’re training men who stay in the prison, and they have changed this place from the inside out.”

[Quoting Cain] The warden said, “When *they* change, *we* changed.”

I said, “Has anybody from Texas asked you to come over and help us do that? Or, you know?”

[Quoting Cain] And he said, “Nobody from Texas has ever asked me anything.”

I said, “Burl, we’re neighbors. It’s been 15 years, and you’re telling me nobody from Texas has found out about this and wanted you to help us?”

[Quoting Cain] And he said, “No.”

And I said, “Would you help me?”

[Quoting Cain] He said, “Yes, Grove, I’ll help you. Here’s my cell phone numbers. I’ll come to Texas anytime you want.”

And let me just tell you, without giving you some of the fun fun details. One year later. This is the next greater good that God did when I headed back to Texas. Tom, if you’ll show them what we have going right now, just south of Houston at darrington penitentiary.

Video begins of Fox 26 News Reporter (sounds like Bob Phillips of 4-country) on Darrington Seminary – A very-well edited video compilation of the program with several speakers edited into whole as Four Country Reporter narrates ... begins with sign of the prison, then the chapel

Fox 26 News Reporter.

At a new century-old place of punishment, where perditions path ends for many in despair, an unlikely force of rescue is taking form, building strength and craving a mission.

Speaker in chapel. We are here to celebrate what God is going to be doing.

Fox 26 News Reporter. They number nearly four score recruited from hardtime prisons all over the Lone Star State. Many have killed. Others have hurt somebody somewhere, bad.

Dr. Ben Phillips, SWBTS Coordinator. Most of the guys in our program are not getting out anytime soon.

Fox 26 News Reporter. And yet far more than their crimes and time, what binds these men is an an abiding belief—

Speaker. To bring honor and glory to his nane.

Fox 26 News Reporter. A godly foundation the state of Texas is willing to build on.

Teacher. Hi everybody, come on in.

Fox 26 News Reporter. Buried within Darrington Prison, you will find a full-blown four-year Bible College.

Teacher. God did not create evil. For evil exists only in another, but not in itself.

Prisoner. They're not going to take me. When I got the acceptance, I started shaking.

Fox 26 News Reporter. Intellectually rigorous and privately funded, the curriculum behind bars mirrors that taught on the free-world campus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. For Dr. Ben Phillips, this gift of transforming convicted felons into clergy is proving an exhilarating journey.

Dr. Ben Phillips. The opportunity to see God show off.

Fox 26 News Reporter. There are barriers. The most daunting—cynicism from both outside and within.

Prisoner. I was a skeptic when I got here. I thought, *well man, I'm gonna go there, and there's gonna be these a bunch of convicts faking and shaking, pretending they're Christians just for a degree.*

Fox 26 News Reporter. That's Terry Solly [spelling?]

Prisoner Solly. Because I've seen a lot of con games in prison.

Fox 26 News Reporter. Six years ago, he robbed a Houston bank with his dad. As fate would have it, his old man is at Darrington, too. Solly says among his fellow students, splitting time between cellblock and seminary, there is not a trace of the phony in their faith.³⁰

Prisoner Solly. They're real about it, you know. You see it in their everyday walk. It's not just something they speak; it's something they live.

Fox 26 News Reporter. Men like Andre Pierre, serving 45 years for murder.

Prisoner Pierre. This is where God wants me at.

Fox 26 News Reporter. A place where Pierre has developed a rare degree of peace. He longs to share with those who still suffer.

³⁰ Did the reporter change the name to deflect from the father-son duo that robbed a Houston back on August 9, 2012. From the June 2014 *Texas Monthly*, they featured online the story of father Scott Catt with son Hayden at www.TexasMonthly.com/the-culture/i-would-only-rob-banks-for-my-family; Scott said, "I would only rob banks for my family." Scott got 24 years, Hayden 10.

Prisoner Pierre. Because God is the one that takes the stoney heart and makes it flesh, allowing the person to be used as a vessel for him. So can God do it? Yes, God can do anything. And I believe that's what it's going to do in Texas.

Teacher teaching. Another value that emerges.

Fox 26 News Reporter. You see, upon graduation, each one of these ministers-in-the-making will be dispatched to a different prison. Powerful seeds of spiritual healing planted in penitentiaries seething with pain, anger, hatred and violence.

Prisoner. This won't fail. The reason why is because the culture change that there are looking for, God's already started in the hearts and lives of the 78 men already in this program right now.

Prisoner. So we are walking testimonies on what the power of God can do in a place like this. So it's gonna shake things up for good.

Fox 26 News Reporter. Purpose and promise from two men serving a century and a quarter between them. Turns out at Darrington, the everyday presence of these prison apostles is already reaping rewards.

Prisoner. Different races and different gangs, holding hands and praying together.

Fox 26 News Reporter. The power of epiphany and redemption, as presented by peers, offering those who will eventually leave these prison walls a different way of living.

Dr. Ben Phillips. And they're going to be willing to listen to it from these men. Whereas, they would never listen to it from somebody like me.

Prisoner. Who's the best to counsel these men than somebody who's been right where they are.

Prisoner Calvin Small. I want to be able to be the friend for the guy that's in the cell next to me, and he'd say, "I need some help." And we can say, "Well let's go talk about it."

Fox 26 News Reporter. Calvin Small is serving a life sentence, happens to be Jewish; he has been made welcomed by his Christian instructors and classmates.

Prisoner Calvin Small. It's not about us. It's about praising God.

Fox 26 News Reporter. It's also why in these classrooms among these condemned men, you will hear a treasured piece of Scripture repeated way more than most: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Prisoner Calvin Small. I believe that's why I'm here.

Fox 26 News Reporter with music overlay. From the seemingly forsaken, come messengers of good news; peace and comfort can be had within a Texas prison for those willing to let the almighty carry their load.

Line of a song about prison is sung

Fox 26 News Reporter signs off

Norwood continues. In the first year that the Bible College seminary started at Angola violence began to drop into prison, noticeably, statistically, and today 19 years later it's down about 75%. So what that means is not only money that can be spent on other things than repairing cuts and wounds and burying people from violence, lower turnover rates among staff, because it's a nice place to work now. It's hard to find a good fight at Angola, the inmates tell me when Brenna and I go each month taking Texans.

And so we've already seen at Darrington violence begin to drop at Darrington. They're still cautious. They're wondering is this the result of these men, but we are four years now. That

was in our second year, we had about 78 men. Today we have nearly 160. We have all four classes just like any other four-year college, freshmen going with their professors everyday to class, sophomores, juniors and seniors. And that first class that you saw there came in from all over Texas, lifers and men with extremely long sentences. We're doing it like Angola.

We want them to stay in the system. We want to return on our investment for Christ, that they will be able to minister peer to peer and not have evangelists come in and *leave* and not leave them with the equipment that they need. The seminary equips men of God, to go out and plant churches and lead and teach Bible studies.

And so that's what happened when the eunuch said to Philip, "How can I understand what I'm reading unless somebody shows me?" And that's what's going on here. And so next May, on the ninth, that class that was freshmen four years ago, right today, they're studying for their test next week—they will be back in classe as seniors—and they're going to graduate next May. And then, because we've got four cohorts going and every time a class moves up, we bring another 40 in from the largest prison system in the United States. And with 109 prisons out there, the chaplains and wardens are saying, "Grove, when do we get our missionaries?" And we will be sending out about 40 to 50 men every 52 weeks into our prison system in Texas.

Think what's going to happen down the road. Think what's gonna happen down the road. Now I'm gonna put a wrap on this and tell you that every single book and chair and table and computer and plasma screen, and the salaries of every professor—now we have 10 full time PhDs working in our seminary down there—all of that money, which is not in the millions by any means. It's not a whole lot. The state put clothes on them. Feeds them three meals a day. Heat and lights and water, so, some air conditioning in the in the seminary, we have air conditioning.

But our job is to fund the school and the programs and keep them in and books and supplies. And, you know, every single table and chair has a face behind it. Your faces, the faces of retirees, the faces of little old men and little old women, and young people and Sunday school classes who have said we can give \$10 a month. And that's what the Lord has brought about without my having to go out and ask for money. He just is bringing people to say we want to help you keep this going.

And we have a very narrow mission. It's very focused, and we're going to keep it that way. We're not going to get spread out and try to do everything in the prison system. We're going to dive narrow and deep. And we're after three things: more safety in the prisons and in our neighborhoods. Well as these men come to Christ, the prison is safer. And then you know what, when Malichi says, "When God shows up, the hearts of the fathers turned toward their children, and the hearts of the children in like manner will then turn toward the fathers." And so that's why we're starting men's ministries to help the men in Texas prisons who have children learn how to be dads, and counsel and mentor and repair broken relationships with those children.

And your church is a large part of that in our Day with Dad and Day of Hope that you all are helping us with. Linda is one of the key players in this whole thing, and your church provides the facilities, and other churches in this corridor. So I'm just telling you that that other states now have heard about what the biggest system has just done. That the senators have all voted. They didn't, we didn't even have any legislation, no no laws have been passed. But the Senate has, and Republicans and Democrats have come on board, Catholics, Jews, Protestants; I've never seen anything like it. Everybody wants the same thing.

Safety, forgiveness, and reconciliation—How can you deliver that on a systematic basis.

There's no governor in the United States that has visited his Seminary in a prison until Rick Perry showed up. He had never been in one of his prison, so I was told. And I understood why. What prison you're going to go into first governor, there are 109 of them. So, he probably just said, well, rather than upset the applecart, I'll just; but I got a call one day the governor's coming and he wants to spend the morning with the men. And he came, and he didn't bring any big cameras, and PR people; he brought his pastor.

It was so cool his pastors in this picture right here. And you can see this out on our website this picture but I just want you to know that this this governor within months of our opening came down and spent the morning sharing his testimony, with these men, and after just a few minutes they realized, Rick Perry, when he talks about Christ is real. And they loved him. So I want to just let you know that the things, I don't have time to tell you about, are Baylor University doing a long-term study, now have five years to show the world through books about the transformation that can happen when the God of the Bible is inserted inside the dark places, where our broken pieces are so prison fellowship has come alongside to help us spread the word to the other states. Because what we dream of is one Seminary in every state in the United States, sending out its graduates every year to all of its prisons, but that'd be fantastic. West Virginia opened last week modeled after the Texas and the Angola models we've been working in consulting with West Virginia for almost a year, and Brenna and I couldn't go to their convocation their Opening Day ceremony, but we were invited. So I just want to let you know when you come alongside us, you are doing something that's just so huge, I can't even see the end of where this is all gonna go, except Baylor tells me it's going to go around the world growth. Now, when we finish this study, we've got enough material for 100 books about the transformation that is taking place, and has taken place in Angola and Darrington. So it's gonna it's going to change prison systems around the world that's what what Baylor is telling you. So I want to just thank you and ask your prayers, that will stay in our lane, we'll stay focused and that God's people will step up and help us continue to pay the bills. thank you very much.

Pastor closes with requests for donations.

3. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick at 2016 HOTF Fundraiser Banquet

Dan Patrick speaks at The Heart of Texas Foundation Banquet 2016, Nov 18, 2016—views 202.³¹ Grover Norwood posted these comments:

Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick was a featured speaker at the recent 2016 Annual Banquet held by The Heart of Texas Foundation Banquet. This is his this is his 18-minute message at that Banquet. Governor Patrick was instrumental in helping bring into the Texas prison system a, historic, totally voluntary, privately funded, four-year undergraduate Seminary degree through the accredited Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Governor Patrick has seen the process of new and positive changes come into the Texas prison system since the prison seminary first began in 2011. He, along with Texas Senator John Whitmire, Executive Director Bryan Collier of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, and Southwestern President Dr. Paige Patterson, became key to the beginning of this unprecedented movement in the prison system. The goal of the "Southwestern Seminary at Darrington penitentiary" is to introduce men of all faiths the concept of true spiritual transformation, which leads to moral rehabilitation. Once an inmate becomes moral, he begins to have a positive impact on the culture inside the prison. The Heart of Texas Foundation was key to the original formation of the Darrington seminary, and provides the private funding and continues its counsel and support of this historic movement in Texas prisons. The Southwestern Seminary at

³¹ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=FUpmiU33A1s, accessed 2-13-21.

Darrington penitentiary is now in its 6th year, (as of 2016), and with the cooperation of TDCJ, we have graduated 66 men of different faiths and sent them in teams to 13 of the men's maximum-security prisons in Texas. Their effect in those prisons has been remarkable, and other states are calling to learn how they can replicate the "Texas Model". We were formed through the inspiration and assistance provided by Senior Warden Burl Cain at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, LA. The goal of this process of moral rehabilitation through the seminary curriculum is to reduce victims of violent crime, create safer prisons, reduce recidivism, reconcile families and their children, and save taxpayer dollars. Every year, we graduate another 35-40 men, and then send them out to other "Field Ministry Prisons" to continue their long prison sentences, but now as appointed "Field Ministers" in the Texas prison system.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick. Good Evening everyone. Thanks for being here. How many of you are here for the first time. Fantastic. Because you are seeing a miracle before your eyes. Back when Grove and I met in 2005, and as I listened here to his presentation, I saw how big this miracle really is.

In 2005 Grove didn't know where he was going at this point. He had ended up in a prison, to my knowledge. He was hurting and he was struggling. I was doing talk radio; that was two years before I even thought about running for office. So we got together on another project, needed to raise some money, one of those couples here tonight, [unclear] Edith Elizabeth Warren, who put money kind of like putting seeds in the ground and doing project. Five couples did. That project didn't work out as we had thought, but it came to fruition in another way, and those original seeds made all of this happen.

So let's look at some other things that are amazing. As I said this to Grove, I didn't even know some of these things until tonight. Could we have that last slide up again, is that possible? [about slide show in background]

So, here we are in 10 years, in *10 years*. He is now handling a mission. He has raised *millions* of dollars. If I had said [unclear].

If I were to send to him that day in a restaurant, "You know, Grove, one day God has a plan for you, he was gonna have you raise millions of dollars. He said, "What would I do with a million dollars?" And if he said to me, "You know Dan, a couple of years, you're gonna run for the Senate, and you're going to get appointed to the criminal justice commission, criminal justice committee, so that you are in a position to help me on this project I don't even know yet I am going to be involved in. So you personally know, the chairman of the committee, John Whitmire, so you can take him to a place in Louisiana. And I'm not sure where he is yet, cause God hasn't told me."

I would say, "I don't even understand."

And then I would become Lt. Governor! And those states, New Mexico, Lt. Gov. John Sanchez, who I know very well, saw two weeks ago. Florida, Lt. Gov. Gutterrea, who I know very well. Wisconsin, Lt. Gov. Becky Kleefisch, who this April we both were baptized in the Jordan River in Israel. North Carolina, Lt. Gov. Dan Forest, who I went to Israel with. Kansas, Lt. Gov. Colyer who went with us to Israel.

Every one of those [unclear] are now personal friends with all those governors. Lt. Gov. Griffin [unclear] of Arkansas. In fact, this past summer, we had a lieutenant governors conference in Austin. It was a republican governors association; there are 31 in the country. And we never allow a nonprofit enterprise to speak; it's just the role of the association. Because it's primarily a fundraising meeting, and so companies come in and they present their

companies and help raise money for the lieutenant governors association, to help elect lieutenant governors around the country.

Well, someone had written us a check, but didn't want to talk.

They just said [unclear]. So I went to our executive director of Washington DC, Grove Norwood to come and speak about this seminary program. He said, "Well, we don't do that, because we don't let nonprofits to speak. It has to be a paid slot." I said, "I already had the check. And they don't want to talk." So Grove's gonna talk. So Grove had a chance to come and present this to 28 republican lieutenant governors.

Now, folks! I'm not that smart [unclear]. And neither is he. Now, he's a [unclear], he is a modern day disciple. And what you're seeing up here are real miracles, we're just seeing them in a different way than we read about in the Bible.

So as we get to raising money, which we will get to this evening [unclear] to take this public. Some of you in here are capable of writing a big check. Some of you are capable of writing a mid-sized check, and some of you are just capable of helping. But whatever you can do, I would urge you to max out, because God called all of you who raised your hand for the first time here tonight for the first time. You're just part of the plan. And in 2005, you didn't know it either. Brethren, look at this [unclear] another person in the plan [unclear].

And I want you to think about. I do so many speeches in Texas; 254 of counties, I'm on the road all the time. And I do a lot of charitable events, non-profits and Christian events. They're all good.

There's nothing like this, where you really see a living God at work. If we had Lazarus on the stage tonight, or any other person who was dead, as we know death. And Jesus came and raised him from the dead in front of us, you'd write the biggest check you'd ever wrote. You'd volunteer as many hours you could ever volunteer. You'd pray as hard as you've ever prayed.

If you saw blind man sitting over here, who couldn't see, and Jesus healed him so he could see, you would do the same. If there were someone who couldn't walk, you would do the same [unclear] he does miracles.

Let me tell you what. This is the same thing: 33 pastors who 10 years ago when we were having lunch were in prison or maybe committing a crime and thrown in prison; 33 more then graduated the following year. I told the men the first time I met them, in the first, back in 2011 I guess it was; I said there were 39 [unclear] at that time. I said, "You didn't know it, but God picked you out a long time ago to be here today. You can't let us down. You are—have you seen the movie *The Dirty Dozen*, the devil's disciples?—this is the group! [unclear]; there in the darkness [unclear] in prison."

And it they pulled out from all over Texas; there are 105 prisons or so. This is a miracle. It's a miracle that I met all those lieutenant governors. It is a miracle, you know this, this report that Baylor University did, how this came about? Because someone from Baylor called Grove and said, "You all need some real evidence. You need some research, you need to send a field team into the prison—Darrington and Angola—and follow the inmates for four years, and do a second study group of people not in the program. And then do a fifth year." And I can't believe it's been five years already, well since. And Grove called me and said, "Dan, we need to do this."

And I said, "How much did they tell you it's gonna cost?"

Grove never asked that question [laughter]. Because he never has asked that question, because it doesn't matter. God gives him what he needs. It doesn't matter.

But I am a *practical* person [laughter].

And so Groves said, “Well, they need a field team, so it would be \$125,000 a year per prison to do a full year study to put people in the field. Now \$250,000 a year times four is a million dollars.

I said, “We didn’t have \$50,000 dollars left [unclear].” Within a *month*, a meeting for set for us with a person I had met whose family helped Burl Cain in Angola many years ago. And Burl set up the meeting, and [unclear] flew us on his plane. And Grove and I and [unclear] went into the meeting, there were two or three more, I can’t remember, just remember—cause I can never forget you, Grove, in any meeting I’m in—like being with one of the apostles. [unclear] And we explain to this gentleman what we needed, hoping he might give us a \$100,000 to start the program. And we walk out of there with a check for \$1,000,000 dollars.

Again, I’m not that good, and neither is he.

So, we need your help. We need your help. Because the only thing keeping us from growing our program and taking care of those men is money. So, I want you to be all in, because remember, no one rose from the dead tonight; no one was blind and was healed. But those lives of those men in those prisons, that miracle is *so* clear. There’s a family, for many of you, who have men in the program. I met one mom and her son who is going to send a picture to her husband, right over there.

The first year of graduation, there was a pastor on the stage sitting behind me. And I introduced myself, and he said I’m [unclear]. I’m so proud today, because of these 33 men who come up here to get their diploma. My son is among them. And the next year. Same thing.

[unclear] sum was 32. So this is a real miracle. You want to invest in something. Modern day miracles—this is it. And the last thought, before I introduce Bryan Collier, our executive director of TDCJ.

God was kicked out of public schools back in 1963 by a lady named Madalyn Murray O’Hair from Baltimore, Maryland, my hometown. I knew the story. I was just a teenager then. Because one person was offended by God.

So God said, “Okay, [unclear] broken families. [unclear] People lost. I’ll get him on the back end. Get him on the back end.”

So now he’s in prison. You [unclear] my word on the on the front of end. I’ll save him on the back end. And we’ll let *them* lead the rest of the country out of the darkness there. Bryan Collier, when we went over in Angola back in 2010 or 11, or whenever that first trip was, probably 2009, I think.

I didn’t know Bryan. He’s now the executive director of our prison system overseeing 138,000 men, 1,000s of employees, tremendous responsibility. Tough job. I was very glad that Governor Abbott had appointed him. Senator Whitmire and myself both recommended him, as did many others. Because he started out as a clerk, back in the 80s, and worked his way out, up from being an officer, a guard. And then the parole division, and then moved up the executive ladder and became the assistant to the executive director.

And that first night, we were the cabin. Because when you stay at Angola, I was worried about that headline, “Senator John Whitmire and Dan Patrick spent the weekend in prison.” It was not a good; it’s not something I was looking forward to [unclear].

And we stayed in a cabin on the 1,800 acres of Angola. And we’d already been out to that cabin earlier in the day and they said, we were talking with Burl Cain, “How about [unclear]?” “Oh yeah.” [unclear] It’s the Mississippi River over there [unclear] and alligators.” [unclear] Okay, we’re staying that cabin that night.

Only God. This tells me God has a sense of humor. Because a big storm blew out of nowhere. Now in that prison was Bryan—I'm telling you the truth, right Bryan—Bryan's boss, Senator John Whitmire and myself. Now Grove wasn't with us. He decided to sleep in a jail cell [unclear]. I thought, Grove, why are you going to that? It's because he didn't want to worry about an alligator coming into his bedroom [laughter]. So the storm was up, the wind started to howland the door blows open. And the water is rising. And I'm not kidding. And I'm looking for something I can climb up on top of to get away from the snakes and the alligators, if they come in.

That's a true story. Fortunately no alligators [unclear]. I got to know Bryan Collier, and once again we needed the right people.

God's even, God planned all this. He knew about all the people, like all of you are going to be here today. He knew that the Waring's first big check was going to be used for something that would create this, and they didn't know [unclear]. And the rest of us that made that initial investment. And so Bryan Collier, because Burl Cain said, "This won't work if you don't have Christian men who are gonna believe in the program." We don't need any wardens walking around; we don't need any executives still walking around, "So you know, okay, another crutch. Going to these guys in prison another crutch."

We had to have people who believed and help. So, Brad Livingston, then the director, now stepped out, and Bryan got in there. And this program would not be a success without the people who wrote the checks. Without the Southwest Seminary Dr. Patterson stepped up. All of it. All the teachers. All the professors, without all the volunteers. Without Brenna. [unclear] But Bryan is key. And, and would did God do? Said this is going so well, I'm not going to let Greg Abbott appoint someone who isn't going to be able to help it grow. Many miracles. Thank you all for being here. Bryan Collier.

4. Exec. Dir. Bryan Collier at 2016 HOTF Fundraiser Banquet

TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier speaks at The Heart of Texas Foundation Banquet 2016, Nov 18, 2016 – accessed 2-13-21, views 344.³²

TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier. It's great to be here tonight. And I have the privilege of getting to sit next to Governor Patrick. That's one thing. And then tell you Governor Patrick is going to introduce you. Then I'm thinking, "He's not introducing me, surely not." But that's a great privilege to have him introduce, but to follow him, isn't possible. Because what you just saw, you won't get it again.

But I want to thank you for all that you've done to help make all of this a reality, because what he just told you, the story about us being in Angola absolutely is true. We were there when we, we were the first group that was over there and saw it. Made a commitment as we left to come back and do that in Texas. And with Grove leading the charge, and God actually leading the charge of that it all happened in, as I said before, Godspeed.

Governor Patrick has supported the program again from the very beginning; he was there when me saw it. But he's also been a great supporter throughout the program, to support the agency, our staff at the Darrington Unit, our chaplains, the seminary, all the staff, but all the offenders. He's been at every graduation. And when he is at the graduation, he goes and talks to the offenders in a way that, I stand in awe to think that that's our lieutenant governor of the greatest state in the country is in there talking to offenders as men, as fellow Christians; and

³² See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=TVP-6HJqWYU, 344 views; <https://vimeo.com/200013765>, 69 views, both accessed 3-6-21.

just talking to them one on one, as real as he can be, and that's who he is. And we're all honored and privileged to have someone like him as our lieutenant governor, thank you sir. [applause]

I know we wouldn't be able to be here tonight, but it's not fair to talk about the seminary program without talking about Senator Whitmire. As lieutenant governor mentioned, he was on the criminal justice committee when this started. He brought Senator Whitmire who's not typically, and I would say this if he was here, the guy that you would think would go look at the seminary program in Louisiana. But he did, and he got on fire. And he was totally energized about the program, the project, went to all the meetings; helped do all the planning, helped with the fundraising, and all the other components, and has been a active partner all the way through the program. And we couldn't have done it without Senator Whitmire all of his help, and I want to thank him tonight, even though he's not here. [applause].

Grove, I know that your heart has to be full. Just look around and take a moment and see how your vision has become a reality. Because you really were the one that led us all to the water. We recognize you didn't do it alone. And he'll be the first one to tell you that it wasn't him, that it was all the people that work in the foundation, it was all volunteers. It was all the others. But I'll tell you, Grove, you really did push it, and you made it happen, and you brought it here to Texas, and thank you. [applause].

We all have to agree that Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary though is the true workhorse in this field. They're the ones who haven't missed a beat since 2011, they were there as we first went to Angola. They picked up the torch. They've continued to turn out graduates. They continue each and every day with their professors to make an impact. Dr. Patterson [unclear] and Dr. Phillips and all your staff, thank you for all the help that you're already making it happen.

Many of you may not know, but you may have known our warden of the Darrington Unit, Mark Jones. Mark Jones retired earlier this month, and he was a true champion for the program, as are the staff of the Darrington Unit, as are the staff and TDCJ which is sitting up here tonight. We've all been very supportive of this program.

What I'd like to do is introduce, I'm going to have Warden Eddie Baker just stand for a second, and just introduce to you Warden Baker. He's our new warden at the Darrington Unit [applause]. Not at any warden would be okay to send to the Darrington Unit, but you can bet we hand-picked one to go the Darrington Unit for the seminary program. Warden Baker's already doing him, knocking-it-out-of-the-park job. He will continue to. He's a strong man of faith, and he's gonna do a fantastic job with us there. Feel free to go shake his hand tonight, or see him. But Warden Baker, we want to thank you for all you're doing, and the staff of the Darrington Unit, thank you for what you're doing.

Well, I wanted to make a point to thank all of you for what you've done to help make all of this a reality in the seminary move from a idea, just that it was an idea to reality that's already produced two cycles of Field Ministers. I really want to stop for a minute and give them credit to the one who really made it happen. and that's God. The reality is, we've all been apart. And I couldn't have said it nearly as well as the lieutenant governor did, but we've all been part of something much bigger than and greater than any of us, and only got something only God can do. And it truly has been a privilege and continues to be.

I want to take a minute just to give you a snapshot of where we are, and what good work is going on behind the fence. We have a total of 66 offenders that have graduated the seminary since 2015 when we had our first graduation. There are currently 142 inmates enrolled; next class as stated earlier will graduate in seven months. There's 64 Field Ministers currently at

TDCJ facilities around the state. They're performing a wide variety of functions within the system. And they're very well prepared, and I'm very glad that you brought the package that they get after they graduate, because I want to talk about that as well. It's not as if they don't just get the graduation and the prep work prior to that, as part of the package; but they also get continuing support from the seminary and from the Heart of Texas ministry. And that means a lot, because they continue to have that support throughout.

In addition to what you see here, there are thumb drives of information that go from the seminary and the Heart of Texas to the units where they exchange information for the offender's to send back to the seminary, and that continues throughout. So they continue to get resources to be strong in the jobs that they have.

In addition to the resources, prayers, and the support that all the Field Ministers have, they've got one thing that not one person in this room has in that population, and that's credibility. They bring a level of credibility to the table inside those prison walls that none of us have. When they sit down with another offenders, and tell a story, that's a story that other offenders can relate to. And that's a understanding that they can have, and that's how they can have an impact that none of us can have. Don't ever tell me for a second that God doesn't use all kind of people, because I'm telling you for a fact, and he is every day with those Field Ministers.

Here's just a few ways that Field Ministers are working with other inmates to help improve their lives and make the state safer. At the Beto Unit, they're making first contact as offenders to get off the bus. When offenders find themselves in a state of depression and need observation by our staff, in addition to our staff, the Field Ministers accompany those staff to talk to those offenders. At the Clements Unit, they're leading praise and worship teams as well as discipleship classes; they're walking the tears and cell blocks. At the Cofield Unit, they're baptizing, conducting Bible study, hosting dayroom Bible study, and helping with faith-based dorms. At the Darrington Unit, they're teaching and tutoring fellow inmates holding peer-education classes. At the Ellis Unit, Field Ministers are reaching out to those in close and medium custody levels. They're also involved in the gang renouncement and disassociation program, as well as our other reentry and diverting programs. At the Estelle Unit, they minister to the deaf and the geriatric population. At the Ferguson Unit, they're conducting baptisms, holding classes such as Quest for Authentic Manhood and Winning at Work. At the Hughes Unit, there's a dayroom and a hospital ministry. At the Lewis Unit, Field Ministers are counseling and preaching to the high security population. At the McConnell and Robertson Units, two units that got Field Ministers this summer, there are Bible classes popping up all over the unit. At the Stiles Unit, offenders are out on the recreation yards mentoring and teaching fellow inmates. At the Michael Unit, graduates are ministering to offenders who are in the hospice program and who are dying.

Those are just some samples. That's not all that those ministers do on those units, but just a sample, as you look on some of those units what they're doing.

From a personal standpoint, let me just tell you, it really is an awesome privilege to be a small part of the great work that's going on. Those of us in corrections who made this business a career, we do it because we like to see positive change in others. And we do it, because we see that, and that makes a difference for all of us. And that's what's going on each and every day with the worth of those Field Ministers do.

Thanks to each and every one of you for all of your support. I just want to tell you that you support is going a long way in making a huge difference in the Texas prison system. And I want to thank you for all that you do to help keep it alive. [*Applause*]

5. Coffield Warden Jeffrey Coate at 2016 HOTF Fundraiser Banquet

Coffield Prison Warden Jeffrey Coate speaks to the 2016 Heart of Texas Foundation fundraiser banquet (11-18-16).³³

Coffield Prison Senior Warden Jeffrey Coate. You know you've heard tonight a lot of, you know, from the seminary, and, you know, the guys learned, and we, we, they graduate from seminary, send them out to the facilities. What I want to show you is what actually happens once I get on to the facility. Because I think I have the best job in the business. I get to watch it happen. I get to watch those Field Ministers make a difference in people's lives every day.

And I'm kind of an expert on this, and I'll tell you why. My mother raised four boys; at one time she was raising us by herself. We were struggling. We were poor. Three of us took on a Christian life. We we spent a lot of time with our grandfather and learning good Christian values. We took it, went into law enforcement or corrections. One went to prison three times. And we were raised by the same good parents. And I just wish that this program would have been available about 20 years ago when he was doing that, cause he was killed in 2007. And if this would have been available to him, I really think it may have changed his life. And now I just havet to, I'm left wondering sometimes, you know. Did he talk to God? You know, before he passed away.

So I'm pretty passionate. I'm a passionate Warden about changing people's lives and putting 'em back in society. And I spent a lot of time, Brother Grove come down to the Beto unit, when I was over there for a year before I went to Cofield, and we spent some time with the Field Ministers. And I'm gonna tell you. I thought it was going to be difficult, When those four men stepped off of the bus, I did just what Grove said, I met 'em. But I had prayed the night before, I said, "God, how do I get the staff on board with these, with failed ministers? How am I going to get the staff to let these guys go do what they learned in seminary?" And, you know, it's funny, cause God took care of all of it. I showed up at work that morning, and I had a staff meeting. And I took the Field Ministers to my staff meeting. And I let them introduce themselves to all the department heads. And they're going to [unclear] when I left a staff meeting, I said, "Well, how am I gonna get the correctional officers on board?" Well, I'm the warden [laughter, applause].

So, I took 'em to turn out. and I let him talk to the correctional staff. And I was a little bit nervous; I'll admit to that. Because I thought, "You know, I just wasn't thinking right. I thought, if these guys go out here and I start walking those runs, and they start preaching the Word of God, somebody might beat them up." I was worried about that, and I prayed about it. And I didn't want that to happen. And then I realized that, I'm gonna speak on the Cofield Unit for just a minute.

I want you to picture, if you haven't been inside of one of our facilities, 80 acres inside of a fence, 4,039 convicted felons are in there tonight. I have close to 1,000 staff members, and I feel like I'm responsible for every single one of 'em. And so we, I want to do everything I can to give them all the tools they need to go back into society. In 26 years I've always thought that our agency, and I love this agency, I've always thought we do a great job of rehabilitating offenders and putting them back into society. Always have. But I always knew there was a missing element.

I heard a lieutenant governor say we were missing an element, we were missing God. We're sending them out there with substance abuse counseling and everything else. But we're not

³³ See https://youtu.be/ELx7l_okuEw, accessed 12-3-21.

sending them back out there practicing their religion. So, what I think, Grove. that is going to happen, that we're not gonna probably be able to put a statistic with, is; I've always wondered how are we going to rehabilitate the community. I told you my brother went to prison three times. Every time he got out of prison, guess what he said? "I aint never going back" [*low laughter*]. And when he got back into the neighborhood, and the friends started stopping by, and the culture he was in, he ended up right back. That happens to a lot of guys. Well, I think, this is just my opinion. But from what I've seen inside that facility, and what's going on right now with the Field Ministers, I think that what they're creating is a bunch of missionaries that are going to go into the neighborhood, and they're going to rehabilitate the neighborhood themselves. And you're going to see that 138,000 keep going down over the years to come. That's what I believe. If we keep doing what we're doing.

My Field Ministers, I meet with him every week. And I can't tell you the amount of work they actually do. When I was on Beto and I introduced them to the staff, like I told you, they; you know, about a month went by, and I'd see a Field Minister. I'd go down and meet with them, and I look like they've been awake for about five days. And I finally figured out that we were working 'em too hard. I had to get 'em some rest. So then I had to go to the staff—that's how God works; he put 'em to work—and I had to go to the staff, and say, "Hey, we gotta let these guys rest a bit." Let them get some sleep. Because they were calling him out to talk to guys, you know, we pass out mail at eight–nine o'clock at night. And if a bad letter comes from home, something's going on, that's pretty depressing. You know our volunteers and our chaplains and myself and a lot of the staff—we go home. I heard Grove say, "That Field Minister is there 24 hours a day." So the staff will go call him out, say, "Hey come out and talk to this guy; you know, he got some bad news from home, and he needs someone to speak with." Those are the kind of things that they're doing.

My Field Ministers on Coffield, my four there, they heard that I was speaking at this event tonight. And Wednesday, I was at a wardens meeting. I normally meet with 'em on Wednesday. So I didn't get there Wednesday, Thursday, they sent message to me. They said, "We have got to talk to you." So I said, Okay, let's get on into the chapel, and I'll go down and talk 'em.

And they said, "Hey, we heard you're doing this big speech and, you know, we're going to help you out" [*big laughter*].

And I said, "Alright, how are you going to help me?"

They gave me a list of the things they do on Coffield. I really didn't need the list. I watch them and I see what they do. But I wanted to share some of it. And Mr. Collier hit on a little bit. But, they do tire walking. I told you a while ago there's 4,039 offenders on my facility tonight. That's a lot of people to go try to walk and impact for four people. What Grove missed while ago is when they get off the bus, we're shaking hands, and then we're pickin' up the phone and asking him, "Can you give me some more?" [*soft laughter*]. Can you hurry on through the seminary or. But they're talking to those guys, and I watch 'em, and it's pretty amazing, cause I didn't know that they would accept 'em.

I'm gonna tell this story. It's kind of funny. It may make my wife cry. By the way, this is my wife, Tracy, she's been in the school system for 20 years teaching [*applause*]. And you want to talk about making a difference. I read the email she gets from the first group of kids she taught that are now working. And so that, to me, that's *teaching*, when they follow you and want you to know. Me and Tracy have two kids. And up until last year, the first, for about 12 years, we had this big ol' beautiful lab retriever dog named Duke. And he just became one of the family members. This dog was so faithful, he would sit out and just sit and watch our kids

play. If they moved, he moved with ‘em. But as you know, a lab is a retriever. And a retriever does what? They retrieve things. And it might not be your things they retrieve [*laughter*]. They go to the neighbor’s yard. They go everywhere.

Well I’m gonna say this. They had this really bad habit, now. Me and Tracy, we’ve been in the youth department; she’s in the children’s department at church. We’ve been teaching kids for years. We don’t keep any alcohol in our house. We do not drink. Okay. Duke had this bad habit of retrieving beer cans [*big laughter*]. And the great big tall ones, he would always bring and set out ‘em around the yard [*laughter*]. And Tracy would say, “We got to get those up. The preacher could stop by” [*laughter*]. And so we run out there, and up the hill my in-laws live. And my in-laws, they sometimes would stop and pick the beer cans up, and call and tell us, “Hey, we stopped and picked the beer cans up, in case the preacher comes back” [*laughter*].

My point to that story is this right here: just like we picked up the beer cans, so the preacher, we hid things we didn’t want the preacher to see when he comes back.

You ever watch a cellblock when a Field Minister walks in the door [*laughter*]. Yes. Another peer, you know they’re in the day room, “Hey, here comes the preacher. Put that up” [*laughter*]. And it’s really neat. I enjoy watchin’ it, I really do. And cause the, the guys are reacting, and.

When I left Beto, I had a stack of mail this high, letters from inmates, and they were asking, “How do I become one of those guys.” And some of them can’t do it, because they don’t have enough time in the system or whatever. But I’d always write back to ‘em, and say, “You don’t have to go through seminary to do mission work. You don’t have to go through seminary to talk to the guy in the cell next to yah and tell him to start doing good and behaving. To worship God.”

But that’s tire walkin. And they do mentoring, teaching offenders how to achieve goals and become a positive influence on others. It’s kind of neat. I had a kid come in on the chain, and I used these Field Ministers to my advantage, and he was so young. I had to ask him, “Are you even old enough to be in prison?” That’s how young he looked, and I was worried about how the population would accept ‘em. So I’m moving down by one of the Field Ministers, and I called that Field Minister in, and said look, “I want you to watch over this kid. Help him adjust.” And that kid’s doing fine. He’s been in the system now, about a year, I guess, and he’s doing fine. But he is taken to that Field Minister, and that’s who he to for advice. and they read the Bible, and they study.

They do peer education training, teaching offenders about decision making, disease Prevention, and prison safety issues. They do GED tutoring. I love that. These guys been through seminary. They’re not dummies. They’re smart. Use all of your skills that God gave you, and that’s what they’re doing. They’re teaching guys how to get their GED stay out of prison, go to work. Jobs skills—provided instruction on resume writing. Field Minister out there doing that. While he’s talking about God, he’s teaching ‘em how to write a resume, how to search for jobs. Personal Finance—teaching ‘em that.

I love this, right here [*Reading from notes a description, perhaps a HOTF program description*]: “Great Commission: training Christian offenders how to start and conduct informal Bible study groups and prayer circles.” I have 25 cellblocks on the Beto Unit, I mean on the Coffield Unit, excuse me, 25. When the four Field Ministers hit that facility, there was prayer circles going on on four pf those cellblocks. Right now, there’s prayer circles going on on 23 of those cellblocks. So, I only had two that it’s not happening on. It’s pretty amazing [*applause*].

Here's some future programs. These guys are always thinking ahead. That Wednesday meeting I had with 'em. You know, sometimes I just want to go in there and find out, "Hey, what are you guys doing? Are you doing all right?" And when I go in there, "Hey, warden, we got this great idea. Here's what we want to do next."

Mr Collier talked about at Beto the Gatekeepers Program, and that's what we're starting in Coffield now. And it's already in play, they're already actually doing it. And that's where when new arrivals come in on the chain bus, we give 'em, the Field Ministers time, they group up, four ministers, and they talk to 'em and help acclimate 'em to the prison environment. But they talk to 'em about the vocation training. The chaplaincy programs and the things that's going on there.

[*Reading from notes a description*] "Follow Christ is a new believers class that teaches the commands of Christ, provides spiritual accountability and how to use a basic Bible study method. Check this out."

I had a Field Minister I was reading the Bible. And I decided I wanted to read it different, last year. I wanted to read it from start to finish, cause I would jump around. And I prayed to God, and I said, "Why don't [*unclear*] I understand everything you're trying to tell me in here?" And he said, "Because you won't start it at the beginning. Start at the beginning and read it through." And so I started reading it. And I always wanted to read Revelation, see what's gonna happen at the end [*laughter*]. But I couldn't really understand it, because I didn't know how it came about. Now I do. And really, to be honest, I owe that to one of those Field Ministers. Because I was reading the Bible, and I went in the chapel one day, and I said, "You know what, I really just don't understand everything I'm reading."

And he said, "Well, first of all, you're reading the wrong Bible. You need a good study Bible." And he led me in the right direction to one. And it was the *best* move. I started carrying that Bible, and started reading it, and reading the explanations at the bottom. And I had a whole new understanding. And it, it's just amazing what they're doing.

[*Reading from notes a description*] "Four Fields Discipleship is missionary training program that equips Christians with practical skills for practicing the Christian faith." I've never seen a program like this. And I hope it, I know it will grow. It's just going to keep going, it's going to keep growing.

And I want to close with this. We're, I'm not that smart. I'm not smart enough to put statistics on how many people's lives are being saved as a result of what the Heart of Texas Foundation and Field Ministers are doing. I can't do that. God can. And I just feel like that one day, you know, I've always had this belief: I'll never stop a man from coming to Christ. So whatever program you want to bring to my facility, if you're bringing to God, it's welcome while I'm there. But I think that what we all should hope for, is it one day we're standing there, Grove, and the man that does know the statistics: he says, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Because of *you*, thousands of people know me." Thank you. [Applause]

6. Warden Cain 2010 Interview by Calvin College's Sheila Hoekstra

Interview by Shirley Hoogstra Inner Compass "Bringing Hope to Prison" from Calvin College—27,033 views, 205 likes, Jan. 2010.³⁴

³⁴ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=zyTfNN8d27k, accessed 3-7-21. Though the note on YouTube says it was uploaded on 8-7-2012, upon contacting Calvin College in March of 2021, Lislie Miller confirmed that the interview took place in "January 2010."

Shirley Hoogstra. Welcome to Inner Compass. I'm Shirley Hoogstra. Imagine being asked to take charge of one of the bloodiest prisons in America, where prisoners had to sleep in shifts to watch each others' backs just to stay alive. Well, today's guest fell into such a challenge, and became committed to changing the reputation of Angola prison. Here now, today, on Inner Compass, from the campus of Calvin College. This is Inner Compass, exploring how people use faith and ethics to guide them through critical issues of today.

Hoogstra. Welcome to Inner Compass. I'm Shirley Hoogstra, and my guest today is Burl Cain prison, warden of the Louisiana State Penitentiary, also known as Angola. And he is subject of this book, *Cain's Redemption* [2005], a story of hope and transformation in America's bloodiest prison by Dennis Scheer. Welcome Burl.

Warden Burl Cain. Glad to be here.

Hoogstra. It is great to have you here, and to actually talk to a person who is on the frontline of prison work. And what did you think when you got the job for Angola prison.

Warden Cain. I didn't want the job.

Hoogstra. He didn't want the job.

Warden Cain. No

Hoogstra. They said, just do it for a little bit.

Warden Cain. Yeah, you go back to the old job. So I did, but then I got kinda of into it, and it really, I knew what it was. I knew that. About five, years. you would lose control over it again. And then you would have the wreck, you're gonna have, some kind of really bad violence, and then you're gonna get fired. Because wardens are paid fall guys; that's what we are. And so therefore, I didn't, I was too young to retire. So I knew my time wasn't gonna work right with the graph, you know, wouldn't be ready at the time. Anyway, we had the first execution. And with that, it had a profound impact on my life, because we didn't do it really the way I thought we should have, when it was all over. And that's what made me stay.

Hoogstra. How long were you on the job with the first execution.

Warden Cain. How was about four months.

Hoogstra. And what was wrong with what happened.

Warden Cain. I just didn't do it right, you know. The, I was the last person in this room with this guy while he was alive, and then I looked at him dead, and, and we put him there. And he might be blunt about it say we killed him.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. And then the way that I did the deal, I just didn't do it properly. I was kind of ashamed, the way I handled it. You know, myself, without the dignity it should have had. And, we're not, I'm not an oppressive person. And so that's how we really ran our prison. I'm kind of moving into there, but not being oppressive, and I was more like the oppressive person in the execution.

Hoogstra. You kind of did it by the book, or it didn't have that heart and soul that you wanted to bring into that.

Warden Cain. To be blunt about it, we were just kind of macho about it.

Hoogstra. Okay.

Warden Cain. You know, just, thug like.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. And that wasn't, that kind of the way it had been in the past; but, but I went there to change Angola, not to let it change me. And I let it change me.

Hoogstra. What did, when did you want to change Angola. When did you get that burning desire to say it could be different, it could be better.

Warden Cain. Well, when I first got there, I realized, the only way to change the place was to get the place to be moral. And then you go to rehabilitation, right there, and I suddenly I realized that that, the only true rehabilitation is moral rehabilitation. And so, moral people don't rape, pilfer, and steel.

Hoogstra. Right [*whispered*].

Warden Cain. These are real basic things that I realized. And I prayed for wisdom, that's the one thing I prayed for to God. Look at this guy, Lord, give me wisdom. I just pray for wisdom. I got to get through this place. The weapon of choice was a lock in a sock. They go beat yah in the head.

Hoogstra. Right [*whispered quickly*].

Warden Cain. And beat your eyes out and so forth. And, and so, just a very violent place. Every week. And it was just too much violence. Somebody's gonna get killed.

Hoogstra. Right [*whispered quickly*].

Warden Cain. About four murders, and you're really in trouble yourself as a warden; or about four escape, or about four suicides. And so, we were struggling through all this, and we just had to change prison. So the first program we did was *Experiencing God* with Henry Blackaby.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. And we had done it in my Sunday school. And so, we just brought that Sunday school class into Angola and did the *Experiencing God*. We involved about 80 inmates, and that was our nucleus. And I didn't even realize it.

Hoogstra. You didn't even realize it. You didn't even know. You just, you just had a problem on your hands.

Warden Cain. I was desperate.

Hoogstra. And you had to have something to happen.

Warden Cain. Something. And that was, the that was the little nucleus that made it work.

Hoogstra. How, how strong was the Christian emphasis in Angola before you came. Were the, were there chapels or churches there?

Warden Cain. There was one little chapel. And there was a Catholic Church for the free people.

Hoogstra. Okay. And what does that mean?

Warden Cain. That's a people who weren't inmates.

Hoogstra. Because there's a little city around the prison, right? And are you talking about those folks that live within the confines of the prison property.

Warden Cain. There's about 500 or 600 people that live inside the prison, children. And I say we live in a gated community, and our gate guard has a lil' gun. And the school bus comes in, a garbage truck comes in, we have a swimming pool, a lot activities for the children, baseball park. And so forth.

Hoogstra. They're all employees at the prison.

Warden Cain. Right.

Hoogstra. But not the children, but the employees.

Warden Cain. [*Unclear*] They're there, that's because we will have a reserve force, if we had any event that we needed extra help. And to have him there, we built this little city was built there. We also have our post office.

Hoogstra. So there's a Catholic church there.

Warden Cain. That's right.

Hoogstra. And a little tiny chapel within the more of the prison structure?

Warden Cain. Seats about 140 people.

Hoogstra. Okay.

Warden Cain. And that's all. So it was, it was an *ungodly* place. Now there was some inmates there that had been praying for years, they tell me, for deliverance, I really truly believe he healed their land. And that's the same group that we started in the Bible College, which came along, not too long afterwards, which was another fluke.

Hoogstra. A fluke?

Warden Cain. Oh, I [*unclear*], I would have never dreamed of that.

Hoogstra. [*unclear*].

It just fell in my lap. That we lost Pell Grants in 95, remember? Inmates couldn't have higher education. Being an educator, I wanted the education. And so I knew that would help, because education brings you out of darkness to light. And so, and so anyway, the average, the average grade level there was about the fifth grade. So we needed to have higher education for those that got their GEDs to continue on. And I'm sitting around a table, and a guy from the Judson Baptist Association, and a professor from LSU that was a Christian. And I'm complaining about no higher education.

Warden Cain. And they said, "Well, why don't we bring the Bible college here?"

Warden Cain. I said, "You lost your mind? They'll never come here."

Hoogstra. [*chuckles softly*].

Warden Cain. That would be like, you, I just couldn't believe it.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. So, they said, "Oh yeah, they'll come, I believe they'll come." So they will, go [*unclear*], if you get 'em. I'll let 'em come. And so, they did. That really what changed culture of the prison was the Bible College. I'm a real proponent of that throughout the country. Now we have the Bible College in Mississippi. We have it in Georgia and South Carolina, and it's patterned after the way we did it. We keep the separation of church and state. And the prison is less violent, in that means less victims of violent crime. And that's really what we really need to think about.

Hoogstra. So how do you keep that separation of church and state when you, you've got a lot of activities that have to do with faith, and yet, obviously this is a governmental organization?

Warden Cain. Well, it's not about the faith as much as it is about the money. And we have to keep the Bible College, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, does not want, nor will they take any tax dollars in their program, because they want to keep their separation too.

Hoogstra. Okay.

Warden Cain. So, that makes a real cool. So we hire one guy that's going to be the liaison between us and them. And then that's it. And so they know the taxpayer really reap a great benefit, because they get higher education in the prison free. So that's really pretty cool.

Hoogstra. And the inmates are actually [*unclear*], you're not *making* them go to seminary, you're not making them.

Warden Cain. They want to go, really bad. And then the other thing is the seminary does, it doesn't really look at what religion you are, or any religion; it determines if you can qualify academically. And then you have to have a good, a good record. You can't be a violent inmate in prison and go to the Bible College. You have to not have the write-ups.

Hoogstra. And so this allows a lifer to have something to work for, doesn't it?

Warden Cain. Oh yeah. We've graduated, we'll have another graduation this spring. And that's gonna put us close to 200 four-year preachers graduated with full degrees, just like LSU, you know, accredited the same. Just like Calvin College. And so, that's really important, because if you have that many preachers walking around startin' Bible classes and being inmate lawyers and being tutors and and other teachers and doing other jobs in the prison, then you're going to have a moral place,

Hoogstra. There's a book called *The Tipping Point*, where it says, "If you just get enough people going in one direction, you can actually change the whole character."³⁵

Warden Cain. That's what happened.

Hoogstra. And that's what happened here.

Warden Cain. It is. Now there was another, another thing we did, that we had to move the free people, the security staff the same direction. They had to become, they had to be, they had to stay strong and maintain custody and control, but they had to become unoppressive. And so we're not oppressive. We don't, we don't curse. Nobody curses, inmates nor free people. If you curse, you get in real trouble.

Hoogstra. Okay. You get written up?

Warden Cain. Oh yeah.

Hoogstra. Now this has got to be a big change for the people have come into prison and probably prison staff, too.

Warden Cain. It's just like, if, if, if two people are cursing, they're real close to fighting; if you can keep them from cursing, they're just a little further away from the violence. So, if we don't curse, we're less violent. Because we're not going to be calling each other really bad names; that says, okay, your, my honor is at stake here, and I'm gonna slap the fire out of yah—so just to be blunt about it. So the cursing was really good for us too.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. Because the free people, you know, the 700–800 employees I had at the time, that was pretty hard to keep peace and harmony there as well.

Hoogstra. Did everybody buy into this right away? Or did you, how did you sell people on this? I mean, you look like the soft warden, and all the people who were they before you, came, and said, "Hey, look he doesn't know what he's doing. I, we know how to keep control this place and he's just.

Warden Cain. Well, this wasn't a democracy. So you either caught the train or you caught the gate.

Hoogstra. I see.

Warden Cain. So, and I had to come across as strong with it, because it was the right thing to do. There's no difference. There's no one can argue with what we're doing, because we were, we were seeking morality and more rehabilitation. We weren't seeking really God as far as on the surface as it would seem, but in our culture we find morality in religion more than anywhere

³⁵ NYT Best-selling Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 2000; 301 pp.), in several ways throughout, put especially p. 259, "Merely by manipulating the size of a group, we can dramatically improve its receptivity to new ideas. By tinkering with the presentation information, we can significantly improve its stickiness.... In the end, Tipping Points are a reaffirmation of the potential for change and the power of intelligent action. Look at the world around you. It may seem like an immovable, implacable place. It is not. With the slightest push—in just the right place—it can be tipped."

else, especially in the south. I don't know about here, but down there, you know, that's where you're gonna find morality, if you don't have it, find it in religion. That doesn't mean that people who are atheist aren't moral; doesn't mean that people who are other religions aren't moral. And I've read enough about Buddhism and Muslims and so forth that they perpetuate morality as well. So we didn't really care what religion you were. But still in all, the dominant religion was Baptist.

Hoogstra. Baptist?

Warden Cain. Yeah.

Hoogstra. Yeah. [some overtalking] thing down in Louisiana?

Warden Cain. And so, especially in prison, that's the culture, because it's primarily black, about 75% black. And that changes on death row, though; it'd be more white, higher percentage of white, but not more white. And anyway, so that was okay too. And the other thing was, with the Bible college, all the churches were involved. The Louisiana Baptist Convention was givin' the money to pay for the Bible college, and so we got the community involved *big* time. And so the politicians had to kind of stay back, because you didn't want to make all these church people really mad at yah.

Hoogstra. So there was sort of a nice balance of interest in the churches and the politicians, and things were working, things were getting better.

Warden Cain. Well, the everybody, this is what I learned. I felt. I kind of learned this about the public and dealing with prisons. They're afraid of 'em. They don't want to be around 'em. They want 'em to be punished, pretty much. But they do care about their soul. And they don't, they want them to go to heaven. *Nobody* wants people just to go to hell.

Hoogstra. No, they don't.

Warden Cain. Everybody wants people that are moral people. And the Christian people, that believe in heaven, and they want 'em to go to heaven.

Hoogstra. Well let's watch and see a little bit about the place that you work in every day.

Hoogstra starts video with a man singing and portions of Angola.

Cain starts video narration. Angola. Average sentence 88 years. It's the largest maximum security prison in America. 90% of the inmates will die here. One out of every two is a murderer.

Shorter video clip of same video Norwood showed in Appendix 1.2

Prisoner 6. Oh, this place was a nightmare. I caught the tail in this really ugly situation, something it was, it was bloody. It was messy, and you know guys you pair up. You know, I sleep half a night, and you sleep half a night. And if I woke up use a bathroom, you fell asleep, I was obligated to make a hole in him. But he was allowing you, you would have allowed me to die. You slept on your watch. I mean this place was a nightmare. [music]

Prisoner 7. This is a cold place. This was a place without hope at one time. You could not get missionaries to come in here. They were scared. Angola was a throwed away, it was a throwed place. It was dangerous.

Prisoner 4 again. Down the line God had a plan. And he had chosen a man by the name of Warden Burl Cain. And he came with a vision. He came with a vision for *this* place, and for such a time as this.

Music and video of prisoners and compound with singing.

Prisoner 4 again [not in video Norwood showed above]. Is this Angola the bloodiest prison in America? This can't be it. But my brothers and sisters, in fact it is.

Hoogstra. So you want these folks to build a community so that the place that they're living in matters to them.

Warden Cain. We do. Yes. They have to. They have to have hope. They have to have structure. And to live your life. you just can't live it in the cell tormenting, because you'll finally, it just. And we do that to some people; some people have to stay in the cell. But, and it's sad. But we want to leave the light at the end of the tunnel, so they if they ever change, or they want to change, that they can change; and many of them do.

Hoogstra. So you have supervision over 18,000 acres. It's a working farm. You have \$120 million budget, and you have a lot of activities going on for these men in this prison. And that has grown under your leadership. How did you grow that? The workshop, the rodeo, the radio station, the, you have a magazine that comes out. Why do you do that?

Warden Cain. Also have a television.

Hoogstra. You have a television station [*Hoogstra giggles*].

Warden Cain. I do, and it's pretty cool one. And we have televangelists, because it's inmates preach in our. We have seven churches now, largest one seats 800. And you always can see a church steeple on this farm. And so they preach in their own churches, they do their own congregation, and we televise their sermons to the entire population. So the ones in the cellblock can be involved too. Otherwise, they couldn't, they wouldn't be evangelized.

Hoogstra. So if you're in a cellblock, you can't go to church, like the people who are in the dormitories.

Warden Cain. Right. Sometimes, we'll have just a cellblock church. But we have to deal with enemies and so forth, and we don't know really who converted and who's not in many cases. But we want to expose them all to the moral rehabilitation, as we would education as well, so we use this television station to have the Learning Channel.

Hoogstra. And you have a requirement and expectation for good citizenship in your prison. What does that look like actually.

Warden Cain. Well, we have, it's really about the community: the dormitory is a city, the bed is the house, and the isle is the street; and three beds down and three doors down, go visit with your neighbor; and go be with him when he's morning. Go be with him when he's sick. And then the church, there's going to be a preacher in most every dormitory. And every congregation can work within it, and the congregations are dispersed throughout the prison. So a moral person can be with you if your family member dies, or if you try, you're havin' a problem, or can't get along, or you feel like you're being mistreated—then there's someone counsel with yah, and come and be, and be with yah, and befriend yah; rather than someone glare at yah, "Ah, man toughen up," and so forth.

Hoogstra. Well, you actually address the loneliness of your prisoners, don't you?

Warden Cain. We do. And we, and we also leave the light at the end of the tunnel with the hospice program.

Hoogstra. Yeah.

Warden Cain. And we learned that, that when they really change your lives, and when people really give their soul to God and so forth, they want to do two things. One, they want to say they're sorry to the victim. And the other, they want to do something to help other people. They want to give back, because the opposite of selfish is giving back. So when you're rehabilitated, you're not selfish anymore. You want to do things for other people. And we have to have mechanisms so they can do that.

Hoogstra. And that actually gives purpose to life.

Warden Cain. That really is a big deal. That's when you can do the time. And that's when you can give it to God.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. And that's what's really great when you see that.

Hoogstra. In the hospice program, you saw hospice program in another prison, and you said I want that in my prison and they said you can't?

Warden Cain. No. I saw the hospice in the newspaper on a Sunday morning. And there was only one other hospice, it turns out, at the federal prisons in Springfield. We were the only prison with hospice in a state prison in the country. And now they come from all over to see the hospice. But it made sense to me, again, the common sense thing was: we're treating all these inmates with the same doctors and nurses; and so, therefore, we want to have a hospice program. We got to still have the same number inmates. We're just gonna treat 'em a different way. So why do I need more doctors and nurses? I don't think I did. And I didn't. And so I told 'em, we're gonna have hospice. I'm not gonna give you any money. You can have the best hospice there is. In a year, which we were the only one, all we had to do is beat the one at Springfield, and we'd be the best.

Hoogstra. Yes.

Warden Cain. And so we did.

Hoogstra. And you like being the best.

Warden Cain. I like being first.

Hoogstra. Okay.

Warden Cain. Because we want to, we're overachievers.

Hoogstra. At Angola.

Warden Cain. Yeah, in my life, I always want to be the overachiever, because I used to, I want to get there, you know. It's, it can't be done, we want to do it.

Hoogstra. And not only that, you have exceeded the wardens length of time and goal by double, haven't you?

Warden Cain. I just made 15 years.

Hoogstra. Do you think that there are men in Angola who should be released.

Warden Cain. Oh yeah. I said that to the public, to the criminal justice committee, came to Angola, and we talked about, you know, rehabilitation. And we don't have hearings for these people. Charles Manson gets a hearing.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. We don't have that in Louisiana. And I told him, that it probably 250–300 that I could let go, they would never hurt you again. Just, just like that.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. But they have the life sentences, and you have to remember the victims. And I think victims trump. And I don't want anyone to go that someone has to be afraid of. And therefore, we have to really work hard in my victim reconciliation, which we're doing; which is one of the most wonderful things I've ever seen is when the victim's family gets up and comes around the table and hugs the guy that killed her son.

Hoogstra. Yeah.

Warden Cain. Or killed a family member and forgives him. But he *has* to be worthy. He *has* to be worthy.

Hoogstra. You speak a lot about forgiveness, and your prisoners speak a lot about forgiveness,

Warden Cain. We do, because that's what's important. They need to be forgiven. But we have to forgive to *be* forgiven. And we need to remember that in the Bible. But we're mortal and moral and mortal people, and sometime we just can't. And I understand that.

Hoogstra. Right. And you have, in this prison, as, as good as it sounds and as redemptive as it sounds, you still have death row, and you still have solitary confinement, you still have the locked cells, and the dormitories. There's these stages. What keeps people, like the Angola three, in solitary confinement?

Warden Cain. They live 30 years ago. They won't move on to the future. They still want to believe in the past and the issues they had, is the black and white, and they're still back there. And this country's moved so far past that, but they can't get past it.

Hoogstra. You know, they were in solitary before you came.

Warden Cain. They were.

Hoogstra. And how, can you move them out? Do you ever speak to them. I know some [unclear, overtalking].

Warden Cain. I, I, I, you have the problem with that they, they're convicted twice of killing the correctional officer.

Hoogstra. Okay.

Warden Cain. And stabbing him. Therefore, that means they don't reflect, expect [sic] the blue uniform. So therefore, if the issue got to be with them that it was problematic the blue uniform, they might do it again. Okay, because he did it once. So, therefore, you don't really want to give them the freedom to live with, in the dormitory because there's a little girl that's 19 or 20 years old that's guarding this dormitory full of men. And she could be a victim. So, that's part of it. And the other part of it, one of them just keeps on doing devious things.

Hoogstra. Oh yeah.

Warden Cain. You know, and he doesn't just really get up front and do right.

Hoogstra. You talk about that some of the prisoners will always be predators. Some people have an opportunity to change their lives, but you've also seen people who just seem stuck.

Warden Cain. Yeah, it's like fish, we can't catch 'em all right. And so we dilute them, though, to the point that our security is more effective on those who are not, who don't change. But you always hope they do, because I've seen the worst, the very worst. And Greg Zumwalt [114184] wouldn't mind me saying, but the guy you saw on the television, either had to change or he was gonna get really bad. Because he's doing the last sentence for murder. And he found relief in God, and he changed. But he could have been a really dangerous person. He's cool, and he's an inspiration to you others, the new ones coming in and so forth.

Hoogstra. Do you think there should be expanded hearings for a person like that, so that there could be an opportunity for, for the civil courts to hear his case and maybe make a different decision? Or is he stuck?

Warden Cain. No. But there's another component that has to happen. You can't just open to prison gate, and say, "Bye, see you later."

Hoogstra. Okay.

Warden Cain. You have to have aftercare, and you have to have effective aftercare. And aftercare should really come from the churches and church community. Because, you know, who else is going to do it? And he has to have a job, he has to have a way to get to work, he has to have a place to live. And he has to be cared for, and he has to be mentored and taught how to manage his money and so forth, and a friend. So you have to have the friend in the church. But so many churches are just Sunday Country Club; they go to church Sunday morning, they

go home, and they don't come back till next Sunday. And they, this is, this is, they don't think about this.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. But we really have to do our job is, in the church, is to help the community, and, and "Rescue the perishing," we sing that song.

Hoogstra. You bring the church and other folks to the prison, and one big way is this rodeo that you have. You have 10s of 1000s of people coming in and seeing this whole flank of prisoners watching the rodeo, and you're trying to get a message across to the people who visit.

Warden Cain. Well first, I tell the inmate, I'll bring the people to see yah, but you have to be worthy. Because they're afraid of you, and they think yah have horns and a forked tail.

Hoogstra. If you're a prisoner.

Warden Cain. If you're a prisoner. You're evil and you're a devil.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. And so, you gotta show 'em you're not. Okay, we're gonna show we're not. You bring the people, we're gonna be good. I'm gonna show yah that. We're gonna be good. Okay, that's cool. So we're on the way to rehabilitation right here. And so that's good, and they did. They *are* their brother's keeper! Because I've had an inmate come tell me that one stillin' in the stand with his family. And so that could have mean he was going to escape. But the other inmates are watching each other.

Hoogstra. Cause they know their privileges could be affected by that.

Warden Cain. Like that.

Hoogstra. Now, how did you get away from the "They ratted 'em out" then?

Warden Cain. We don't use that word.

Hoogstra. Okay, why not?

Warden Cain. Because, if, the "rat" word we can't say. Because if you have someone dealing drugs on a corner of your street, and you don't call the police, you're a bad citizen. A good citizen calls the police. So if you see someone doing something really bad in prison, and you don't call the authorities, then you're not rehabilitated. Because that's not *ratting*; that's being a good citizen.

Hoogstra. And you have to be as the warden willing to take away things that a majority of your prisoners are actually living rightly about. So if, for instance, that, that prisoner stayed in the stands with his family, instead of being where he's supposed to be, those prisoners know that you as a warden might say, "Hey, you're not going to go to the rodeo."

Warden Cain. Put I did not take it from him; he gave it back.

Hoogstra. He gave it back?

Warden Cain. Yeah, because he had the privilege. He gave it back. It's like, when, in this book, when your child driving fast, don't take the car; he gives you the car.

Hoogstra. Right. And if they take if they misuse the microwave or misuse the athletic equipment.

Warden Cain. They don't want it anymore.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. That's not my problem. I wish you would have kept it. I didn't want it. I don't need the microwave.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. You know, I don't need your television. Why didn't yah agree on what you're gonna watch, instead of fight over it?

Hoogstra. So in fact, who have made the policing of the inside of your prison due to the inmates. You said, “Look, you got to police yourself. We can’t have that many guards.”

Warden Cain. Just don’t have that many, you know.

Hoogstra. Right.

Warden Cain. And this is like the land of new beginnings. We press on to the future. We can’t change the past, and we *can’t*. So we don’t look behind. We look forward. In life, we all need to do that. You know, we need to be more forgiving of our families and friends and so forth. Cause you can’t change a mistakes people make. We just make mistakes. We just can’t help it. We just have to have forgiveness and grace.

Hoogstra. And why not in prison? My guest today has been Burl Cain, prison warden of the Louisiana State Penitentiary. I’m Shirley Hoogstra, and thank you for watching Inner Compass.

7. Warden Cain at 2015 Prestonwood Men’s Conference

Warden Burl Cain spoke at the “Stronger” Men’s Conference 2015 at Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas 3-28-2015—5,167 views.³⁶

Warden Cain. Man, what a program today. I’ve used all my notes for the last speaker. Can you imagine having to follow him. Shee. I’m honored to be here with you today and I want to express my appreciation to Mr. Tom Mater with Prism Fellowship that invited me here and kind of ran interference. I don’t know if he’s here today, but if he is, Tom, thank you so very much for getting me here.

I’m gonna move over to tell you a story about the power of God. Because I went to a place I didn’t want to go. And I’m gonna back up and give you a little testimony, then I’m gonna try to give you a little advice about your children. Because I turn out to be really the dad in the prison. But I never dreamed I would be the warden of a prison. I am an agriculture teacher. Do we have any teachers out here in this group? I want to tell you, anyone you teachers can run a penitentiary, I promise you [*laugher*]. I’m gonna tell you why. Because I graduated from LSU and I go out to be an ag teacher, teach the FFA. I get to that school; I go to Colorado; I want to go see the mountains. I’m gonna teach out there. And three months after being there in that school, I went to the principal, and I said, I said, “Look, I can’t do this. I don’t like this job. I don’t want to do this.”

He said, “Well, let me tell you what. You have a contract. And if you break that contract, I gonna see you never teach again.”

I say, “Good. I’m out of here” [*laugher*]. So that was the end of my teaching career, it was too hard, I could not do it.

Anyway, I was working for the Louisiana Department of Corrections, appointed by Governor Edwin Edwards as an assistant secretary over all their farms and industries. So I didn’t have anything to do with the prison. But I saw the prison warden was having more fun than me, and I decided I’d like to do that. So there was an opening. And you can be awful political in Louisiana back at that time. And so I got the job to be the warden of the prison. But I had never worked in a prison in my life. I hadn’t know anything really about inside the prison.

But, it’d be cool. I can do this, I believe. I called my mom: “Mom, I’m gonna be the warden of the prison.” And here’s my mom. She made me go to church every time the doors open, from a little kid, as long as I can remember. My dad too. We never, I never heard my mom or dad

³⁶ See <https://youtu.be/Tc0eiCgKHt8>; see also www.PrestonwoodMensConference.org, accessed 3-1-21.

say any profanity, never saw ‘em drank any alcohol, and they wouldn’t let me learn how to dance [*laughter*].

When I got to LSU, I said I’m gonna learn all the things they wouldn’t let me do [*laughter*]. I’m gonna see what I miss, and I had, it took me seven years to graduate [*laughter*].

But anyway, mom said, I say, “Mom, I’m gonna be warden of this prison.”

Mom says, “Let me tell you,” I’m thinking she’s gonna be glad; she said, “Let me tell you one thing.” She said, “I raised you right. And you’ve been a reprobate ever since you went to college.” She says, “God’s gonna hold you accountable that those men have a chance to know him, because you’re responsible for ‘em.”

I said, “Yes ma’am.” She was not happy.

But anyway. I went to that prison, had 1,500 inmates, three chaplains. Said, “You guys are gonna be the shepherds. Y’all gonna feed the sheep. If the flock don’t grow, and, and the sheep aren’t fed, we’re gonna get a new shepherd. Now what about that can’t you understand?”

And so, I passed it off. Did you see that? I just passed it off. Kept on being ol’ Burl, having a good time.

Comes time to go to this Angola prison, and let me tell you about Angola. I have 6,325 prisoners. If you get 50 years or less on your sentence, I send yah somewhere else. Now the exception, I got 1,000 more inmates that I don’t have to send away; they have short sentences, cause we train on them. I have murder, rape, armed robber, habitual felon. And the longest sentence there is 2,574 years plus 19 sentences of life. So that’s, that would have, he would have to live up to 500 B.C. to serve that sentence. So anyway, pretty difficult guys there.

So I didn’t want this job. Said, “I’m not going there.” When the job came open, because I was too young at the time; that was 20 years ago; I’ve been there 20 years; hadn’t retired yet. And I said, “I don’t want to go there.” Everybody go there gets fired. Wardens are the paid fall guys. Not going. They say, “Well, you gotta go. You the longest serving warden here. You got the most experience. You that one that need to go do it.”

I said, “Nope.” I said, “You had to give me a \$25,000 pay raise.” I knew they couldn’t do it. It was impossible, Civil service, all this kind of stuff. And that was a lot of money back 20 years ago.

Well they did [*laughter*].

So I had to go. “So I’ll take it only temporarily, or I’m not gonna do it long.” I’ve been there two months. And the first thing I did, I’m looking at this guy, because I knew I was out of my league, I could not do this prison. What it did is, it turned me back to where my mom, they way she had raised me. I remember, I would look at the sky. I would think of Solomon. I’d pray for wisdom. I would look at the sky. I would pray, pray, pray, pray give me wisdom. Help me decide what to do, how to handle this situation. And I will look back at the sky, and I would say, “Thank you, Jesus.” Because I wasn’t that smart to come up with what you just told me. That wasn’t of me.

Two months into it, we go to an execution. And so that’s cool. I’m for the death parently. We’ll go do that. And so, we get, carry this guy down there. It’s time to do it. We carry him into the execution chamber. And, and so, but first, we go to see the governor, to see if we really gonna do it. And if he gonna have a stay or something, and that’s customary in Louisiana, to know for sure what he’s gonna do, so we can plan for it. And he said, “No.”

As I was leaving the governor’s mansion, a state trooper said, “What time are you going to do it *exactly*?”

I said, “I’m do it from 12 to 3 a.m.”

He said, “No, no. I want to know the exact time, because we bet exactly when you do it. We put a pot together, and whoever’s closest wins the pot.”

I said, “Okay, then I’m gonna do it exactly at 12 minutes after midnight.”

Now I just picked the time when a human being was gonna die. So, but, I didn’t realize what I was doing. So I go on back. That night we start to do the process. And we just go get him, and bring him in there, and he’s so afraid that he has to be carried in upright position, his feet don’t even touch the floor. He just, he just going along, we just carrying him. And we lay him on a table, he don’t say a word. When he sees the table, he just really freaks out with fear. And I immediately thought of the victim, and how the victim must have felt. We lay him down on a table. It’s time to start the process. I’m looking at the clock, and I have to give a signal through a one-way mirror; there’s only he and I in the room. Nobody else can hear us, hear what we say, hear what I say to him, or are, they can just see us. But I have to give the signal. But where the executioners actually are, because it’s a one-way mirror, so no one can see ‘em, who’s going to actually push the drugs. So to give the signal, I did that [*gives the thumbs down*]. Okay, so then I start the process, and four minutes later, after a minute and a half he breathes two breaths [*gives a puffing sound*]. And then he stops breathing about two and a half more minutes, then everything goes flat. And they’ll give me a signal through the door that it’s over and it’s done. So they gave me the signal, and it was over, and it was done.

And I looked at him, and I said, “What have you done? You just killed that man. And you were the last person in this room, and you didn’t say one word to him about his soul.” You what he did, you know he didn’t talk, you know you just probably sent him straight to hell. And he said, and I said to myself, “And look what they did. They cast lots. Because they bet on exactly the time he was gonna die. And look what he did. Who are you? You’re not God. You can’t pick a time when somebody dies. That’s wrong. No human being should do that.” And then I thought of the victim. And I thought I would do what I could for the victim to have help the victim any way I could have. But then I looked at him, and I said, “He has a soul, and you didn’t do anything. All you did is give that silly sign with your thumb that you saw in the movie that Ceasar did to the Christians in the Coliseum and the gladiators, when he meant for them to live or die.” And I have to tell you, the next day, I had to go see the preacher. Gave me two scriptures: Genesis, he says, “In Genesis, he who shed man’s blood so shall his blood be shed.” I said, “No no preacher, something in the New Testament. They killed everybody in the Old Testament [*lot of laughter*]. We gotta get to the New Testament. So, he goes to Romans the 13th chapter, the first six verses. It says that God’s all powerful, he’s in control of everything, and there’s an agent of wrath, and so forth. And I said, “Okay, I can live with it.”

So therefore, from then forth on, we all agreed on the execution team we would, we would read the scriptures, we say, we would pray that we would be in God’s will, and we would go forth and do it. Next time, with the next guy, we were gonna do was Antonio James, and he was a Christian man. We talked about the thief on the cross. We talked about “This day I’ll see in paradise,” and what Jesus said to one of the men on the cross, and on the other cross. And so, it meant that when you die you’d go to heaven to me and to him. And so we talked about the Billy Graham book *Angels, Angels*, where it says when you die, your soul goes on up to heaven.³⁷

And he says to me, he said, “Will you hold my, well, so I’ll be connected to this earth while I go to meet Jesus.”

³⁷ Billy Graham, *Angels: God’s Secret Agents* (New York: Doubleday, 1975; 175 pp.), on the 1st ed. cover, *Angels* is repeated five times with *God’s Secret Agents* between fourth and fifth time..

I said, "Sure I'm gonna hold your hand." Thought of the victim. I couldn't hold their hand. If I could have, I would have. But I couldn't. You have to do what you can, where you are.

So that night we started the process. And we couldn't find the vein, and he would make fist. And he looked at me, and everybody left the room. And we finally got ready to do the process. I said, "Antonio it's time." I said, "You're gonna get ready to see Jesus' face. The chariot's here to get yah." So we started a process, and he said to me the last thing on this earth as I held his hand: he said, "Bless you." And I know he's in heaven today. And then he he turned my hand loose.

The point is, the point is, we have to do and always remember to always obey and do what God would expect of us. Don't get in an environment where you don't. And don't turn your back on Jesus, because that's what I did during that first execution. But it changed me. And then I knew I had to stay at that prison. So then I took the job and was glad to be there. But again, praying for wisdom.

I'm going to tell you a little bit about what we do, and I want to show you about to seminary. Because you're doing it in Texas, and you're doing exactly what we do. And I got this cue-deal here [remote]. And I'm gonna try to get us a, I don't see any buttons on it [laughter]. I found one. Okay, there we are. I'm gonna take you on a quick little tour. I don't have a lot of time for this. But I want to also, let's just, that button didn't work really [laughter]. I'm still huntin' the button. It's a little bitty box too [laughter]. Where's the button, guys? And I have a secretary that does all this kind of stuff for me [laughter]. I don't do any details [laughter].

Unknown man. We need our media people. There we go. That green button.

Warden Cain. Ah, it's not a button, it's a color [laughter]. Green, remember green for go. Okay. We go into prison.

Now listen, we have about 2,000 born-again Christians in this prison. And we do a lot of work. We raise everything we eat. And we have about 2,500 head of cattle. We own 18,000 acres. And you have more land in Texas at your prison. But we just gonna walk through here, because I'm gonna get to something real important. There, coming in the front gate [*reads sign at front of prison*], "I've learned to forgive and forget about the things that are behind and press fourth for the things that are before me." And you see a white mark; that was Philippians 3:13, that is Philippians 3:13.

The ACLU told me I couldn't put it up.

So I say, "Well, it doesn't say God."

They say, "Well, but it's got scripture on the bottom."

I say, "Well, it won't" [laughter]. So there it is [laughter].

See, you got look twice. I get along with them real well. Believe it or not, I'm gonna be on a TV program on Tuesday for one hour with the head of the ACLU in Louisiana. She and I get along real well, because could I convinced her that she had, she had to support my second amendment rights, if I were to go and do what she wanted me to do for her. She got to go both ways; she said okay. So we, she won me over.

Inmates going to work. First job they ever had in their life. We work with mules and horses. The public thanks yah working hard. You'll see the wild horses again a little later. And we pickin' greens. We cook well. They're good.

But the main difference is, is what makes this prison work, was it's a God thing.

They're cracking pecan. We give them a block and a road. You can crack pecans.

And here's the seminary. What happened was, is praying for how to do the prison, I realized that correction means correcting deviant behavior. And I realized that moral people don't rape,

pilfer, and steal. So if you can get people to become moral people, then you, you really have done moral rehabilitation, and you've changed them. And so that's really what it's all about, is changing people's lives, so they don't hurt you again. Because it's about victims of violent crime. It's not lock and torture, and lock and feed. It's about changing people's lives, so if they get out, they don't hurt you again. And so the only way to do that, and where we want to find morality the quickest, is in religion in our culture. So if we can get religion in the prison, then we're going to find morality really quick. But we just can't care what religion it is, or we cross the line. And we have to keep the separation of church and state. So, the deal was, the seminary folks came to see me. I didn't come to see them. But it actually was a president or the head of the Judson Baptist association that said, "Why don't we get to seminary here in the prison." Because I was complaining that we don't have any education, because we lost Pell Grant in prison. Prisoners aren't eligible. So I said I didn't believe they'd come.

They said, "Well, yes they will."

I said, "Okay, I'll give a place to do it."

So they said, "Okay, let's do it." So we start the seminary, pretty simple.

And everybody said, "Well, how are you going to do a seminary in prison?"

Well, the inmates, they're gonna do it. We're gonna have a seminary, and so surely we did. And inmates really got behind it, because they realized they were gonna get a degree like LSU. And I thought that was cool. And the teachers came from the First Baptist Church of Baton Rouge; he was a PhD professor that worked in the seminary. So we started. We had to raise \$75,000 every year, which we do to have the seminary.

The result is this. Today we have graduated about 250 inmates as full four-year preachers. And we have 28 churches in Angola, and inmates are in the pulpit in those churches.

And this is real foreign. When you go to work in prison, they say one inmate can't ever have power over another. But the preacher really doesn't have power over you, because you have the freedom to go to church, if you want to. You don't have to go. And it's the same in prison. We don't *make* you go to church. Now, we're going to show church on our TV station, thanks to the Horners, Andy Horner, Premier Design, And, and if you don't want to watch the TV on Sunday morning, and you want it to be on something else, and you want to sue us about it, then we'll just have the Learning Channel all day on Sunday. And you'll miss the football game [*lot of laughter*].

So you see. There's another way to skin a cat, and just hit him head on [*laughter*].

The deals gone again. There's the seminary. I just wanted to show you'll the seminary. These guys are really working there. That's our class. That's what we're doing. This is a graduation. That's Dr. Kelly, and their parents and families are sitting on the side.

And when a mom comes up to you and says, "You know, my son had to come to prison to get an education to find God."

What I really think, and what I'm really saying inside is, "Some soul had to die, you know, for someone else to find God." But I'm saying then, "That they didn't die in vain, maybe, because the other soul was saved." And I just pray that, that you know, the victim was a Christian.

Now what's cool about this is we have built all these churches, and we have all these inmate preachers, and folks like Henry Blackaby; and that's one of our churches, you're looking down from the front, obviously. Mike come to see us, that's he and his wife on one of the tires, and John MacArthur. And so, we have a lot of guests that come through.

We don't like them to be in the pulpit, though, because we like to have our inmate preacher in the pulpit.

This is our rodeo. And this is some of our churches. And so these churches are built with private donors. And they're all over the prison, so that on the 18,000 acres you can see a steeple from anywhere in the prison.

And you might have noticed there was a cross in the church. Now if I had asked the lawyer, "Can I put a cross in a church?" He would have surely said, "No," because lawyers say no more than yes. So therefore, don't ask the lawyer [*laughter*]. So if you don't ask, you don't know. And ignorance is bliss [*lot of laughter*].

See that cross right there in that church. See yah see two crosses. But if you go, and I talk to other wardens, "No, you can't do that."

I said, "Who said you couldn't do it?"

"All the lawyers say you can't do it."

I say, "Why did you ask them?" [*lot of laughter*]

You know, there's another cross on the steeple. So, I want you to say, I want to tell you that at the State Penitentiary in Louisiana, we did the stained glass too. We built the church, and we had no contractor there. We can build one of those churches in about two months. And, and we just don't do the air conditioning cause we want the warranty [*laughter*]. But anyway, this is the last one. Do y'all recognize that building? That is, that is the Alamo. No. We know there's two Alamos. We even have the window on the right all set like you have on your Alamo. Now the reason we built this, this is a non-denominational Catholic Church [*lots and lots of laughter*]. Okay.

You can't have a denomination or the ACLS will get you [*laughter*].

So, anyway, that's pretty cool church. The reason it's the Alamo is that all the money came from Mexico. They hired me—*didn't* hire me, I wouldn't take any money—but they flew me to Mexico to tell 'em about their prisons and all. And these, these guys got a lot of money, and they had a big old jet. And it was a Hawker 4000, I remember, cause it was a big one. And everywhere down there we went to all their prisons to try to help 'em out, but then they want to do something for me.

They said, "What can we do for you?"

And I said, "I don't want anything. I just want to help you do your prison."

"Well, we'll build yah a church."

"That's just exactly what I want" [*laughter*]. And so, and so they built, that church cost \$401,000, and all the money came from Mexico. We built that charge after the slab was poured, and we have a concrete plant; so we poured the slab too. It took us 38 days to build the church. And that's from doing everything. I had 80 inmates work on it, 40 by day, 40 at night; we work 24 hours a day. And we built the pews, we did the stained glass, we did it all. And we had to be ready by the 12th of January for Our Lady of Guadalupe.

And so anyway, it just shows. I didn't build anything. I didn't do anything. This is a God thing, because God chose the worst prison with the worst reputation in this country to see that he could change, that people like that could change and really become moral people.

We go weekends without fights. We have very little violence. Our violence dropped 80%. Now, it's like fish, you can't catch 'em all. But you can dilute 'em so much that your, your security is effective, is more effective. But the point is, they changed.

The point is, we can see revival coming from the prison, because these guys are godly men. And when we do start to release 'em—and I feel certainly surely that we will—we're going to

start a project called the Onesimus Project, where we'll send preachers to urban areas from the prison.³⁸ And then they'll work in urban area. But then we have a program called Malachi Dad where they inmates in prison, now, they care about their children.³⁹ They want to be working and mentoring their children in a community, and as that's through Malachi Dad, where it's like if you go to Iraq, or you go to war, you still have children, you still can mentor them, and we enable him to do that; and so, that way, those children in the community; so we can send an inmate preacher to an urban area, he'll be having a toehold where he can get him involved in church. In Louisiana we have some suburban churches who are more affluent that will pay the salary of the inmate that goes to work in the urban area, so that'll connect the urban area with a suburban area, and we'll see communities start to come together.

That's our dream. That's a dream that God gave us. I got the missionaries. We send missionaries from our prison to other prisons in the shower: God spoke to me in the shower. I got the hospice program on Sunday morning. Now, God never spoke to me 'til I went to this prison. Now, God talks to me.

Somebody say, "Whatcha going to do next?"

And I'll say, "I don't know. He hadn't said yet" [*laughter*]. But he does. And he will. And it's amazing, because what happens is, it just comes in your mind what to do next. And so, you know then, that God's blessin' what we do.

And, and I would like to close with this with you guys. There's some times it's really important that you have to do, because I have to be the father of these inmates, cause they didn't have one.

But listen, we have some things we do. We have a sign that says, "Askable." You have to be askable. That's a new word, we made that up. Askable means if somebody asked you a question, if your child, your son, your daughter asked you a question, you have to answer it. In our prison, if an inmate asked somebody—a staff person—a question, you got to stop answer it. Knowledge is power. We know what they think when we talk to them. We *want* to know what they think. You don't want to fight fire, or you get burned. You put out fire. In your home, you don't want to fight fire, you want to prevent Fire. Fire is not good. That's when they're getting in trouble with the law, they're doing drugs. They don't all kinds of bad things. You can prevent that though if you're askable.

Because when a real little, they've got to learn to follow rules at that age. When they're teenagers, it's too late, too late; you almost lost 'em. Now you got to bring him back. But it's difficult. But when a real little, little rules, follow rules; and when you say something, *mean* it. But don't have, don't just tell 'em all the time and boss 'em all the time, "Do this, do that, do the other." And you gotta say *yes* more than *no*. You really do. If you don't say *yes*, you're gonna cause 'em to sneak around on yah. Say *yes* as much as you can. But just talking to 'em is really important.

Now, here's the other thing. When, when your child says, "Dad, come go do this with me." Say *yes*. Try to say *yes* every time, as much as you can. "Come go play cowboys and Indians." "Come go ride the four wheeler." "Come go with me in a car somewhere." Get in the car and go. Spend time with 'em. You had 'em—spend the time with 'em!

³⁸ Compare www.SWRC.com/ministry/missions/onesimus-prison-project.html, a ministry of Southwest Radio Church, and www.PrisonFellowshipnigeria.org/the-onesimus-project.

³⁹ Awana Lifeline, *Malachi Dads: The Heart of a Father* (Streamwood, IL: Awana, 2013; 212 pp.), www.Awana.org. Compare www.PrisonFellowship.org/tag/malachi-dads and www.LifeLineGlobal.org/malachi-dads.

You want them to have your values, not somebody else's. If you aren't talking to them, they're talking to their friends who may not have your values. Who may have their dad's values. Or you may not, who may not be *worthy* of your child's values. Your child, you wouldn't have the values that he has. So, you really have to spend the time with 'em. Because if you don't, then somebody like *me* is gonna be spending time with 'em, possibly, and then, because that's where they get rehabilitation.

Go to church. My mom made me go to church. Take 'em to church. If you don't want to go to church, take 'em to church anyway. You had 'em—take 'em to church. You've got to do that. And when they little, make 'em go. They don't want to go; they go get older; well, you keep setting example for 'em. Because they'll come back. It's so in the Bible. But you've got to do that, because you've had 'em, and you want 'em to turn out right. But you're the, they're their product or their environment.

And here's the other thing. In our prison, we have no profanity. Now the inmates came to me, these inmate preachers, and said, "You'll are cussing too much, and you'll should be cursing in front of the preacher. Your mamma wouldn't like that."

I said, "You're absolutely right. She would not like that." I will never curse again, *ever*. In fact, in front of you, but ne'er [*unclear*] anyway. So, I meet with all the wardens. And we say we all gonna quit cussing. There's 19 of us, assistant wardens; it's a big prison. But then everybody stops, the inmates too.

So imagine going in this prison, you can take your wife or your child anywhere in the prison. There'll be no whistles, no cat calls, and no profanity. Now listen, this is what this means: God changed that culture in that prison. We did not change it. I'm not that smart; I *promise* you [*laughter*]. I didn't do it. Be humble, don't stumble. He changed it.

He can change your home. And he can change your community. Because he did Second Chronicles 7:14. Those inmates were praying for delivery, just a few. You know, my people who call my name, turn your face, and I'll heal their land. He healed the land. It can heal our communities, so important.

I will say one more thing to yah. Don't let your illusions become reality. When people let their illusions become reality, they make a mistake 50% of the time, because you're not a mind reader. And this is what happens in your home. You start thinking, your wife's thinking something, or she's doing something. Or she starts thinking you are. And we see divorce come. We see all these things happen in our home, because we go off half-cocked with what we think. You're not a mind reader, and God don't intend for you to *ever* a mind reader. You gonna make a mistake when you run off on illusions. And so many people make that mistake.

And let's just get to one other place. Because I've been there and done that. But he says you can divorce if it's been adultery. But he said you can divorce if it's been adultery because of the *hardness* of your heart. Read the rest of the Scripture. Means because your unforgiving. So think twice, because you're hurting a child.

I don't care what you say. I don't *believe* what you say. But I've been and done that it too. When you split your family up, and your children go off, and they call somebody else dad, and you let this happen in your family—do all you can to stay with your wife and keep their family together, because they need both of you. They need you bad.

And when you, if something happens, and you have to marry again, you lose your wife, [*unclear*] gone. Don't be unevenly yoked: that's the worst thing too. And marry for love and not for lust. And what happened with young people: they lust, they get married, then they have a disaster.

Remember what I say, because I'm picking up the pieces in Louisiana State Penitentiary of these broken homes.

It's been a pleasure being with you all today. Thank you all so very much for having me [applause]. Wonderful program [*applause continues*].

8. Warden Cain at 2016 Florida Justice Summit V

Warden Burl Cain spoke at the 2016 Justice Summit V in Florida, 4-14-2016—3,345 views:⁴⁰

Warden Cain. That picture came from *Mother Jones* magazine. Hey, y'all ever heard of *Mother Jones* magazine. It's liberal to the liberal. It's so far out there. And this reporter wanted to come down and I wouldn't let him; and he sued me, so I had to let him, because I let other people in. But then I left, so I couldn't, I wouldn't have to talk to him. He made me really look good, because his catch was when he left that, "If he came down Angola, you had to find Jesus, or he wouldn't let you go." And so, that was a good deal.

But back to the, I know we probably don't have any school teachers in here, but you might. So do we have any school teacher with us today or anybody ever taught school? Got a few, okay right there. Well, I'll taught school. I went to LSU to be a school teacher, voc-ag education. And I went to the classroom to do that, that was a noble thing to do, and I made about three months, and I told the principal I say this, "Listen. This is the worst job in the world. I can't stand these kids. They running to me crazy. And so, I don't know if I can keep doing this job."

And he said, "Well, let me tell you one thing, if you break this contract. I'm see that you never teach again."

I said, "Good, I'm out of here." So these school teachers can run a prison, I promise you. But anyway, that's kind of my story about how I got started in corrections. But I want to tell you, it's a very noble profession. Well we all do. And the main focus, we should really have in our mind is victims, because we want less victims of violent crime. We have to remember what corrections means. Most people forget to word: corrections means *correct deviant behavior*. Doesn't mean lock and feed, torture and torment, or what have you. It means correct deviant behavior. And that's what we try to do.

And I guess about 15 years ago I, I would executing a guy, and our Secretary LeBlanc now, was a fellow warden. And he was there to witness. The guy had been in our prison before, and he had gotten out and murdered someone. And so, when we finishee the execution. And we tell Secretary LeBlanc, and he would agree, and he told me, we have to go to the room where the victim's family is, we have to talk to them, because a couple of them can witness. We have to say okay, I'll have a knowledge thing. It's out done and so forth, and they think they don't feel real good. And it's gonna help before they do the execution, but they really kind of leave with a heavy heart because they really didn't change anything.

But anyway, the other thing we do we go to the victim, we have to go to the inmate's family too. Because he had a momma, and he had a family, and they didn't commit a crime. They're good good church-going folks. And so you have to go in there and you have to talk to them too.

And you really realize that nobody wins. And we already know that when it comes to murder and crime, But we also realized there's a victims all over the place.

So we committed ourselves at night, we looked at each other, we said we have enough experience. We have learned how to change the prison. We just have to commit ourselves to doing it. And we come up with a term more rehabilitation. We don't say faith-based, we we

⁴⁰ See www.YouTube.com/watch?v=DTvX3UoeNqk, accessed 3-1-21.

don't say any other word about God, or what have you. We just talk about more rehabilitation. Now here's the deal: that talk about who is a criminal; a criminal is somebody that is selfish. You don't care anything about what you have; if he wants it, he'll take it. He's a bully. He's all about himself, all about himself.

Now, that's basically who he is. You don't have to go to school four years to learn who's a criminal. And then [*unclear*].

So we have to change that mentality. If we can change that, to change him for being a taker to be the giver, we can rehabilitate him. So that's what we launched out to do, and that's where we really got going, really with our religious program. but really before that too. Because when I went to the penitentiary, I didn't want the job, way back in 1995. And so they coerced me into it because I had 13 years experience at another prison. So I had the most experience of anybody in the state, and I should be able to do it. But I didn't want to do it. It was too violent. Wardens were the paid fall-guys, and we are. So I'd lose my job in a few years. Anyway, I took it temporary.

We went and did the first execution, and then I knew I had to stay. But I knew I didn't know what I was doing—to they own self be true. So I would pray to God to give me the wisdom to make the next decision to know what to do, so it made me get real close to God myself. Plus that execution did, cause I kind of didn't do that right. I felt like I sent him to hell, and I didn't say anything to him about his soul. So I vowed never to do that again.

Anyway, that's kind of how I got started. And so what really caused me to really go to praying and get back to my own roots. I was one of these guys raised in a country home; we didn't even have a caution light. My mamma made me go to church every time the doors open; and it was Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night—I got so tired of going to church. And I hated to go to church so bad, one time they had a revival, and they are going to have a morning service. And we said, "Mom, we're not Catholic. We shouldn't have to go to early morning mass." But she made us to go anyway.

So when I got to LSU, I said, "I fixin' to learn all these things she didn't let me know. I'm fixin' to have me a good time. Well, I did, almost to the point that they liked to send me home, and that would've killed me, because they would have beat me to death, probably.

So I had to tighten up at the last minute and try to eke by, and get off probation and make it. But anyway, I stayed pretty much that way till I got to Angola. And that really changed my life. myself, but it brought me back to my roots.

But let's talk about. Let's talk about the seminary. And, and I know Representative Baxley came, and several of you did to see Angola. But the real game changer was, that it came in '95, '96 actually, right after I got there. I didn't ask for it; fell in my lap; I wasn't smart, I don't claim credit for changing in Angola. It was a God thing. I didn't know what I was doing. And so, but the seminary was a real game changer because when we started, we had a lot of problems. And we're gonna have some time for questions at the end with the staff and all, to buy in. But I explained to the staff, if you're a Christian and you don't buy this seminary, you're fighting God. And when you get to the pearly gates, I feel sorry for you. You better tighten up. Get your attitude right about about what we're trying to do, because this is God's work and not my work. That kind of brought them all around.

But anyway, we started seeing our culture change real quick after we started doing that. And where do we get in 2000? We sent the first men down to walk into the prison. The first women down to walk into the prison the correctional officers. And then look, this is a maximum security prison, we have it that tab 5,108 inmates. And what we would do is they would murderers,

rapists, armed robbers, habitual felons. If you had it, with 4,000 lifers, excuse me, and if you had 50 years on your sentence, I sent you somewhere else. I'd only kept yah if you had more than 50 years.

So therefore, real hardcore prison. Now, to send a woman down there to the dormitory to be a correctional officer, we all realized she didn't guard anybody, they let her guard, they let her guard them. And so, that's how safe the prison got four years after the seminary was there.

So I commend you, and I commend Warden Lamb, because, and Warden Olson, because they started that your seminary, and I visited yesterday down at Hardee, and they were out on a track, they right where we were, perfect, you doing it. You have an opportunity to change the culture of prison in this state, not just Hardee.

They're some things you got to do, that I'm gonna tell you later, you got to be willing to do. One thing is y'all to have an adjustment [*not clear*]. Okay, we have to look at what we do, and we have to break tradition. Because if you stay traditional, you do the same thing you did. And Warren Lamb told me, he said, "You know, I grew up in corrections, so I do what I was trained to do." Well, the good news for me was I didn't grow up in corrections. I was over trying to teach that school and got run off, and I went to work in corrections. But I got appointed to a pretty high position by Governor Edwards and into cabinet level. And so I went from there to be the warden of a prisons.

I never really worked in the prison until I was a warden of one. So that made me very non-traditional. If it didn't make sense, I didn't do it; if it was common sense, I did do it. If I [*not clear*] question all over things I did, because, because, because. That's what your challenge is here today, whether you're a sheriff, whether you warden, what have you, whatever. You have to really be non-traditional. Times change; we have to change with times. What you did 20 years ago, you don't need to do now, maybe. Laws change. People change. Culture change. The environment change, from being a kid to go out and work in the yard, and do whatever; now they kid do joysticks. You got to deal with all that kind of things, because that changes them.

So we have to be non-traditional, and that's what we are at the penitentiary, non-traditional. I tell yah, the seminary was a real game changer, because it created a culture change. The culture within the prison changed, because inmate preachers started to go and visit other inmates. They start to sit on a bed with him and pray with him and so forth, but they changed their spirit, they changed their spirit. God changes people.

Now here again, we don't tell'm we're gonna be Christian, we're gonna be anything else. We don't care what you are. We care that you morally change. We care that we have more rehabilitation in our prison. We don't claim to be Baptist; we don't claim whatever. Now if you wanted to know what the religion of Angola is, its Bapti-costal, that's what it is. And so, there's rockin' and rollin' and that's what there're doin' in school. But anyway, that's how that works.

But let's take you way over and jump forward to a new program we just started. I really want to tell you about; it's real important. While you heard of drug court, all your life. Well now, we have what we call reentry court. The legislature passed a bill, and we have five judges in five parishes, which would be five counties. That when they have an inmate that violated the law, and they going to sentence him, they sentence him to less than 10 years; then they'll sentence him 10 years but go Angola to reentry court.

Now, we didn't have any money. The tax dollars were gone. They were scarce, no money anywhere. We were lucky to have that big ol' rodeo. We built that dude real big. So we diverted the funds in the province out of the rodeo; it'd bring in four million a year. We diverted it over to the reentry programs. So there was our money. So we didn't have to ask the taxpayer for a

penny. Other people can't do that. You'll are not gonna do that. I'm not here *at all* to advocate that, because I don't see how we get away with it. But anyway, we do.

So, the point is the inmate comes to Angola, and here's who to his teachers are? We have no teachers. We lost him in the budget cut. So the teachers are all lifer inmates who have skilled and trained, and who have been certified with those skills, who have four-year degrees in the seminary which is accredited, just like Florida, Florida State. And so, that's a legitimate degree. And my phone is ringing; I'm so sorry for not turning it off; let's get this thing off here, so I can talk.

Now then, so, so the inmates are the teachers. Well, who ever heard of inmates teaching another one? Well, you talk in prison, they say one inmate can't have any authority over another. Well, I say, "Well why?" You know. Why is that? And so, if the inmate has changed his life, if he's a moral person, then he can. And then he does it very successfully. And that's what's so important to us. So they go there, and that's the teachers.

But let's say take it a step further. These inmate teachers live in a dormitory where these inmate my students are coming in, and they're their moral mentors. They teach them anger management. They teach them all these skill sets under the direction of the social worker, but the social worker don't do it. And so therefore we change them there.

Now what happens is we get them a skill and a trade, like welding, like what have you; but it's all skills and trade. Then they go back to court, and the judge will change their sentence to probation, which can take about two or three years to get to all these programs, and skills, and be a skilled welder, or what have you. Then what happened is probation pro steps up, because they play a major role in being sure that he has, that he goes to work, and follows the law, he checks in and so forth, and they drug test him.

Now what does the community do? The community steps up, because they help him find a job, and probation parole does too. So we put him on a job right out of prison; the court and probation parole monitor him. He now has the skill to make a decent wage \$15–20 an hour, if he were an automotive mechanic. He'll have an ASE patch on his arm; that's what you say when you go to the dealer. He's gonna have a certification big time. He may have five welding certifications. He can weld MIG; he can weld TIG; he can weld all this, he can do pipe, whatever. Therefore, he we made him employable.

If you go to a business owner and say, "I want him to sweep, I have an inmate he needs a job. He can sweep the floor." They don't want it. You go to the inmate, you go to the guy who owns a car dealership, you say, "I have an inmate that has that has that, has an ASE certification." He don't care. You'll hire him immediately, because he wants to use him. Cause he's gonna make him money. He *don't* care. Especially if we're gonna watch him and drug test him.

So what we did, we made the inmate employable. But while we did it, we saved another victim. Because if we don't do that. He's gonna get out of jail. [*applause*] Thank you. He's gonna come right back to prison.

That is why we have 50% recidivism rate: one out of two going out. So are we doing our job is corrections in correction? No, we're failing, because we're not finishing the job.

Now, I challenge you this. I didn't have any money. I took my teachers too. They took everything we had, but we were creative to keep it going. But we got way outside the box. Now, here's what happened. Nothing. We didn't have any problems. Nothing happened. Inmates felt better with themselves. We improved their self esteem. They produced more, and everything worked better for us. And so therefore, it was a success, it's a successful program. Now it's

gonna need more money, we got to have more parishes [*not clear*] in it, and so forth, but we proved it work.

Now let's go back to the seminary. Let's talk about the culture of the prison, and how we want to change the prison. This is probably one of the worst prisons in America at the time I went. I did not change it; it's a God thing. But, if it could change, anybody can. Now let's take it one step further. After we started graduating these preachers, and there's about 280 of them, we started sending them in pairs of four and six to all the other prisons. So their culture changed too.

Now here's why. You have a preacher at your church. You go to church every Sunday, and he preaches. And he's there in a community, and he marries the daughters, the sons. He buries yah, he consols yah. He does everything. He's your spiritual leader. You have prison ministry; we have to have prison ministry. But the prison ministry folks drive up. They do their little deal; they get in the car, and they leave. Well who meets his needs, if that night his momma dies? Who meets his needs is he's having trouble with another part [*unclear*], something in his life. There's nobody there to do it.

So what if your preacher in your church, preaches to the church on Sunday, got on an airplane and flew to the Bahamas. He stayed in the Bahamas until Saturday, and he flew back and preached in the church, got an airplane left again. How successful would that church be? You'd fell apart. So you see, prison ministry, the way we do it, won't ever get the job done. It's a good; got to do it; but it won't get the job done.

With an inmate preacher that's trained for four years, has been trained in counseling, has been trying like any preacher. He's really got some good training. He goes in there, he *is* the preacher. This is so far out. I told Warden Lamb, you have to take little bitty steps, baby steps, may take you 10 years, 15 years, but that's where you're going to get to. And when you get to that, you're going to have safer and safer and safer prisons; you're gonna have less and less victims of violent crime. But we had to prove it.

How did we prove it? I have a good fortune Angola. I can raise money. If several people I call and say, "I need \$100,000 to do this or that." I'm going to get a check, because they trust us. Because we do fine with bricks and mortar. We don't waste it on administrative cost. We can get the money.

So we wanted to research this program we have, the seminary, and we wanted Baylor University to do it. And we, so we got hooked up with a guy named Tim Horner. Any of you ladies had ever heard of Premier Design, Premier Jewelry? They come to your house, sell the jewelry. That's the company. They do us a wonderful, a wonderful job. So we need \$1.3 million for Baylor to research this seminary: \$1.3 million, five-year research.

Okay, so we get into a plane, fly over to Dallas, Texas, go see Tim Horner. And I know him real well; he's been Angola. I go to see him, and really cool. We named our seminary after his mom.

And I say, "Tim, this is Dr. Byron Johnson from Baylor, and this is Senator Patrick, who is now the Lieutenant Governor of Texas. We need to talk to you about some help with research. We need some money."

He said, "What you'll need?"

I say, "Well, we're gonna need about \$1,300,000."

He said, "Well, I'll tell yah one thing: if I pay for any research, I don't want any student doing a research. If I'm gonna pay that kind of money, I want a PhD doing it."

We were already in the door, and we just started the first sentence. And so, Dr. Johnson kinda perked up over there, because he got excited, and he said, “Just what are going to do?”

And I said, “We’re gonna prove his seminary worked.” But we can’t, we can, because we had found out; I can come tell yah what I just told you. But if I don’t have the data. I can’t really convince you. But if I can lay the data on the table, then I got yah. Because, then if you see the data, you see at work, and you have a wherewithal to do it, and you don’t do it. I would say that starts, that word starts with the letter S. *[laughter]* But anyway, I’m not gonna call the word. But it doesn’t make sense, if you have the wherewithal to do it.

So we engage, in minute. Tim Horner said, “Well, I tell you what”; he said, he said, “Dr. Johnson, do you think it worked. What do you do?”

He said, “I think it works. But it’s not gonna ever work if we don’t prove it.”

He [Horner] said, “Well, if that’s what it takes to get God’s word out there, and I’m gonna help you prove it. So you got the money.” It took about 10 minutes. Dr. Johnson fell over on a table, just like that. Never had he raised so much money so quick without somebody saying “I gotta go down and get the CFO to look at it” and all this kind of stuff. Got the money.

Guess what? The research did over. The book is coming out in July. It worked. We can prove it worked. It worked phenomenally well.

Took three things to make it work. This is the trouble now for the states, all the states, not just here. Three things that made it work. You have to be non-traditional to do these three things. One is, we have the inmate church at Angola. There’s a whole bunch of churches, and I’m talking about inmate pastors that have groups in our church maybe up to 250 inmates; and on Sunday, they in the pulpit preaching just like they are in your community. And they got assistant pastors, and they got all this congregation they’re leading to do good. Don’t break the rule; don’t do anything bad; admit everything in your rap sheet because God’s looking at you, and you can’t hide it. Quit living a lie, and quit running around here doing drugs and all this kind of stuff in this prison. Be moral noble men. Let me ask you this. Boy did that hurt. Dah, I mean, what did that hurt?

So, you then, so then I go into other states, and they say, “Well, inmate can’t preach, because he has authority over other inmates, and that that’s all bad and so forth.”

I say, “Well, come see me.” And so, but anyway, it’s baby steps. It’ll take 10 years, probably to get there in this state. But you will get there. And when you get there, you’ll rejoice, because you will save a lot of money. You will have a lot less victims of violent crime. I promise yah. All right.

[applause]

So what happens. The religious community begins to support the prison, really big time. Because they’re afraid of the inmates. But they’re fearful, but they worry about their souls. I’ve had this told to me over and over, “We don’t want to come to that prison. I don’t, I worry about their soul; I want you to go up and save their soul, if you can. But I don’t have nothing to do with them—they evil. Okay, I got it. That’s how they feel.

All right, so they like we doing it. So the PR, and the Louisiana Baptist Message, and everywhere you go, and churches want yah to come talk at churches. And it’s making everybody look good. Makes the governor look good, makes the Department of Corrections look good, or makes everybody realize, hey, we changing lives. We’re doing good.

And so, therefore, what’s wrong with that? That was cool.

And we still do it and have a safer prison. Violence dropped about 70% in Angola over this period of time. We can go one weekend with 6,325 prisoners and not have a single fight. And that's a pretty big prison, a lot of people. Most towns can't say that. *[applause]*

I really jumped ahead. Let's talk a little more, the social thing that happens with the seminary, because they preach the funerals, they sit on the bed with them when their mom dies. They keep calmness in a prison.

They there, and because they direct all the anger toward God. If they hear that something's gonna happen in a prison that is not good, they gonna let us know. They are not gonna let us know because they're snitches and rats; they gonna let us know because they're good citizens.

We don't like that word rat, because if I see somebody doing drugs on a corner of the street in my community, I'm gonna call the police. But don't call me a rat, call me a good citizen. And that's what that means. So we quit using that term too.

Best part was, one of the good things was, inmates came to me and say, "Warden Cain, you'll cussing too much."

I said, "Really!"

He said, "Yeah, your momma wouldn't like it either. Could you do it too sometimes?"

I said, "You're right, she wouldn't like that at all."

Whoever heard of an inmate coming to a warden and giving him a little criticism. But hey, wait, he was tellin' the truth. Sounded okay. Okay, tell yah what am I gonna do. I'm gonna stop cursing, we're all gonna stop cursing. But y'all are too. If you don't do it, there are gonna be sanctions; we're gonna have sanctions for everybody. Okay, cool.

So today, if you walk anywhere in Angola, you will not hear one word of profanity. There's no cursing. It's cool. *[applause]* It's what happened?

Now, what did that mean to the security staff? It meant when we stopped cursing'em, we were less oppressive to'em. So we ratched down the tension a little more. But what did it say to the home? Because when you're in the home, and you're screaming out all these profanities, how much tension do you have there? So it's a good example.

Now we start this program Malachi Dad because the inmates that got through the seminary went to worrying about their kids. They said, "My kids are more apt to come to prison than other kids. I don't want my child to come to prison. You got to help me figure out a way to do it." Well, all these preachers are all trained and how to do all this counseling. So we start Malachi Dad with a Awana. So now what you do is, when the kid is having trouble, they're linked up to their to their dad. They can write letters—we don't do phones—but they can write letters. And inmate pastors can work with them to work on how to solve the problem, and it can be a dating problem or whatever. But he gets back engaged in his child's life, no different than a soldier who would go off to Iraq and be gone for a year. So then he starts to work there.

And that takes us to the next program we just started. We have all these kids now in a community, most of these kids are in urban areas. So now let's do the Onesimus Project. This is our latest one.

When people say, "What are you going to do next?"

I said, "I don't know. God hadn't told me yet." Well, he told me about Onesimus. You've never heard of this program; it is brand new. We just develop in it. We already got our first preacher out, it's working. The Onesimus Project is we want to send inmates that get out with short turns back into the urban areas. Well, where are they? All mine are lifers. But I just told you, they're sending me all these guys from from court. Okay, plus I got some other short term inmates now, that I can practice on with these lifer inmates. So they're the ones that can go

back to the community as an Onesimus preacher. What happened is a suburban church puts up the money to pay the preacher in the urban church who was an ex-convict who is a preacher in the urban church, who then has all these kids that are in Malachi Dad in a community to go out and be the toehold, so he can work with him and start getting him to come in to be morally rehabilitated. Now it has to be different kind of pastor doing it, because everybody not going to the same church. We got to meet the community standard, and go to all the different towns, all the churches, so we have to have more preachers, more Onesimus ministers. But we can link up the suburban to the urban, we can link up the community again. And we can change the culture, just like we did at Angola, where there's no gangs—I have no gangs. The gangs went away, because what happened, they got into church, and his preacher was trained gang leader, if you want to call him that. He knew how to lead all these other guys. He got all them working for good instead of evil. And we know what they are doing, so we can keep up with him, and we can watch him. And if somebody's falls, we can yank him up.

Then we diluted so many of them that our security is way more effective, because we don't have everybody to watch. We just have a few that won't change. And it's like, you can't catch them all, you're never gonna change all of them. So it's all about dilutin'em. And so that's how it worked.

Anyway. It's really a pleasure for me to come and talk to you about this.

We have hospices, we have a hospice program. Inmates do all that; they really lighten our load for the medical department and save lots of money. We got to have less cost in court; we don't go to court as much. And we don't get sued as much. So a lot of good things came from it.

I really enjoy being here with you'll. I'm gonna close. Most people tell a story when they start, but I liked this story, cause it happened where I was. I'm on the board of directors of the Brooklyn Tabernacle with Pastor Cymbala, and we have the other Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir and all that.

Anyway, in New York, these streets are real wide. This guy was going down this street, and he had a seeing eye dog. And so he stopped at this red light. And all these people come congregate around waiting for it to go. And a dog stopped him, and the dog is standing there. But the dog turns around and cocked his leg up and urinates all over this man's leg.

So the man goes fumbling in his coat pocket, he feels it wet on his leg, he fumbles in his coat pocket. And he finally pulls out a dog treat. And he reaches down there to hand the treat to the dog.

This lady's standing there by him said, "Mister! Don't you understand that dog just urinated on your leg. Don't you realize you're fixing reward that bad behavior."

He says, "Look lady, I'm just tryin' to find his head to I can kick it behind." *[laughter]*

So, I thought I'd leave y'all with a little bit. He told me I'm supposed to talk an hour. I'm hoarse.

So anyway, you don't need to be talked to an hour. I'd be glad to answer any questions you have. Yes ma'am.

Lady asked ... no clear

I will. Because for these guys in this Malachi Dad Program to mentor their children and so forth, it was better that they could see them and interact with them. Because we wanted them to have a chance to lead them to the Lord. So we started the Returning Hearts Program and—it's an Awana Program with us—there's some others around that's good. But anyway. Anyway, they needed to see their kids in a different environment than the inmate visiting room. They

needed to see 'em one on one, and be able to talk to 'em, and be able to visit with them and spend a day with them.

Now I got a call. We did this program. I'm just gonna sit right up in the front. I got a call as we did it. It was in a newspaper and pictures, and there was a picture of this guy spending the day with his son, with his son, an inmate.

And so, this guy called me, and he said, "I can't believe you have that program, because I saw that man visiting with his son. And that's the very man that killed my daddy. And I never got to visit and play with my daddy. I grew up without my daddy because of him, and you let him play with his son." He was from Shreveport, Louisiana.

I said, "Look, I really hate that. But here's really the deal. I can't help your dad. I can't do anything for your dad. I wish I could. But what I want to do is, we did it for that little boy. We didn't do it for the inmate. We did it for the little boy, because a little boy probably gonna grow up and be like a dad if we don't change him, and allow his dad to help with changing him. And we don't somebody else to be like you, to call him say he didn't get to play with his dad. So it's all about the little kid. And he said he understood.

He said, "Well, I'm hurt. But it's okay. Because I understand what you're doing. You're trying to change a little boy. Just so long as its not about his daddy."

I said, "Well, I hate his daddy, too. Shouldn't have done what he did to you." It's true. But we skated by the victim, because you got to always keep victims first. Cause victims always have to trump in our business; you cannot offend a victim. You just can't. It's just wrong. But we have to educate the victim as to what we're doing and why are we doing it, and if we do that, most of them will buy into it. Some won't ever, and I don't blame 'em. I may not could ever either. We just had to try to feel their pain, and we never can, but realize it's beyond imagination; so don't question it.

Anyway, they spend a day with their kid. Now to do that, you got to have that many volunteers come in for every inmate you have out there doing it. So in my case, I have 500 inmates and have to have 500 volunteers, so that's a 1,000. And I'm gonna get three or four kids, two or three kids at least [*unclear*], I might have 2,000 people. But I have this big rodeo arena, you don't have that; you got just a yard, someways you put out to the side. But then they come out spent a whole day with their dad, and all these mentors are with them and walking around with them. They got all these games to play, and whatever have to find. But what's most important is we take their guardian who brings them there, and we have a magnificent lunch for them. But we have social workers and other people are talking to him about parenting, about how to do it alone. How to make it, and answer their questions, and the problem that you're having raising those kids. It's all about the kid. And then we have music, and I love the program. Three o'clock—they come and pick up the kid; they leave their dad; we all cry. They get in the car and drive away. So sad.

Crime is horrible.

But that's a wonderful program. It goes with the seminary. It goes with all these other programs. So we're doing that one too. Thank you for your question. Anybody else have a question.

Moderator. Hang on second let me get the mic to yah.

Lady asks a question. I saw, it might have been Sunday morning show, the Angola prison the rodeo, and everybody working on their project. You know, you said that they each have, they're allowed to start their own business, and sell their own work. I saw a special on it, and if you could tell these people what that was.

Warden Cain. Yeah, that was *60 Minutes*. Yeah, what that is, we have the rodeo, then we have arts and crafts show. And the arts and crafts show on any given Sunday is going to bring in about \$300,000 just in arts and crafts sales. But here's what this is. This is an entrepreneurial program, because it's part of reentry. We're teaching the inmate how to create something in his mind, and then how to manufacture it and get the raw materials; and give him a little loan to buy raw materials, then he's got to go market it. He's got to make a profit, and then keep enough of the profit, so he can restock his wares, just like any business. In here we have, we just completed it last, we'll complete it tonight, graduate from money management class that we have for the inmates. And we have people that teach money management, and it ties into this entrepreneurial program to teach inmates had that skill. Because some people are entrepreneurial; and if they are, they have a place to market their wares. And there's every kind of thing you can think. But here's the deal, if you make junk and trash, you're not gonna sell it. You got to come back, and you got to make it good; you got you got to hone your own skills and develop that. And while you're doing all this, you're being good; because you're not out there giving me to blues, running around the prison acting crazy over here, trying to make something be creative.

Now here's how that works. The hobby shop has these two tools and these things in it. So here's the deal: if you if we, if we find any of those tools in the prison, or if you make any weapon, or we found a weapon in the hobby shop, you missed the next rodeo. Now that's tremendous peer pressure, because they *are* their bother's keeper. Cause we as citizens have to worry about the community, and we are our brother's keeper. You know we have to visit our neighbors, know what's going on. And we have to keep everything going good. And so, if they tell us that there's a weapon in the hobby shop—and we did it anonymously, that's how we want it—I don't want to be told you, give it, give me a note. And so, then, we'll go find it. We don't close the hobby shop. But if we don't get to notice, then we are going to close it. Because I know what's going on in there. If there is a cell phone, they need to be telling us.

Now here's how that works. When I walk around to prison, I tell'em I'm hard of hearing, you know; I'm really not that much. But I don't have time to stop and talk to all of them, cause they want to tell you their life story every time they talk to you, rather than get to the point. I want to hear the point. So I say, "Look yeah I can't hear yah. Write me a note." When they see me coming, and they gonna be written a notes. I'm gonna come out of there with my pockets bulging. I'm have all kinds of notes. Everybody see them give me notes. So one wants to give me a note that there's going to be some kind of riot, I get to note, and nobody ever knows who gave it to me. It'd be no harm done.

But if I didn't make myself askable, and here's how this works. We create a new word, and it is called *askable*. And that means, if anybody asks you a question, you got to answer it. Because knowledge is power in prison. I was in a prison in Minnesota, and everybody walked down one side of the deal and couldn't talk. I spoke to an inmate, and he couldn't speak back. And I thought, *man, y'all better get a grip, they could be burning this place down and you won't know it*. You better be talking to them, because you want to prevent fire; you don't want to fight fire.

So, the word askable is on the boards, and everybody knows to be askable. And that way then we have access to what they know, and we have an answer, and we're gonna fix it. But they got to be trustees. They go ask all kinds of stuff, they might tell me the food horrible. Well, I better watch out. Good food, good medicine, good play, good praying, good prison; you drop one of those components, you got problems. So I got to have all four working good together.

So that for the askable comes in with the little notes. So I have the knowledge. That's how it works.

Well, other questions? Yes. I did a good job did really pretty good job, and I appreciate the question. Yes sir.

Man asks a question. I really appreciate all the work that you have been doing as far as our criminal justice system, and I've been following your work for about six years now. And of all the programs that you have developed, your hospice program is one that really I think is amazing, because you're contributing to mankind. Can you share with us your hospice program?

Warden Cain. I can. I was sitting in my house. I got to missionary program in the shower. That's where God spoke to me on that one. I can remember where I thought of it. And I wasn't, it just happened, it just pop in your head, and I know that's God talking to you. Guys, it's crazy, but I got the hospice thing on a Sunday morning, sitting at the table. And all of a sudden I thought hospice. I need to do hospice, have all the preachers.

And so, they said, "Oh, won't work. They go, take the drugs out of the prison, out of the hospital. They don't steal the syringes. You got all these problems with that." Never once.

But here's the thing. If you don't, if you don't try it, you won't know it. I'm, we're back to tradition now. So I say, well, we've educated all these inmates. We got these preachers. If we let the preachers be the caregiver; we have to trust them. We've already sent them through school for four years to be a preacher and a moral man. And so, let's trust them and try it. Let's tell them this: it's a sacred program, you'll going die here. If you want to be ministered to in hospice like I you are ministering to these other guys, then you gotta be worthy. And you can't desecrate this sacred program. It's a program of God. So I preach to 'em. Remember, Muslims have the same God we do, we just forked off back up there with Abraham, way down to the deal. So we talking God, everybody.

And so, they can buy that. Now then, whatcha going to do? Hey, we not gonna mess it up. You let us do hospice. We need to do it. Get that man back with his community, back with his friends that he grew up with. We're gonna take care of it. Okay, cool. We're gonna try it.

We're gonna give them fruit; we're gonna give 'em oranges. Well, they're gonna make whiskey and beer out oranges. Well, maybe not in hospice. We will have grapes. Well, that's gonna be real bad. No, maybe not in hospice. So we did it. And it worked. Never had a problem. I've never had anything taken out of hospice. I think if you brought something or took something out there, I think the rest of them would just work you over, because the whole thing worked with peer pressure.

There's a lot of pressure to be good. I saw it, I wish I would had brought that slide. I had an inmate it would walkin' and preaching. And he has, he has the towel in his hands propped up on his deal. You'd think he put T. D. Jakes out of business; he can preach a paint off the wall. And so he would just walkin' and talkin' and he got on his own rap sheet. He said, "Everything in my rap sheet's true. You know everything in your rap sheet's true. Now I want you to admit it right now. We fixin' – we fixin' to have an altar call. I want you to get up here and come to the front, and give it up for Jesus, and admit watching your rap sheet and admit you did it; and try to figure out is there ever way to say I'm sorry the victim you will. And let's just come clean."

I mean sweat coming off of 'em. His shirt's all wet. And he just walkin' and preachin' and won't turn loose. That's powerful in prison; it's phenomenally powerful. I stopped going to

church anywhere else. I go to inmates preach. I mean it's cool. I really like it. Plus, I'm with them and I get more notes. *[laughter]*

Problem with the notes, got to answer 'em all. So the Secretary was complaining, so I started writing them handwritten notes. And they'll just copy that and put it in his records and a handwritten note. Well then, one of them graduated from seminary and he held up a note that I had written him five years before, and it encouraged him to go to seminary and change his life. And he said, "I took Warden Cain at his word, and here's the very note he wrote me, and he wrote a note to the congregation all the people after the graduation." Really made me proud, probably one of the proudest moments of my life is to know that that guy went to the seminary and changed his life over that little ol' I wrote, just a little flip-over note.

So see it's all about talk and communication. It's all about make 'em human. It's all about non tradition. And it worked. And it worked into one of the worst prisons in the country. Any one of you ladies can walk anywhere in Angola, death row, anywhere you want to walk, there's no whistles, no catcalls, nothing gonna get thrown on yah, and everybody gonna act normal like we do here. You get into admin-seg—now, there's some that's crazy; you gotta back off of those. Because we do have some mental health issues, but *they're* going to be nice. And so, we don't have to go in there, getting all this excessive use of force and all that. It just worked. It tamed, it tamed the beast within 'em.

Any other questions. Okay, back in the back.

Moderator gets mic. Hold on.

Warden Cain. I hope I'm making sense to y'all. It's all true.

Lady asks. When do we get to come up there and visit Angola?

Warden Cain. Well, we visit about 2,000 people a month.

Lady asks. And that's what I, that's what I wanted to ask you about. How many people have been there that have talked to you about your principles which are that the worst of the worst can change, which is a biblical principle as we know. How many people have looked at that as far as all criminal justice down to the county jails, and beyond that. Have there been any studies, or any other places, or have you worked with any jails about possibly looking at these same principles, with short terms?

Warden Cain. We are doing this. We plan to do this. That's our next step. And we, we double the capacity of our seminary. So we got to go fast and produce more, because the sheriffs are wantin' some inmates in their jail. We have about half the inmates in Louisiana are held at the parish level, the county level, and the sheriff does that; and you probably do some of that in Florida. They want to inmate minister at the jail. But they got to be willing to status reduce this guy, and we got to get a lifer from Angola to the jail, or at least somebody with more than 20 years. Cause we don't want short-termers in the seminary, cause we don't get any value from them. They get through and it becomes personal, so they can make or get parole or pardoned or something like that. We want you to give us some, we want to get some bang for our buck. But the sheriffs are going to be using 'em. It's going to work wherever they go, because it's just like a real preacher going anywhere they go. And see this inmate feels that other's pain, because he's incarcerated too. Whereas a prison ministry guy can go home and be with his wife and children. He says, "Ah, you going home and feel good, you're gonna leave me here." When the, when the preacher stays with him in the prison and lives with him. That's the game changer. But yeah, we move at it further.

And here's the deal. There's eight states doing this now. You're one of them, and you're doing it really good, and I commend you for it. You're going to take baby steps, and you're

going to have an inmate in the pulpit at some point. For you, what they, what they got to do is build trust with you all, and they're doing it. And I told them they better do it; I talked to them yesterday. Anyway, that's good.

But once that happens, then you give. You know, they got to prove themselves before you can give anything. It's just time. And that's great. But anyway, it's gonna work here. You got it in Florida. You got it with us. You got it in Georgia; it's not quite working as well is all. You got it in Mississippi, not quite working as well is all.

I didn't tell you the three things that makes it work. I gotta tell you that for I close. You got it in New Mexico; it's working good. You got Texas, working phenomenally, just graduated first class; now they have Field Ministers in other prisons. The change is already apparent. And so, we have it now in Calvin College; we want to do a northern state, and Michigan is doing it. There'll be at Angola day after tomorrow. I have four senators coming from Michigan, just to check to see where they're going to go. And then it's eight states, West Virginia, West Virginia, the other one. We're real close in California. And, we worked in other, and Wisconsin is coming, we have legislators coming from Wisconsin to see it as well. And I've already been to Wisconsin to talk to them.

Monday after New Year's, I have lunch with the head of the ACLU. And she and I are real good friends, because I had to learn real quick how to skate by them. And I learned how to keep separate church and state where it's legal. And that was real important. Y'all are doing that too; you know how to do it. The point is I want her to tell me what I'm gonna run into in others states, so I can really try to make a real national program. So we really can do this all over the country, cause it would change the culture in prisons in America. And now we have the data. So we can prove it.

Man asked question. Warden, I have a question for yah. The newspaper and the radio station and the television station, do you have to exert a bunch of control? Have you had things on there that weren't complimentary or weren't appropriate?

Warden Cain. No, the radio station has disc jockeys that are college graduates normally, had to have a good voice. It's a, it's a, it's a Christian radio, it's not a Christian radio; it's a religious radio station basically. The Muslims have a time on it; on Friday, they get time. Everybody gets time that wants the time. And it's 24 hours a day and it's hooked up to Moody, is also HIS radio network, H-I-S. I think you all have that here in Florida, Georgia. They gave us \$120,000 in four hours; they raised it with a telethon to do the radio station. That was the easiest thing I ever did. We put that on the air, and the money poured in. Bought the radio station; cost about \$100,000. That's how I talk to the inmates. I go the radio station, I can address 'em all; we can sit around and talk on the radio. We also have a TV station; cost \$85,000, by Premier Design again. And that worked well. We have not had any breaches in any of those. But the one thing, we're watching, and we're hearing what you're saying. And if it got off out there bad, they'd be in the guard hole [*not clear*] [laughter]. No really.

Man asks. How about the Paper?

Warden Cain. But anyway, here's the three components you gotta have. You got to have the seminary, number one. You got to allow them to have the church, you have to have the seminary to train them; you have to allow the church in a prison, that preached, that has an inmate preacher, you got to do that. And then you got to give him access to the prison.

I had it in my pocket, but I guess I put it back in my suitcase. I had an ID card that says "Inmate Minister" on the back. With that ID card, inmate minister, he could go anywhere in the prison. Now when he goes to a cell block, we gonna strip him, strip search him; when he comes

out, we gonna strip search him. And he likes that, cause we are keeping inmates on the cellblock from trying to coerce him to do things, because they know we gonna watch. But he goes everywhere in the prison. Calms them down.

I had two on mental health watch the other night, one on mental health watch, and I sent two preachers to go over and talk to him. They came back and said, “Hey, there’s nothing we can do with that dude.” Said, “He’s crazy. Send a social worker.” But at least they tried. We felt good with it, we tried it. That’s, that’s what you have to have. And you have to give them access to the prison.

Some prison, yah see, that’s what happened in Mississippi. They won’t give ‘em access. Cause they still traditional. They’re afraid they’re gonna do bad, some how. So, they educated, but he’s sitting in a dorm where they where they live, all together. Now, in Florida, in—I’m sorry—in Georgia, they start letting them out a little bit, Phillips prison.

Okay, any other questions y’all have? I’ve enjoyed being with y’all. Yes, ma’am.

Lady speaks ... not clear.

Man asked. Will you repeat the question.

Warden Cain. No. I’ll tell you why. The inmates changed them. By their behavior, and you’ll have them tell you that. The guard, the correctional officers are going to be as the inmates make them. If the inmates are bad, they are going to be worse—always. And so, what’s the prison’s doing, if the prison is rockin’ and rollin’; they rockin’ and rollin’. When the prison settles down, they settle down; because they don’t have to do it, cause nobody’s acting out. So they get calmer too. So, the inmates change the correctional officers. I didn’t. Only thing I had to do was make ‘em give ‘em access. And what’d they do, they’d slow walk at count, and make ‘em late for school. So, I said, “The ones doing that is the demon on the gate. And you’re fighting God, and I’m gonna be compelled to put you on the night shift where the devil is. [laughter] He’s in the dark. If you keep on dragging around and fighting God, I’m gonna put you in a dark. You’re not gonna like it. So they can understand that; I explained it to them. I couldn’t understand it for them, but they understood that. So.

Man asks. One last question. I read somewhere, warden, that nobody has ever successfully escaped from your prison. Well, I’ve heard the alligators were five, the inmates were zero.

Warden Cain. We’ve never lost an inmate we didn’t catch. And we’re very, very fortunate. Because, really, really, when I got there, I have really good bloodhounds, and we practice all the time. Because we will run for the sheriff. We have some sheriffs in here. If I, looking at the sheriffs, have anybody get away from him. [*chocks a litte*] Excuse me. And even in Mississippi. We just cross the line and go help to him too. It doesn’t matter. They call us, we gonna go chase ‘em. And our guys I’d like to do that. And when the dogs catch him, we pet a dog. The dog wants to be petted. There’s no biting, no growling, all this. And we don’t be brutal to the inmate at all, because we want him to tell us where he went and how you got away. If he’s run from us. Were you over here, when we were over here. Let’s talk. Let’s sit down here on this stump, and we’re gonna drink a Coke. Do you have a coke? This has been a real fun game. I’m glad we won. So where have you been? [*laughter*]

You know. That’s how I learn that, I learn that. He said you’ll. We won’t let smoke on the [unclear] cause they’s see the fire. So he said, well, I got. It took three days to catch this dude. He was going toward Baton Rouge, he was going to Washington D.C., he said. He was going straighten up the government and kill some people up there that was messing us up. But anyway, he got lost. The next morning, in the next night, he went to, when he woke up, got to look at where he was gonna run to, only moving at night, he was looking at these [*not clear*] lights.

There were only two sets. One was here, and one was over here; and he had to choose. Well, one was Angola' we're bright. And one was Baton Rouge. He made a bad choice, and turned around and came full miles back to the prison. And that's how we caught him. [laughter].

I've had some real lulus. I had one escape out of prison [not clear] cause he wanted to come to Angola. He had been in my prison, and I sent him to another. On New Years, two years ago, he broke out, called me on the phone. Said, "I'm trying to get to Angola. Will you come meet me." So I called a secretary and meet him at one o'clock in the morning. He said, "It's a setup. They go shoot us out here. Bring two guns." I have two. Let's go. And so, I met him in Baton Rouge. Now that was about an hour and half. We talk to this inmate on a cell phone the whole time. And the secretary trying to give him directions on how to get out of St. Gabriel, Louisiana, where the secretary's from, so he can meet us on the road. And so, finally, he says, "Oh-oh, there's car behind me, they got red lights." The secretary said, "Okay, you caught. Pull over to the side. Put the car in park. Kill the motor. Stick your hands out the door. So they can see you don't have a gun."

He said, "Okay, I'm doing it right now. I pull over. I've stopped. Got the car in park. Kill the motor. Put my hand out the door."

Then we can hear all this noise, cause we had our phone on the speaker, so I could hear too, cell, my iPhone. And so all this noise going and so forth. And so then, all of a sudden, this law officer, which was Sheriff Ambrose Chief Ambros from San Gabriel police. He said, "Who's on this phone?"

Secretary said, "This is Secretary LeBlanc."

He said, "Yeah, right." Slapped that thing closed. [laughter]

So the next morning, I had a call Sheriff Ambrose. And Secretary LeBlanc is modest; he don't like press. You know, he kind of shell shocked. So that, so I'm telling him to press. I cannot let this happen, not tell the press. So I called the press to tell 'em, but first I call Chief Ambrose.

I said, "Chief Ambrose, that really was Secretary LeBlanc you hung up on last night. We had that inmate on the cell phone." Well, he couldn't believe it. So then when I called a press, they really couldn't believe it. So it made headlines about this inmate that escaped from one person trying to get to the other one. [not clear] he escaped in the ambulance so he was easy to see going down the road. [laughter]

Man closes. Anyway, warden, thank you so much very much for being here today. Let's give him a hand. [applause]

9. NOBTS Professor John Robson 2017 Seminary Promo

"Angola Prison Story" – on the Seminary Program at Angola, 278 views, 1 like.

Part 1, John Robson is the director of the NOBTS Seminary Extension Program at Angola⁴¹

Part 2: Dannie K. Johnson, Inmate Minister, 57, Black, ID Number 00104404, Custody Status Date Dec 19, 2017:

<https://vimeo.com/217575725>.

Part 3: Kyle M. Hebert, Inmate Minister, 55, White, Date of Birth Jul 27, 1965, ID Number 00256437, Custody Status Date May 02, 2015:

<https://vimeo.com/217575497>.

Part 4: Stanton Easley, Inmate Minister: <https://vimeo.com/217577462>.

Part 5: Donald "Carolina" Biermann, Inmate Minister: <https://vimeo.com/217575624>.

⁴¹ For Robson see <https://vimeo.com/217559694>. See <https://vimeo.com/217549452> for all five, accessed on 2-13-21. They were uploaded from LifeWay Christian Resources by Claude V. King, 5-15-17, and tagged #Burl Cain, #Claude King, #Richard Blackaby, #Henry Blackaby, #Angola Prison, #correctional ministries, #prison reform, and #Experiencing God.

Part 1: John Robson is the director of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Extension Program at Angola.

In our school, the seminary extension New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here, we have 16 different denominations represented, and we have several Muslims students as well.

And so in the, in the mix, there is indication of a broad spectrum of denominationalism on the farm. But you will discover if you observe this place that every single Christian is extremely, extremely in touch with the authority of the Scriptures. And that whether they're Catholic, or whether they're whomever, they love the Bible, and they enjoy God's word. In fact, they know more about the Bible, *per se*, than probably most people ever will. Because it's the one book that they have that they can give themselves to, and they can pray over, and they can ruminate, and enjoy God's presence. And it gives them the individual freedom of saying to themselves, and between themselves and God, "What are you saying in this?" And then they can apply whatever scriptural principles they gained from it. And that becomes the heart of their life and their message.

Their message is magnificent. Because it's the simple kerugma, the core, Jesus Christ is Lord, and then all of the events that come forth in the gospels concerning His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, and then the giving of the Holy Spirit. And so there is so much for them. And when they study in our school, and this is all put together for them, then they're enabled so much better, and are *worthy* of their role as an inmate minister.

But the curriculum and the school is straight out of the catalog with just a few tweaks for this particular setting. And so it's 126-hour curriculum, accredited by SACS, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. And of course, it has the same joyful accreditation that the campus schools enjoy, and then as well as state universities. So, it's fun to be in a school that keeps it standard very high. All the professors have to have 18 graduate hours in each of the subjects that they teach.

We were investigated by SACS last spring, had absolutely no recommendations. They were so very proud of what we're doing here. And the seminary is very happy with our work and position here. And, of course, they contribute so much to the professorial opportunities; they bring so many from on campus here as well as those in the neighborhood who are qualified to teach come from Baton Rouge and elsewhere. So it's a fun thing for most everyone who comes here. Because it's such an eye opener. But it's *fun*, because the church here is so alive. And we're so grateful to be touched by the New Testament church. And that's something that we believe is happening in Angola.

One of our great Baptist leaders said upon observing this place that perhaps in America revival will begin behind bars and will spill over into a populace. That would be a wonderful thing, because it's no doubt that God is at work here.

Well, in short, Angola was the bloodiest place in America that was considered to be a prison. The farm itself was a plantation. And in the process of being dedicated as a prison, it was worked like almost slave labor. Conditions were, I understand, horrendous. And all the stories of how bad it would be in a prison in the South are true. And of course, I've had the students tell me that it wasn't too many years back to where you saw blood on the walk *almost every single day*.

And my first clerks said, "You can't even see a good fight here anymore because of what Christ is doing at Angola." But this prison was so harsh and and so structured away from any form of rehabilitation. It was so punitive. There's still a punitive element. But when God comes inside of a person's heart and begins to change him from the inside out through the Holy Spirit,

then when that word of God has hidden in one's heart, he begins to change and be transformed in the wonderful way that we have promised to us, that we're so thankful to see these changes. They're normal now here.

And we have the contrast of knowing what this person has come from out of his crime and out of the, the debilitating circumstances of his broken life. And then we see the reconciliation of God and him. and then the reconciliation *through* God to man. That we begin to see more than moral rehabilitation. We see what the new creatureliness in Christ brings. And of course, the world will always say that moral rehabilitation occurs from the outside in, and that a man *resolves* to be better. But the Bible teaches us that that's not so. Then only *through* the Bible's word being made alive in us through the new birth and sanctification and what he does through discipleship and setting us apart and the Lordship of Christ being applied to our lives and coming under his full authority and sovereign rulership. Then we know that that's how our minds are transformed from our new heart, and we began to know the perfect will of the Father. And that's what these men know. And that's *who* they know. And that's who they *are*. They're new creatures in Christ.

Warden Cain makes a wonderful statement when he says that when he came here he found the church in Angola really lived on the streets. Because basically all the influence was coming in from the outside and was preaching in special events, and then *leaving*. Even though there were some inmate ministers, the major emphasis was from the outside coming through the gates, and *then* they left.

And so he became burdened about this, and he wanted the church of Angola to be the church of Angola. And so, when the Bible college or the seminary extension was given the opportunity to come here and to educate them men who are called to preach and to be ministers, then he said he began to see the transition. And now the church *is* the church of Angola; because the men are disciplined here, and they disciple each other. And they fulfill the mission imperative right here behind these bars. And these people then are the natives preaching and teaching Christ to the natives. And the mistake that was made years ago, when missionaries would go and try to make the natives comply to their own particular standards and whelms, and the failure of the church at large in the western movement of the mission movement itself is not being made now. Because when you come in and enable the natives, then, to *win the natives*, you have fulfilled the Great Commission. And that's exactly what's happened here, hundreds have been baptized, hundreds have been disciplined to the point of thousands now. And *Experiencing God* is a byword on their lips. It's the prime target of all of our teachers, it's the prime tool of our teachers, and everything that we do has been preluded by *Experiencing God*. And we're so grateful for that and the contribution that it makes in the lives of our students and in the life of the Church of Angola.

Small group concepts no longer is the church a loud noise, sounding brass, and clanging cymbal. It's small groups, it's Bible studies, it's one on one, it's sidewalk counseling, it's everything that makes the church what it ought to be. And a great deal of this has come as a focus from the small group studies. Our certificate program is the same extension of *Experiencing God*, is, you know, more literature added to it. So all in all the church at Angola is the church of Angola. And our ministers, as graduates, are in every dormitory, every camp. They visit every prisoner in this place who wants to hear the Word of God, cause they have *entrée*. And our chaplain's department continuously oversees and coordinates those things.

So, it's a wonderful thing now to see this organism of the Holy Spirit alive and moving into the dark recesses of this place. There's no one here who hasn't heard the gospel. This church

now sends missionaries to nine other prisons. In fact, the churches contribute to their financial support. Warden Cain devised a plan where each missionary goes to another prison, because he would lose his status of making money, should be given \$50 a month. The church has raised that money and support those missionaries that way, as do some of the other clubs in the prison. And the churches here actually are having a part of sending these guys by doing that. But each one of these guys has to be a graduate of the school, has to be in good standing with the chaplain's department, and then he has to feel *called* to that prison. He isn't told to go. He's given the opportunity to say, "Yes, I'll go." And he can go for two years, and then he can come back, *or* he can stay, if all is well. And so we look for that to be a very important part of the discipling of prisons throughout the state of Louisiana.

But I predict that state lines and legislatures are going to tear down the barriers, and that some of our men will go farther than the borders of Louisiana. Because God has broken down barriers bigger than state lines. And I believe with all my heart [*breaks into tears*] sorry [*whispered*]. [*Long pause, deep breath*] That this's what it's about about. [*Long pause, deep breath*] Excuse me [*whispered*]. I don't think that's valid, and I think you can say it with a sense of reliability and confidence that you've seen Macedonia. And it's not because of what we've done. It's because of what he's *allowed* us to do.

Somewhere, the men who took *Experiencing God* felt called to preach. There was probably 30 of them. The Baptist man of Baton Rouge were faithful and came up. And somewhere in the mix of, of that, they really solidified their call to the gospel ministry. And they said the word Cain, and they had his ear: "We want more." And I could name who they are, but it wouldn't mean anything to you. Four or five of them are dead now. And he heard them. And he called on George Roundtree, who was an LSU professor who had been a consult here, was a Baptist Deacon. And George said, "We ought to get a college here." And that would help. And T. W. Terrell, the association director missions for Judson [Baptist Association] which is Baton Rouge Bapstist Association, was his pastor at one time. And so he called on T. W. and Warren Cain, and he met through Dr. Roundtree. And then he presented the need. And at the very same time T. W. was fulfilling a five-year plan that we had done in Judson about Christian education in our area, and had just talked to Dr. Leavell [7th NOBTS President Dr. Landrum P. Leavell] at the school at New Orleans, and had convinced the school to open an extension center in Baton Rouge. And when Warden Cain told him the need, and said, "Can you do this?" Then T. W. had the confidence that he could, because he just done it in Baton Rouge. So he calls Dr. Leavell, and then Dr. Dukes comes up here, Dr. Jimmy Dukes.⁴² And they meet, and everybody's nodding their heads, yes; nobody's nodding their head, no. And what a vision, and what a dream. And then the seminary commits to it; the trustees commit to it; and before we know it, God's driving this train down the track, and all of us are finding a boxcar to get in. And if we can, we shut the door and don't tell anybody we're here, and let him keep on driving it. And that's been going on 10 or 12 years. We have over 200 as a result of May 22nd who will have received BAs and and associates.⁴³ So that's about 400 degrees. And these are all in Christian ministries. And these guys will walk up to one of our people that come from graduation, like the president or someone who has contact with the other side of the administrative task of this, and they'll say, "You know, I never finished anything in my life 'till I did this." That's big [*almost whispered*].

⁴² Jimmy W. Dukes is currently a NOBTS distinguished professor of N. T. and Greek.

⁴³ Since the video was uploaded May 15, 2017, that likely means this was shot in May 2016.

Let me tell you the inmate ministers keep records, and for over now seven or eight years, they have been averaging between 22- and 25,000 contacts per month. Is that phenomenal? That's a lot of ministry.

Katrina invited a response here at Angola. As a result of several thousand prisoners being evacuated out of the New Orleans area to Angola. In fact, if you recall the imagery of the prisoners on the interstate bridge, all of those were sent here. And it was a very difficult time for our officials here, and administrative tasks were almost impossible. And in the process of this, there was a great deal of tension in the air. And they were bringing these guys in, and these guys didn't know who they were in the setting they were in, and there was a lot of fear that there was going to be disciplinary problems. And so somebody thought of their, of our inmate ministers. And they said, "Send in the Marines." And that's exactly what they did. They sent our inmate ministers in hook line and sinker. Our guys moved in those 2,000, went to work on them one on one. Before one full night, they worked around the clock. I don't know how many nights, but before the first 12 hours they had settled down that bunch. Now, at that point, the men in blue—the security—we're no longer frightened of what was going to happen. They were all under control. They were beginning to minister to people. As a result of that time, over 200 of those outside inmates were baptized by our inmate ministers.

And they constantly were ministering to their knees they. They raised among the inmates of Angola love offerings of toilet items like deodorant, toothpaste, you know, anything. They just left, you know, they didn't have anything. And so our guys started sharing out of their own stashes what they had, and they gave away thousands of items of toiletries that would make their, their lifestyle better, and gave 'em clothes and. They didn't have *anything* when they came. I mean, and these people just did a wonderful job, and the administration did a wonderful job. And it was a good time in the Lord.

There were times when 30 men would be saved in a Bible study. Just point blank profess Christ for the first time. It was really beautiful.

And the women that came as well, there was a large number of women, over 50 women were saved and baptized. They them out at Camp F. They totally evacuated Camp F and made it a women's prison.

Fortunately, our chaplains department was able to be there and be with them and coordinate that, and it was very carefully done. But the inmate ministers still had a good, good hand in it; of course it was, you know, native to native at that point. And so consequently their influence was far reaching.

We had a Bible study over there for over probably 10 months before they all left. It was good. The old chapel, which is called the interfaith chapel, has a baptistry in it. But we have portable baptistries, and they're on wheels, and they take 'em everywhere they go, you know, need to have a baptism. And it's just a matter of the chaplain's department making sure that it's done. And they have a baptism. They'll have it out on the yard. They'll have it anywhere, in roll one right in the middle of the floor in the chapel, if they want to have, if the chapel didn't have a bad ministry. They'll do whatever is necessary. And it's a good thing.

Well the funeral at Angola is probably the most colorful thing in terms of funeralizing that you would ever see in your life, because of the, the horses and the hearse that was—the hearse was made here—brass fitted, old fashioned, just very unique. But the men make the caskets here in the carpentry shop. And of course they do it with great dedication, putting their skill, because they know that it's for one of them. But the dignity of the service has been enhanced by the men as they've learned how to do funerals from the perspective of the quickening of the

Word of God into the setting, and the increase of their knowledge, and their sense of protocol, and their sense of priestliness. No longer are they afraid of death as much, because of what Christ is doing here. And no longer is there the cloud of a secular approach to death. But obviously, as the church has multiplied and grown, then the church is carrying the Spirit of God into all of these things. But they've always had wonderful possessions. They used to sing, "I'm going to lay down my burden down by the river side" [*he sings it*], and they would march to that. But now they sing, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound" as they march behind the casket. Isn't that beautiful and special?

And then, of course, the pastor opens word of God and does what he does best, in that moment. And their education is very strong in the area of Christian counseling. They've been taught about grief. They've been taught about death. They've been taught how to minister to families. And they do all of it; they do the full load. These men are capable of being pastors anywhere. This is not jailhouse religion, nor is it jailhouse education. The fact that it's not jailhouse religion is proven by them not by us.

They don't like hypocrisy. You cannot be somebody in a prison without everybody in the prison knowing it. You cannot be something on one hand, and then something else on the other. They *demand* that you be who you are. And they find you out, If you come in from the outside and you're not the real deal, you may as well just cash in your chips, so to speak, and walk out the gate. Because you're not gonna be very influential here playing both sides of the coin. They know a man of God, and they know one who's playing at it. And so, that's the standard by which they operate the church. They believe in church discipline. They discipline each other. They will not allow one of their people to bring reproach on their church, without him being dealt with. So the church at large here is very much aware of its reputation. And they do not intend to lessen it; they intend to improve it.

Angola's status from a security point of view is very large, because of the population, it is spread over the 18,000 acres in various camps. And most of these camps are the size and population that some of the prisons throughout the state are. You would say, if you were looking at this from an airplane, that this is just a group of six or eight or ten prisons all put on the same piece of ground. But, of course, they're coordinated beautifully by administration, etc., etc.

What you see here, though, is the opportunity for this school and for the gospel to reach into the home of so many different people. And in each camp we have inmate ministers who belong *there*. It'd be just like sending missionaries from main prison to Camp C to Camp B to Camp F to RC, which is the group of men who support death row, and Camp J, which is the place where the greatest disciplinary judgments of in-house situations go. And the, the worst reputation is at Camp J, for the past, you know, the worst guys who are the mean ones, who throw feces at you when you walk by, and curse you and dog you, and whatever. But that's where our guys go all over this place, and they minister all over this place. And it's all tied together like a big Pentagon, except it's more than a Pentagon. And it's all coordinated and beautifully cared for by the administration and security. But the thing about it is, is the gospel is able to penetrate each one of those communities. And they *are* communities.

And it's very impressive thing to see the chapel at Camp C, the seven inmate ministers that are there, and how they have taken hold of that whole camp, and have birthed it, and shepherded it. And they have their own ministry plan and tasks, and in every one of these camps there's a minimum of seven inmate ministers. And it's a beautiful thing to see. Every cell block, every cell, every man and every cell, even in the mental hospital areas—every person is touched every day by an inmate minister.

It's no wonder that 11 years ago the violence from inmate to inmate was rated horrible. They had over 467 violent acts a year toward each other. And the inmate ministers have moved in, and now they're averaging 60 a year in the whole prison. If I were a guard, I'd like that. Wouldn't you? I would.

Part 2: Dannie K. Johnson, Inmate Minister⁴⁴

Where's all started probably in 1988 or '89. I come up in, in '85, took a few years for me to really get into the system. And I come from a background of, you know, a Christian home. And I kind of fell away a little bit. So around about '89 or '90, I began to experience some, some programs that had been offered, you know, here. And when I, Judson Association, Baptist Association, offered a program. And so I got into the program. And what happened, when I got into the program, it was based on this particular book, that we has a workbook that we was working through. And it called *Experiencing God*. And when I began to work through the workbook and study the book and read some the things that Mr. Blackaby had, was, was discussing in the book itself, I begin to really ponder on what I was really here for, you know, and what was my, my plan and my purpose for God, you know. I knew God I had a planned purpose for me, but I never could understand what it, what it really was. So after so many weeks into the program, into the book, I began to really began to start praying about it and started, you know, asking God, you know, "What, whatcha need me to do, you know, whatcha would have me to do." And, so, what happened is that I experienced that. He wanted me to just to be a servant. This wanted me to, to serve people. And it didn't matter where I was at, you know, he just wanted me to be a simple servant. To experience him and *being* a servant itself. So, I begin to just do that, you know, and, and, and really enjoyed the videotapes of Mr. Blackaby when he, he speaks about different things, and the different analogies of the Bibles, the stories of the Bible, and the some of the prophets, and some of the people to the Bible, that he put in plain language. And it really helped me out. And, and at that point I began to go out, from that point, and being a servant, you know, like somewhere, like evangelizing, you know, and experiencing God at that point. And want other people to experience him.

It is still fresh in my mind, that, and in my spirit, that what, what God has really did is really want me to have a personal relationship with him. And in doing so having a personal relationship, this tends, this tends to soften, you know, everything that comes my way, all the trials and all the tribulation and all the hardship that comes with, you know, even this *living*. Not just necessarily being in prison, just life itself in general. You know, you got family problems. So he has really worked in me as being, you know, counseling, you know, this, you know, counseling people, because of the fact that I've experienced so much, you know, and through, you know, just knowing him, and knowing his word, and just studying his word, and just, you know, just being a part of this world, you know, his spirit. And so I'll be able to go out and, and share, you know, my, my experience, experience in him, and my experience itself, personal experience, and give it to, you know, give it to people that I, that I know that could be exposed to the Gospel, you know, sort of speak, you know, the Gospel itself. So, this is what, you know, what I have learned over the years.

Man, it's, it's awesome. I mean, when I first come up here, it was like, if I had the rate it on a scale from one to ten, 10. It was probably like a two. And, and I've been here 25 years, and, and 25 years of my experience here, I mean I've seen it, you know, it's probably above, you know, above a ten now. So it's really have, you know, this, the programs they offer here, you

⁴⁴ Johnson, #00104404, <https://vimeo.com/217575725>, accessed 3-14-21.

know, that's only just one of them, *Experiencing God*. And all the other programs they offer here, is really just raising, heightening the level of spirituality, getting people aware that they, you know, they need someone, that they need God. They need to experience God, they need to experience Christ's love and Christ's compassion, you know, and Christ's forgiveness.

And they need to be forgiven. Because a lot of people just hold on to, not be able to, know, not be able to want to forgive themselves for what they have done. And, you know, they have done a lot of things that, you know, so. Most people here, you know, that's, that's one of the problems they have here is being trapped in their guilt, knowing they have done something, most particularly, specifically is, is that you know, their crime, most of the time be they crime, or some other sin or some other transgression or something. Maybe the spouse or something like that, you know, being adulterous with their spouse or something, or have an affair on his spouse, or something cheated on his spouse. So what happened is that they hold onto to this unforgiving, like they can't be forgiven, or something, for some reason.

So what I do, I, I, my, my first approach is, is to let 'em know that no matter what you have done. And I bring 'em to the Scripture, and I show 'em where that God is only not forgiving for one particular thing, and that blaspheming the Holy Spirit, being in unbelief. That's the only thing. I say, "If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you could be forgiven for everything but that." And I said, "Do you believe?" And he'll say, "Well, yah, I believe, I believe in the Lord." And I say, "So don't, don't never ever think that you're unforgiven, are you having guilt feeling that you can never be forgiven, that you can't have a relationship with the Lord." But once they, they get to their time with forgiving themselves, then you can allow Christ's mercy and grace to be, you know, part of their life, and it elevates them. And their spiritual, the spirituality just goes up, and they begin to really to seek him, and just fall on their face, so to speak, and this, you know, "God, just whatever you want me to do." And they begin to be more calmer, and they begin to be more mannered, you know, and they begin to be more respectable about themselves and respecting security, respecting other people that's surround them.

And it's, it's a really good thing, that, and I thank God for his mercy and his grace and his understanding and his wisdom, his infinite wisdom that he's, he's able to use us, people like us, just common people that made a mistake or so. And be able to really just, you know, allow his spirit, just to, to be moved in his place like this.

But it's really, it's an awesome feeling, to know that when I first come here, how it was, there's a lot of tension, a lot of stuff going on. But now it's more calmer, you know, you can just see the joy, you can see the laughter. You can see that, this, I mean extraordinary things that's going on concerning, you know, the word of God, you know, and his spirit. So it's really as good, you know, it's an awesome feeling.

Yes, I'm actually, I'm a intern, I'm a junior right now, and I will be a senior next, next semester. And great, I'm gonna graduate next, the next graduation. They had a graduation this year. But I'll be graduating in 2008. So, I'm in the seminary, I enjoy, I enjoy the seminary, it gives you, it equips you. And same as the faith-based program, it equips you to go into the seminary. And what the seminary does, it give you the information that you need for ministry. It prepares you, as Jesus prepared the disciples, you know, this is what he was doing, with every day he walked with 'em, he talked with 'em. He was like he was in a, you know, his seminary, you know, Christ's seminary, and he was just teaching them everything they need to know, the common things they need to know. So when he set them out on a, on a commission, they, they had, they would had the package, they had the full package. So the seminary does that, it give you, so to speak, [unclear] to be that full package you need to go out and, and minister, not only

here in Angola, not only in other institutions, but when you leave and go into society, there you would be a productive citizen. And you will be, you know, one of, a leader or a leadership, you [unclear] important role in society, and given it back to society. So that's what the seminary have done for me, and I think for *many* other people, that has been part of the seminary and graduates, and, and a part of the alumni, that they goes out, and that's what they do, they, they give their heart and soul, you know, to be a servant of the Lord and just serve people, you know, and then they just serve them, from their heart.

As I said before, I, I grew up in a, in a Christian home. I didn't, what you know, it's like, you know, you grew up in a Christian home, but you don't really have a true relationship with him. You know of him, because your family, you know, you're just doing what your dad and your mom want you to do. And I think in '89, that's when I really kinda of had a personal relationship with the Lord. I rededicated my life in '89 to the Lord. And I, that's when I really personally experienced, you know, actually giving my life to Him, and, knowing Romans, you know, 10, you know, looking at Romans 10:12 and other scriptures and Roman 10:12: confess with your mouth that the Lord is, you know, is Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. And, and I, I quoted that, you know, these scriptures, and I asked the Lord, I said, "Lord, I just wants to come into my life, and I just want you to, to take control, or whatever you want me to do, from this point on, it doesn't matter. But if I leave Angola or die at Angola, I just want to receive the kingdom of heaven that you promised me, your promise." And that's what [unclear] in '89, when I really, that's when I really realized that I experienced a personal relationship with him, and I really knew him then, like know him, you know, like know of him. One, one, at one point, I knew of him because of my parents and my family and my church and everything, But now I, I know him personally now, it's a personal relationship with him. And *man*, that was an awesome feeling when that was, when I was really experienced that. That was like, man, I, I like to feel like I wanted to feel. It, it's a high that you will never get a rid of, you know. I never did no drugs, but I know one thing: it's, it's a feeling that I will never want to get rid of. And every time I pray and I fast, and I, it's the same feeling all over, all over again, you know, knowing that he's with yah, you know, he's in your heart, he's in my heart, you know. And it, no matter what I go through, I could always go to him. And I say, "Lord, you understand me, and you understand my situation." And, and sometimes it makes me weep, you know, sometimes it makes me cry, because I just get so emotional at times. And, and I know he's there, you know, I'm experiencing him. And that's the most important thing that I, when I do go on mission or when I do go out in the, in the population, I really get them to understand that it has to be sincere from the heart, it has to be a sincere commitment, because if it's not, it's not going to work. It has to be a sincere, faithful commission, committed to your life to the Lord. And he's gonna, he's gonna do it, he gonna to do some things that you, he's going to work in your life that you never thought he could work in your life. He'll use situations and circumstances. And I've been in a lot of situations, circumstance, and I'm saying, "Like, okay, okay, hold up, wait a minute." And sometimes I'll be thinking, "What's going on here," you know, but, "That's okay, Lord, show me something, what you want to show me." And it's sooner or later, might not be the first day, might not be the second day, might take two, three months, and I realized through my prayer and meditation time, so that's what it was, okay, this is what I need to do.

Part 3: Kyle M. Hebert, Inmate Minister⁴⁵

The dramatic change that, that he's placed in my heart from the brokenness. At age five, I was blown up in a serious house explosion, that my father and I was both pronounced dead. By his grace, he allowed me to survive that at age five. Right then and there, he had a call on my life, a purpose for me to live, for him to fulfill his purpose through me. From that time, all the way through seven, age 17, when my father died, I lived as a model student, athlete. My mother was in school with me; she was a school teacher. I was the model child. Everybody thought I was going to college, play sports. I lost my father.

I had a relationship as a Catholic, and I'm not, I'm not knocking Catholics, I'm born and raised a Catholic. But I didn't understand a true relationship with Jesus Christ at that time. They brought me to church, so I had somewhat a knowledge of who God was, who Jesus was. When my father died, when I was 17, I put away school, being an athlete, I went and started drinking and doing drugs. My consistent morality turned into a life of destruction. My mother couldn't handle me. I started running with gangs, biker gangs, that is, getting all tattooed up, just in self destruct mode, until age 34. The Lord allowed me to get caught up in an attempt first degree murder, a his fight, that changed my life forever.

With man made to be for bad, God made for good. Because when the cell door closed for the first time, it went off like a church bell. I was broken. I turned around, nobody was there, and you truly—I believe this with all my heart—you truly do not know who God is, until God is all you got. He had broken me. I wound up with 40 years. And having 40 years didn't mean I was coming to Angola. You see, he had bigger plans for me. Remember, he wanted to fulfill his purpose through me. When he broke me, I got on my knees and said, “Lord, whatever it takes. I want to know you personally. I want to know you as my Lord and my Savior.” And he did just that. At that point of submission, I'd been weighted [*a bit unclear*], and by weighting, I started reading the Bible. I started studying his word, talking with other people. I began *watching* where he was working at. And by watching, I seen him working in other people's lives. So then I decided to join him. And when I joined him, he was able to begin to fulfill his purpose through me. And little did I know, even with 40 years I would be sent to the Louisiana State Penitentiary, which is a lifers' camp, theoretically; 40 years would have gotten me to Hunt or DCI, one of the other camps in Louisiana. But he had a Bible college here. And he also had a course called *Experiencing God*, that was a prerequisite to get into the Bible college, that in 2000 when I came to Angola I took, and it changed my life forever. It was just another additive, another addition to the great work he has started in my life, which allowed me to come to Bible college and start being prepared for his mission, equipping me to continue his work.

Not only did he allow me to, to learn more about him. He put a love in my heart, a desire to want to teach, to want to preach and share what he's done. The *breakage*—I understood now, was his cause, allow me to do a work from him; we don't do a work *for* him, we do a work *from* him. The pre-salvin ministry [pre-salvation] of the Holy Spirit had been in my life since age five. Always had a desire, I knew that there was a higher power. I knew that there was something greater in life. But I tried to fulfill it with all the negativities in in the world, instead of allowing him to come into my heart and fill that God-given gap, that only, that vacuum that only he could fill.

I learned to hear from him. There's many times I thought he'd abandoned me because of sin, because of corruption in my life. But I learned that he was teaching me that he was preparing

⁴⁵ Hebert, #00256437, <https://vimeo.com/217575497>, accessed 3-14-21.

me to do something. He is the *resurrection* and the life. He had not abandoned me. But he taught me through trials and tribulations. He taught me through his pre-salvation ministry of the Holy Spirit that he was empowering me to do his will, to do his purpose, to fulfill whatever he had called me to do.

I sit here before you in my fourth year Bible college. My, my heart, words can even explain the happiness, the blissful, supernatural macarius, *blessed* happiness that he has placed in my heart to love people.⁴⁶ He has given me a hunger to reproduce myself into the world just as Jesus did you see man put me here to reform me. God allowed me to come here to be a reformer, reproduction, multiplication, population, heaven. You see, we all have sin, and understand the sin in my life that caused me had I not had Jesus Christ to be separated from God forever. It's simply this: sin is missing the mark, *harmatia*.⁴⁷ All we had to do is re-adjust our bull's eye. Now, we're able to—even in the midst of being in Angola, these towers, wires, these fences—that doesn't separate it, that doesn't keep you from having a relationship with Jesus Christ. There's many people on the other side of these wires that are entrapped by sin, and don't have the freedom that I have on this side of the fence. I'm free. I've truly taken my eye off of the front gate, and I got 'em on these 12 gates. That's where my heart is. It's about being a reformer for the Lord, doing a work from God, and I'm just grateful.

The course has really touched my heart. I've been able to teach it, now. In order for individuals to get into Bible college, that's another element, being unable to teach the course and sit with these, these other brothers and just watching the Lord, the Lord work in their lives, and has allowed him to understand that God works all around us. But we have to get in and join. We have to submit, wait, watch, and join; and that's the pattern. And once we understand that and learning to hear from Him, to truly hear from Him. *That* is where we have to be. That comes only with a relationship with Him through His Son Jesus Christ. But that's my heart. That's my heart brother Claude.

He's broken me, he's allowed me to be regenerated, the new birth, “be not conformed but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The Metamorphosis, not just an outside appearance, but the *internal* changes, the dynamic of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. And that's, that's where I am today. Ask me anything [*apparently Claude King begins*].

Claude King. Is there a particular teaching [*unclear*] in the scripture from the course that you've seen impact men that you've been teaching, maybe more than others?

Hebert. [*Pauses, breathes heavily*] Yes. It, not so much the scripture, but in one particular teaching you all had shared about not hearing from God. A lot of guys have problems with trying to hear from God. They want to hear that, either, “Well, I don't hear no audible voice”; or “I'm not hearing anything”; or, “I have heard, but I'm no longer hearing anymore.” And you all shared concerning Martha and Mary with Lazarus. With, when, she had told Jesus that Lazarus had died. And Jesus waited to come, waited, waited a while before he came to see him sick. No, he hadn't died yet, I'm sorry. And she, and she, “Look, my brother's sick.” She sent word. And Jesus didn't come right away. She felt hurt, she felt betrayed. When Jesus finally did come. Mary was all upset, saying, “He's he's died. Well, you're, you're late.” She felt betrayed. And I've watched many of the guys feel a sense of betrayal, that, that maybe they not hearin' from God. But what Jesus was telling, “You've seen the miracles I have done, you've

⁴⁶ Macarius: Latinized form of the old Greek given name Makários (Μακάριος), meaning “happy, fortunate, blessed,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macarius>, accessed 3-16-21.

⁴⁷ *Harmatia* arose from the Greek verb *hamartanein*, meaning “to miss the mark” or “to err”: www.Merriam-Webster.com/dictionary/hamartia, accessed 3-15-21.

seen all these great things that, that have been I'm trying to authenticate." He's tryin'—he was authenticating his gospel, what he was doing. He says, "But I want to teach you something new. I want to teach you that I'm the resurrection and the life." He said, "Come forth Lazarus!" I believe with all my heart had he not specifically said, "Lazarus," everything in that tomb when it came out of there that day. But that is, that is the specific teaching that always hits home with these, with these fellas here, and understanding that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. And you may not, sometimes if you don't hear from him, he's, he's *preparing* you for something *new*. You just gotta have patience. You got to stay focused on him. I believe that, that would be the great—*everybody* talks about that. Scripture, I mean everything in there is great. But I believe that, that teaching right there, it gives 'em that hope to say, you know, "You're right, Jesus did wait, when, when Mary, and, and you know, she was upset." I mean he loved these, these people, and he waited, so why wouldn't you wait for us. He's preparing us for something new. He wanted to show us something new in our lives.

I'm ready to go wherever the Lord sends me. That's without a doubt. But he's already opened a door, a door that I never even expected. We have a prison magazine here called *The Angolite*. And the fellows came to me, it's not a job that you apply for, it's not a job that you sign up for, it's a job that you're chosen for. And the only reason I knew I was chosen is cause God, who can turn the hearts of the king whichever way, put it on their hearts to call me to be the religious writer for *The Angolite*. So, he has opened that door, I'm able to share not only with my ministry, but I'm able to write it. I'm able to speak it, I'm able to express it on paper. So, I write for *The Angolite*, the religious magazine. Plus, I have a ministry up here. I'm able to go all through the farm, all the main prison, CCR, the cell, the cell blocks the West Yard, the East Yard, he is truly opened up all the doors where I can go and talk to these fellows.

We have a lot of hurting people here on this farm. There's a lot who saved, but that, that doesn't, you know, classify you as being happy all the time. You know, this is a life of suffering, you know [*unclear*], understand that. Paul was very clear with that. And we have to be there. We have to be the shepherds to not only get close enough to feed the sheep, but we have to be able to understand that pain. And, and that's what the Lord has to have done in my life. I'm able now, because of what the Lord has allowed in my life, to comfort those with the same comfort that is confident me with, in the midst of an unbelieving world, in the midst of an unnatural circumstance and situation. This is really an unnatural situation.

However, in the midst of it, God has allowed so much good. I mean, people, y'all here: that's a blessing in itself. Just bein' unable, you know, y'all coming in, and here what the Lord's doing. God is here. We have a *warden* that has just opened up the door to God, and you know, he's allowed him to come in. And that's the blessing. We have Dr. Robson: guys, that the Lord has put on their heart to come in and teach us. These are, are everything that's on my heart. When I see them doin'—I want to do, Where I see God working in their life, I want God to work in my life, and he *has*! He has been true to me, and we say, "I can never walk away from this; I can never lay it down." The Lord has saved me, he's going to keep me. and Jesus said, "No, all of the Father has given Me, no one will be able to snatch him out of my hand." And I stand on that. My, my eternal security is secure in his hand, and I'm going to keep on going forth and doing His will and pointing 'em to the cross, until I don't have no more breath in his lungs.

[*Inaudible question*]

Hebert. Pray, pray, pray and pray, and that's what I did. When I felt entrapped and for the first time, like a wild animal—I had been running wild out there—and then all of a sudden

handcuffed, thrown in the back of a police car, and then put in the cell, knowing the crime that I committed could very well eliminate my physical freedom. See, I didn't understand the difference between physical freedom and spiritual freedom, but that's where the praying come in. Number one, you gotta want to get out of that, that physical bondage, that bondage that they may be having out there is coming because their sin in their life. They have to ask the Father to come into their heart and give them a Savior. And that's just what he did, he saved us. But you gotta want to get rid of it.

You see, bondage is between your ears, and only the Father can change it by the renewing of your mind, by being transformed. So I would have to say, they have to give it all to the Father, and allow him to work in their heart, in spite of that car payment, in spite of maybe that, that, that close one that might have died. We can't, see, I'm a firm believer, it's not when you've been is where you're going. But it's who you take in with you. If you don't have Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you're going to stay in bondage. You must have the father [*not clear*], even if the ones that are saved, there's many that are saved that are still in trapped. But you got to let that go, you got to give that to God. You got to pray, and say, "Father, whatever it takes. I know you're using this to develop the character." You see, God wants to use us. But he asked to prepare us to be used. He's got to develop that character in us, and that's what he uses trials and tribulations for so that bondage is a tribulation, it's a trial. It's a test. But they got to allow this have to go through it and allow him to work in their heart to carry them through. So he, he didn't say he keeps us in a valley, he says, "Though I walk *through*." You see, it's *through* the valley. We don't stay *in* the valley.

So I would have to say, *pray*, submit to him and say father, "David cried out tremendously. Cry out to Him. I don't want to be in this bondage. I want to be freed. I want that hope. I want to see the light at the end of this tunnel." He's the true light, and the Savior will come into your heart and show you that light. You know, being saved doesn't give you happiness. God is not worried about happiness, he's worried about character. He needs your character to be developed so he can use you for the specific purpose that he has. And in the midst of those bondages, use that, allow him to use that to tempter yah, to mold yah, to develop yah. So even in the midst today know that he's working, but you got to submit to him.

A lot of people say, "Well, you know, y'all come to penitentiary, you know, y'all get saved. That's ol' fake saving." I don't think they understand what regeneration truly is. Or what *better* place to get saved? I have nothing else. Like I said earlier, you truly don't know God 'till God's all you got. It wasn't coincidental that he allowed my family to turn their back on me. It ain't coincidental that he allowed me not to have a phone list. No mail call. He allowed me to have 5,000 brothers around here. That's a work and feel for me to share his gospel. It's me and him. And that's where it's at. Bondage is not even a part of my vocabulary. And I pray that the people that watch this will know that that even in spite of wires, towers, and fences, that's, that don't declare bondage and freedom. It's Jesus in your heart, it's allowing Him to save you. It's allowing him to keep you and him to be the Lord in your life. Being a savior is one thing, but if he's not Lord, you don't have the full gospel. He must be Lord of your life, which means submitting fully, wholly, and no matter what following him.

Part 4: Stanton Easley, Inmate Minister⁴⁸

Well from the beginning, I think back on my early childhood, I had been raised in Christian homes, never really come into the understanding of what a relationship with Christ was, or even

⁴⁸ Easley, <https://vimeo.com/217577462>, accessed 3-14-21.

how to understand this awesome and magnificent God that we've come to know, that I've come to know now in my life. My whole life I was, I guess you would call kind of slow, special education. I don't grasp things real quick. And so, it took me basically, maybe 40 years to ever really come to know Christ. I had gotten baptized followin' the crowd, you know, the Bible tells us that we're all like dumb sheep and we go astray. And even in my morning devotion this morning, you know, I was reading over in John in the 10th chapter 27th Verse. And Jesus said, "My sheep know my voice, I know them, and they all follow me." And, you know, I think about how that I follow thede crowds of the world and how that I was so lost, and I could never really understand faith and Christian teachings. And, and all, you know, I had kind of given up and just follow the crowd of the world, the idea of the world.

When I came to Angola, as a result, it gave me an opportunity to learn of God, to slow down long enough to really experience God, as to teaching says. I learned how to identify him as a person in his being in his magnificent being and to identify Christ, and to know His voice, and to be able to follow him. That's basically where I was going with the sheep story.

Before that, I didn't know him, and I didn't know how to learn of him. I'm at a place in my life now with the relationship of God, by being able to identify him and to know Him. That I have come to, the Bible teaches us, says to love God with everything that you are, mind, soul, body strength, and to love your neighbors yourself. And as a result of coming to know him and being able to hear his voice, I have now learned how to love my neighbors myself. Whereas before, I didn't know how to love people. I didn't even really know what real love was.

I think this has been the greatest part of my salvation experience, being able to really love people, to be a relational person. Because before, I had a lot of bitterness, I had a lot of mistrust, I had a lot of self-centeredness. Now, I know how to be a servant. I know how to be humble. I know how to be a relational person. And for me, it's brought a great piece, Because before, not trusting people, not being able to relate to people, it made me a potential threat to people. Whereas now, I see people in a different aspect. I, my heart is tender toward people now. I can be one of the five love language type of people, a touchy feely kind of guy, you know. And that was something that I used to couldn't do, I just couldn't do that, I didn't know how to love people, really, like Jesus does. Because being able to identify to know Jesus has taught me how to touch people, right where they are, to be accepting of people, and not with any condition. Because when I look at what Jesus has done, and what I've learned about who he was and who he is, even in me now, which is something that I couldn't fathom before, I couldn't even begin to know—Jesus living in me—that was beyond the scope of my comprehension. And so, *now*, I mean, this joy, it's like this grin that's on my face, there's a peace. Even in being incarcerated here at Angola, there's a peace, in a place where they say supposed to be so violent and so mean and so depraved of any humanity, any hope, any faith. I found all of those things in this place. And I mean, I can walk around, and in spite of what's going on around me, I can see God really working. And that's made a major difference in my life. Because before, I used to chase those things that people chase, you know, all the glamour and the glitz, the idols of the world, cars and female companionship, fast living, you know, the big money. And, now, [giggles] I look at people like John Baptist, Jesus, you know, poor and lowly, lowly, and yet so rich with the things of God. [Pause] And, there's a settled place, there is a settled place, now, in me, and, you know, I'm not concerned about tomorrow. There's a song that I sing a lot of times that, you know, I'm not worried about this time, Lord, as long as I know you, you see, and as long as I that relationship, It's kind of like David was out in the pasture [unclear], we can see, you know, I just kind of walk around and sing to God. And, you know, as a result of having a relationship,

I'm able to bring music to other people's lives. And I think about King David, sometimes, how it says there was an evil spirit from God that had got on him, and the only time he would have peace was when David would play his music, and he would have peace, and his fear would leave him. And, the count, how I feel that God has blessed me to be here now, you know, I have this music in me, and it's a worship and a praise thing to my God. As I sing to him, I sing to him and others. And as a result, it just, it blesses me to be a blessing to know that God is actually operating, he's living in me, and he's making a difference, even in this place that I'm in. Because this place, to me, is more free than the place in the world that I came from, prior to being here. And that in itself is a blessing amongst a great amount of testimony, you know, because I can think about things and events that had transpired before I was saved, before I actually closed my eyes and said, "Okay Lord, this is it." Because I was in a life-threatening position, and that I think it was at that very point, you know, I was in like a high-speed chase, and the car spun out, went airborne, and I thought I was going into the Mississippi River. And, and, on, I like just hunkered down in the backseat, "Okay, Lord!" And it was at that very point that God began to really work, to really receive me, but I had to die to me. And once I began to die to me, and Christ really came in, and to have been blessed to find that place, rather than to die and go to a devil's hell is, is, it's beyond words. It's really beyond description for me.

And the education that has come as a result of the all the experiences, the requirement to experience God as the first foundation part of being an applicant for Bible College—and, and all these are things that I had never thought, I never dreamed, you know—at one time, I kind of haphazardly, even before I realized that God was moving in a way that was to my advantage to bless me, even in my chastisement, you know. That he was creating his son in me, the spirit of his son in me, that I might come to the true knowledge of Him, that I might be able to advance his kingdom through testimony.

I just kind of haphazardly walk around, I was in and out of camp, back at Camp B, and I used to get up every morning, I would come out and I would just sing loudly old traditional gospel songs as I went to breakfast, to the chow hall. And I had some inmate ministers that had graduated from the Bible College, I think out of the first class first class, come to me and begin to tell me, because these were the guys that really taught me *Experiencing God*, they were like my tutors and mentors. And they began to teach me what it was to really have a relationship, not a religion and not be a traditional Christian, you know. And, and then it was at that point that I began to realize that God was really calling me to a higher place. Like the song says, "Zion is calling me to a higher place in praise," you know. And that's where I'm at now. It's like, you know, I've heard it said before, "Prisons are stonewall colleges." And so this is like the best education, the best experience, the best life that I've would have never otherwise experienced.

And then they begin to teach me what it was to worship God as a result of my—I mean it just goes on and on and on, of course—like I was saying about the high-speed chase. I remember being shot at and no bullets ever touched me: had to be God's grace. You know, when, I deserve to die, he saved me. I remember jumping off a building and trying to get away, and God didn't allow me to get broken up, or even then the dogs to do me anything. And yet, here I sit in a school to learn about him and to learn how to disseminate his word back to the people, you know. Knowin' what you're talking, about and being confident that in every step in every way that you go, God is guiding you. *God* that's glorious, it's really glorious. It's enough to kind of make you want to just jump and run and on.

And a lot of times, I feel like a little bleating lamb, you know, the little lamb is just bleating and running along. And, and, I'm so, it's kind of haphazard, but yet I know that the good shepherd, Jesus, is there watching me. And I'm not worried about falling off a cliff, or having any wrecks, or fear of my life, or what tomorrow's gonna bring; because I know when it's all said and done, rather I live and God sees me, beyond here to advance his kingdom in the free world, or rather I spend the rest of my life just serving in the ministry. I know that my home, my eternal home is in glory, and—*God!*—that's a [*unclear*] new song. This [*unclear*] new song for me.

The *Bible* is my compass, and it's my square that keeps me balance. But beyond that, scripture in the Bible itself says that Jesus is the bread of life. And he is the wine of the New Covenant. This word, you know, my imagination can far exceed the words, the graphic details of the words of Scripture, for me, in the Bible. It says that, you know, they had manna that came from heaven that fed the children of Israel. It's like my manna. It's really a way for a Christian to see [*unclear*] it's my life. It's everything, because beyond man's interpretations, beyond the design of religious denominations, it's my hope, It's, to me, it's God speaking, his spirit, the spirit of that word, his Bible, is what makes me alive.

You know I hear him asking the prophet, "Can these dry bones live?" This dead man is truly resurrected by the words of that Bible and all. And there is no other life, there is no other hope, there is no other sustainer. That's how essential that Bible is to me. It gives me all that I am, gives me all that he is, and all that I can be in him.

I am a praise and worship leader in one congregation, a praise and worship minister in another. And I just have a gift that God has given me. He's my song. He is my song. He's my hope. And that's where my peace is, it's in the music, it's in the worship of Him. I love worshiping God. I love praising him. And that gift has afforded me another service to be able to sooth the hearts of men who would otherwise reject. You know, when they say music is a universal language, I think it's an internal language. I don't think, I *know* it, and it allows me in a relationship to be able to just spread my wings like the cherubs did that sit around and just saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord," you know, and, and, that, that *is* a joy. That's the joy for me.

Part 5: Donald "Carolina" Biermann, Inmate Minister⁴⁹

Well, I came from a troubled background, alcohol, not really, just kind of abuse and you know just a hard family, my family was were good people, they were just hard.

I grew up, not really knowing anything. The only two emotions I experienced for 44 years of my life where hate and indifference. I didn't. There was no middle ground with me it was just one way. I either completely hated you or was completely indifferent to you. And I've gone through four prisons in three states with the same attitude. I've been in Angola twice. I came back here second time in 1999, and I didn't believe in God.

I've never believed in God, I've never had a belief, I've never had an introduction to God. Every time somebody attempted it, the very first thing was love, that was the word that always came first. And to me love was nothing more than a conditioned response. If you tell somebody you love them, there are certain things that they expect you to do. So love was not an emotion, it was not something that you felt it was something that you did. So I was not receptive to the gospel from anyone.

⁴⁹ Biermann, <https://vimeo.com/217575624>, accessed 3-14-21.

I think my very first true exposure to the gospel was whenever Warden Cologne committed his life to the Lord, and he came back to Angola. And because of our past, our history of, of violence, he was a chief of security, and I was actually at the time and I think the highest rank had ever known him as was, was a captain, until he made Warden. And we just thought it was a lot of disciplinary problems. I was misunderstood. And so, when he came back, he decided I was the one that needed to hear about Jesus. And I told him I wasn't listening to that foolishness. And, you know, and he told me, "Yep, you gonna hear it." So I listened, and didn't do anything. That was probably, I guess, 15 or better years later, whenever I finally met Jesus.

I was, just, been back for about a year. I had a friend of mine that I known when he first came here. He was a Christian, he was a Christian when he came here. And, for want of a better word, we were friends. I just was intolerant to the gospel, and I met a chaplain at Camp C, and they introduced me to a program called program called Kairos. They said that I could come and eat all weekend, eat free-world food. Well, I'm not ever going to probably free-world food again. And I felt like this would be a good opportunity; I could eat my free-world food, and I figured I could put up with *anything* for a good meal. And I figured I'd go to the Kairos, I do the three day retreat, and I'd leave with my integrity intact.

The first night I went, it was an introduction. And that's just what they get to know everybody. And I say well I'm not gonna make the whole weekend on this, but I'm gonna eat them all. And I, I went the next day, and I was listening to a bunch of middle class do-gooders. Tell me about how bad their life was and how God had miraculously reached down into their life and made things better. They were crying. And I was just sitting listening, and I was getting really frustrated. I just was not feeling this "God is so good" thing, you know. And they were telling me about their problems: their wife run off with the mailman, or they were addicted to pharmaceutical drugs, or something like this. And I said to myself, if you want problems, I'm just about to give you some real problems. And I was at the, probably, I, I had already had an act of violence planned out after that weekend.

I know already, had just, it was premeditated. And I, I was ready to leave from there. I had heard all I was gonna hear. I didn't believe in God. There was no concept of God in my mind. I was listening to people talk, and I couldn't, couldn't relate to anything they were saying. And I just want to be about my business.

There's not ever anywhere in Angola anymore you go there's not a security officer. There were security officers there that morning. However, when I looked around, to have one of them get me out of that meeting, there were none. And I was looking, I was thinking, "How is this gonna work?" There's no free people standing here for me to get out of here. And I'm ready to go. And I thought, "Well." One of the guys that was the one of the, one of the facilitators asked me, he said, "What's wrong?"

I said, "I need to get out of here. I need to leave."

And they told me I could leave whenever I wanted to.

And he looked, he said, "Well we're just going to have to wait a few minutes for security to come back."

I said, "No, hoss, we leaving, we getting out of here." And I was fising to start start flipping tables. And everything inside of me just went quiet, it went still. I've never in my life, in that 44 years, I've never been without turmoil in my mind—never ever. There had always been chaos in my mind. All of my thoughts were chaotic.

Not that I suffered from any form of clinical schizophrenia, but there was just always chaos in my mind. And all of a sudden, it was just nothing. And it took me so much by surprise. And

by this time, nobody was even standing around me. They were, had all backed away; they'd all gotten away from me, because it was obvious that Carolina was about to throw a fit.

And, I had, there was just quiet. It was completely quiet.

And I thought that I had just gone over the edge. I thought I finally lost my mind. I'd gone crazy. And I, I started talking to myself, I was wondering, you know, "What's going on?" And I was thinking clearly. I could hear myself, and I'm thinking, "What's going on?" You know, "What's happening?" I'm crazy. I've done, I've lost it. And there were no answers, absolutely none.

And then, as I started to look around again, it was almost like I was seeing the people seeing the room from a different perspective. And I don't know how, or why; it was kind of like moving a curtain and seeing what's being unveiled behind the curtain. I'm seeing the people, I *actually* see the people. And then Jesus said, "I love you." And it was like, it was like standing by these big speakers, and, and the sound coming through, and the very air reverberates with the sound. But it wasn't so much a sound as it was a feeling. And I'd never, I mean I've never heard that, I've never heard, "I love you." I've had people tell me, "I love you." But I've never *heard* it. I mean it's kind of like putting on rain suit, and somebody sprayed it with water hose, you know. I'd heard it, but I'd never felt it.

And 44 years—everything that I believed crumbled right around my feet. And it, it scared me. I'm not gonna tell yah a word of lie. I've never been afraid of anything, never. I've never felt fear. I felt fear. And that was the first thing I said was, "Who are you? Who are you?" And he said, "I love you."

And then I started hearing, there was a guy speaking, he was given steel given his testimony. And immediately, I mean it was almost like, the revelation was, he wasn't given a testimony, he was confessing. He was confessing his sins before God, before man, and it was just his testimony. But it was a confession. He was crying out to God.

And I started crying. I hadn't cried since I was seven years old. Not cried—I mean, we all shed tears, but I've never felt it. And I, I began to cry. I cried. And I couldn't even talk. I couldn't say anything. I couldn't do anything. And the people around me, especially the guys who were born again believers knew exactly what I was going through. I didn't have a clue. I couldn't a bit more told you then, then, and if I didn't know—I thought I was crazy. I honestly thought I was crazy.

And I see it in their eyes. I can see them in the way they're looking at me: it's nothing but loving. But nobody comes to me, everybody, I'm just standing there looking. And everybody, and these guys are looking. And I had a, the friend that I was speaking about before, he told me, he said, I asked him one time, "How do you put up with these people?"

He said, "Well, I've learned to see them through the eyes of Christ."

And I thought, "See 'em through the eyes of Christ? How do you—Jesus can't even look at these people with compassion."

And that's the way I saw them. I saw his love in their eyes. His compassion. And I think for the first time in my life I felt it. And I didn't commit my life to the Lord at that time. I really didn't. I went through that whole weekend, and I cried the whole weekend. I cried every day, all night. I'm going around, people are looking at me, and saying, "What's wrong with you?" And, "Are you all right?"

"Well of course, I'm all right. Everybody cries when are all right, you know."

And, "What's wrong with you?"

"Well, if I knew that, I probably wouldn't be crying. Now, would I?"

So it was a, you know, it was real hard time. And the thing was, the awesome thing to me was—not so much then, I didn’t realize it—but later, as I thought about it, was, if an inmate—especially an inmate with a past as violent as mine has been—is going through a some type of severe emotional trauma. They isolate them. They put ‘em in the dungeon. And that’s for his safety and everybody else’s safety. Well, they didn’t bother me. As matter of fact, the order went out not to touch me. Leave him alone. Don’ mess with him. Don’t lock him up. Leave him alone.

And I’d sit on my bed and I’d cry. I go back to the Kairos meeting in the morning, and I’d cry all through the meeting. Trying to eat, cry. Could not stop crying, *could not* stop crying. I’m not talking about, just, I am talking about crying.

I’d go to sleep. I’d finally, I just, I was exhausted, and I’d go to sleep. I was crying when I go to sleep. I wake up, and I was crying. This was going on for two weeks, two straight weeks. Finally, I just couldn’t take it anymore. I just told God I can’t do it.

And there was a situation, I’d, God, I’d walked yard every day. Now, they got work call around here five days a week. You don’t get out of work call. They would not even bother me at work call. I’d leave at a dormitory and [*unclear*] I go out and I’d walk the perimeter of fence, and talk to God.

And, now I’m really thinking I’m crazy. And I’m telling him, “I don’t even, you know, I don’t even know who you are, you know.”

He said, “Well, who you talking to?”

“I haven’t the slightest idea, but I wish you’d leave me alone.”

And I didn’t, the hate and bitterness was gone; this, the hate and indifference was gone. This was the thing that was probably the thing that scared me the most, because I would ask God, “How am I going to live in this environment without my, without my hate?”

He said, “Trust me.”

“How can I trust you. I don’t even know you. I don’t know who you are.”

And he said, “Well, who you talking to?”

I said, “Don’t know. I’m crazy. That’s who I’m talking to.” This is all day. They blow yard for count. I’d come in and go sit on my bed. We didn’t go eat. Go right back out and walk the yard. And this went on for, it probably went on for about 10 days, 8, 9, 10 days.

But one day God asked me, he said, “Ask me for anything you will.” “Prove me,” he said.

I didn’t know any scripture. I’ve since read these things in Scripture. I’m listening to what God’s telling me. And later, as I began to read the Bible, I, I’m starting to see. This is how I knew. This is how I know. I knew before I ever got any proof. I just knew.

And he said, “Just prove me.”

And I said, “Well, what can you do for me?”

He said, “I’ll do anything you ask me.”

And, I honestly believe this day, if I told God I want to get out of prison, I’d have gotten out of this prison. I honestly believe that, beyond a shadow of a doubt. But that was the furthest thing from my mind.

I hadn’t spoken to my family in little over four years. As a matter of fact, after this conviction, they completely disinherited me.

And I said, “Well, this is a good thing here, now.” You know, God’s supposed to know everything. And so, “Here’s what you do, give me reconciliation with my family.”

Two days later, my mother called his prison.

I, I mean, it was, when they call me to the classification office at Camp C, I, oh, I used to get so upset when security would call me. Man, I don't like the police, don't like the administration, don't like nobody. And I went to the classification office asked, "What do they want."

And they said, "Well, you need to call home."

I said, "This is Angola, what do you want?"

When I first came back here, whenever they were signing me in, and he said, "Who do we notify in case of emergency?"

Said, "I appreciate if you notify me. I feel like if there's anything going on in my life, that I'd like to be the first one to know about it." And, so there was no contacts. And my, I had one friend in Seattle, and I just gave him, her phone number, just, you know, to just let her know when something happened.

But, whenever he called me, told me, said, "You need to call home."

I said, "It's Angola."

He said, "No, no. You need to call your family."

I said, "Well, they inmates. What do you want?"

And he told me my mother called him.

And you could rolled me over with a feather. And I, you know, I got really belligerent. I got really angry. You know, I mean God is provin' himself to me, and I'm really not feeling that.

How did my mom know to call here, right after this.

I mean, you know, and I told him, I said, "Well, who does she talk to?"

He said, "Well, she talked to me."

I said, "Well, what did you tell her?"

And the rest of our conversation was, I told him, I don't, I don't need to call. You told her everything she needs to know. And, if, there's a system in place here, with the phones; if a person is not on your phone list and been approved by the administration, you can't just pick up the phone and call. Well, there's nobody on my phone list, so, except for the girl in Seattle.

And Laurie at that time, prior to me coming here, she was the first person I'd ever met I wouldn't hurt. Now, I didn't know, that's the only way I can explain that. Is she was the first person I had ever met, that I would not hurt. And I couldn't explain it. That's just the best way for me to put it.

So, I told, you know, I just told God plain and simple, "I can't call."

He's telling me call home. I can't call. She's not on my phone list.

And he nagged me all day, all day, he nag me. That night, I went to bed. Roughly two o'clock in the morning, woke me up, tell me to get up and call my mom.

In our camps, they cut the phones off at 12 o'clock. She's not on my phone list. There's no way possible I can call. If I go around that telephone, it's not an authorized area. So I got up, wandering around. And, got to say, the free man was in the dormitory was awake when I woke up. When I got up and I started moving around, he went to sleep, snoring.

And I looked at him and I looked at the phone.

And I said, "Not a chance. God said, 'Go call.'" Well, this building was the old Education building, had burnt down, and the computer system was all messed up. So they had the computer where you didn't even have to call; it was direct calling. You could call straight out anywhere you wanted to call. And it wasn't broadcast throughout the prison, for obvious reasons. And I didn't have a clue. I just walked over to the phone, picked it up and got it a dial tone—couldn't believe it. Two o'clock in the morning, roughly 2:30, now.

And I said, “Well, I’ll fool God.” I turned around and dial mom's number direct. It rang. She answered on the first ring; 2:30 in the morning.

I said, “Ma!”

She said, “Yeah.”

I said, “What are you doing.”

She said, “Sitting here waiting on you to call.”

I said, “You’ve been sitting there since you called here earlier today.”

She said, “No.” She said, “I just woke up about a half hour ago and knew you were going to go.”

And I got mad again.

She said, “What happened to you?”

I said, “What do you mean?”

She said, “A little over a week ago, something happened to you.” She said, “Have you hurt somebody again? Somebody hurt you?” She said, “What’s wrong?”

And I got mad, I just asked her, “What do you care?” Hung up the phone. Just like that. What do you care? Hung up the phone.

And, I just, it was really hard for the next two, three days. God and I argued, and we talked. And finally I just realized that I couldn’t fight him anymore. And I went to church on a Monday night at Camp C, in the visiting shed back there and didn’t even wait for an altar call. Went straight to the alter. Thought that’s what I had to do at the time, thought I had to be in a church, thought I had to go to an alter, thought I had to kneel down, and go to have somebody pray for me. And pray somebody else’s prayer. And I thought that’s just what had to be done.

And because I’ve been, you know, just the, the Christians really did rally around me, whenever I was back there, for the most part. And I would, some of ‘em I’d accept, but most of ‘em I’d just push away from me. You know, I, I just didn’t, I don’t, I just didn’t like the kind of people that were Christians. Most of them I felt were hiding behind a Bible.

And I had told God, right after, right after I committed my life to him, I said, “There’s two things I’m not going to be. One of ‘em’s a coward. The other one’s is a Bible thumper. Let’s get that straight now.”

And I just felt him laugh inside me, as I have for so many times in the past six years. He just laughed inside of me. And he said, “You look and find in that Bible one coward, and you’ll never have to tell anybody anything about me.”

Well, that was six years ago, in June, will be six years, June the 5th, will be six years ago. And I’ve not found a coward, and I’ve not shut up about God since then. And the miracles that he’s performed in my life are just, they’re just too numerous to tell. I mean, they’re just, this thing with my mom pales in comparison to the things that God has done in my life in the past six years. It’s just really awesome. And you just can’t tell at all. How do you tell it all?

Change has been such that, sometimes I still think a lot of my past, the violence, and the aggression. It’s sometimes, it’s a very useful tool. My testimony in this institution alone is, is sometimes more useful than not, because people see the change in me. A lot of the guys that I’ve hurt in the past are guys that I know minister to on a regular basis, on a weekly basis. And I have, right now, I’m down to one Bible study a week, but I was actually facilitating as many as four Bible studies a week. And I’ve done my ministry in the main prison ever since I’ve come to the main prison, which was a miracle in and of itself.

Just eight months prior to me being admitted into the school, they told me they turned me down from coming to the main prison from Camp C. Said the only way I’d ever see the main

prison goes out the window of a patrol. So whenever this friend of mine brought me the application for the seminary, I told him, I said, "Are they going to drive me back and forth?"

He said, "No."

I said, "Then I ain't going. They're not going to let me in the main prison."

He said, "God told me to have you fill this out."

And I did. I filled it out on a Tuesday. The following Tuesday, I was talking to Dr. Robson. The following Thursday I was in Hickory 3, bed 9. And two weeks after that, I had a ministry assignment. And I'm just now getting' into school. But the security up here were all old hands. So, you know, and immediately, most of 'em, that's just what they said, they could tell a difference.

Warden Cologne told me, "You know how I can tell you were born again?"

I said, "How?"

He said, "You don't have the tree on your shoulders no more." He said, "You're walking upright."

And it was, probably, that was, it, at that time the most profound witness, because I had entered back in to an environment where my enemies were plentiful. And that was one of the things God had told me at Camp C.

He said, "If you will give me everything that you have, I'll send you to the land of your enemies, and I'll deliver it into your hand."

And I didn't know what he was talking about. I didn't think it was the main prison. I thought maybe, you know, it could have been anything. And I've been in the main prison now for five years, it'll be five, no, it'll be six years. And all of this, it will be a little over five years I've been back in the main prison, and virtually without incident, no acts of violence at all. I've not put my hands on anybody in anger in over six years.

So, it's a, my ministry, I'm very hard, I'm very hard line. God's hard on me. You see, I see a lot of people who call themselves Christians, or who may be Christians, that get away with a whole lot of things, that I'm just not convicted that I can get away with. I'm, that you, I'm not convinced that I can say the things that I want to say, that I can do the things that I want to do.

I don't always just freely yield my will to God's. I argue with him. I tell him, "I don't want to talk to that individual. You go talk to him. That's your job, not mine. I don't like him." And I do. I go minister to people that I don't like. I've done this thing when I didn't want to, when I didn't feel like it. And most especially when I didn't believe it.

There's still times when I *still* doubt. But I study, I study diligently. And I know that God is real. And I know that when he tells me to do these things, doesn't matter whether I believe it or not. Doesn't matter at all. But I have to do it in obedience, because I love him. Not because I have to, because I want to. I really want to please him. I want, I want him to know that, and, you know, it doesn't matter if a person dies, live a whole life, 85 years of a good life, and they have never accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, it's going to send them just as deeply in the hell as the unrepentant murderer. If he's just died yesterday, there's no question in my mind where he'll spend eternity. And the person who has never accepted Christ has the same fate. Makes no difference how good a person they are all through their life. Unless they accept Jesus, there is no, there's no promise of a pleasurable future.

I had enough mess in my life, God's forgiven me for so much, so much. And the Scripture says, "That to him, him who was forgiven much loves much." And I really do, and my ministry is, is effective.

Guys, actually, they love for me to come, because I don't pull any corners, don't pull any punches with 'em. If I have to deliver a death message, I'm not really, I'm not a, I'm not a crier. I'm not a sympathizer. You know, we made our choices. And we made some bad decisions. And this is just the consequences of our decisions. God's not responsible for us being here. He didn't put us here. He didn't allow us to come here. He preserved our life onto salvation. He raised us up here. Get a grip. Live with it. It's bad, but it's not *really* bad.

I read the Martyrs books all the time: *Foxes Martyr* books and *World Jesus Freaks*.⁵⁰ And I think this [*pulls cross from under his shirt*] this martyr's cross a friend of mine made this for me, because I, I'm a radical. I just don't, it's Jesus, and that's it. There's no other way. There's nobody else, and he says to obey. We've taken, we become slaves to the new master. If we'd obey the old one, then we need to obey is a new one.

10. Prof. Bryon Johnson 2016 Radio Interview

Neil Stavem interviewed Prof. Bryon Johnson on 8-29-16.⁵¹

Summarizing, Johnson noted: "A number of the professors at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary that provide the education have said, 'These guys provide us a model of what the church really should look like outside the prison.'" Among the darkness of Angola, Johnson reflected on its dark past, violence, "corruption not just among the inmates but the staff." Johnson noted that 22 years ago a warden came and "decided that he would start a Bible College in the prison, thinking that may be helpful.... Over the last four years we've been in that prison with a five-member research team studying the prison, interviewing everybody that we possibly can. It is the largest study ever conducted in prisons dealing with the topic of religion. It's really become a fascinating project. In the short time we have today, I hope to maybe answer some of your questions that will give your listeners just a glimpse of how something pretty miraculuous can take place and *positive* at that in such a dark place. Stavem asked about pro-social studies, and Johnson gave an overview of pro-social studies. Why do people do good things.

Stavem then opens to discuss the history of the Angola seminary

Johnson. Yeah. It's a remarkable place. It's founded on the grounds of an old plantation, where slaves were brought from Angola Africa. And so, you know, there's so many things here that just strike you as you go to the prison, and you show up and you see that it's all these different camps. Over a great area of space in kind of a swampy area of Louisiana. And it's the largest maximum security prison in America, and you know it, it basically is unusual in that so many of the inmates are serving life sentences. About 90% of these inmates will die in the prison, because in Louisiana when you get a life sentence, it literally means a life sentence, there is no parole. And so one of the things that people say is, you know, I don't know if I believe in jailhouse religion. I think that's, that's kind of maybe a fake way to get an early release. And, and there is some truth to that that. You could imagine people would do anything

⁵⁰ John Foxe (1516–1587), *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (John Day, 1563), revised ed. with foreword by Harold J. Chadwick (Newberry, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2001; 482 pp.) and perhaps DC Talk, *Jesus Freaks Revolutionaries: Stories of Revolutionaries Who Changed Their Worlds: Fearing GOD, Not Man* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, an imprint of Baker, 2005; 384 pp.).

⁵¹ Neil Stavem, "The Impact of Inmate-led Prison Ministry," (8-29-16), <https://myfaithradio.com/2016/impact-inmate-led-prison-ministry>, accessed 3-3-21, with two links there, one for a clip and another for full interview transcribed here.

to get out of prison early. But when you're serving life, you're serving lives and and so there. There is really no incentive for good behavior at a place like Angola if you're going to die in prison. And that's what makes this story, among other things, so so very powerful is that for many years people lived, you know, like they weren't getting out. What do they have to lose? So that's why there was so much violence there, and that's why so many people were killed at the prison; and then why there was corruption, and it was just such a dark place to be.

But, you know, over the years, even date predating this seminary which, like you said, sounds so odd, you know, maximum security prison with a Bible College embedded within it. But they also did something interesting in Angola: they allowed inmate-led churches, and they've been there for, for many decades, **but they were weak**. When they started the Bible College, it really seemed to put wind in the sails of these inmate-led congregations, and so there are 29 churches at the prison.

Angola, so it's Louisiana State Penitentiary, also goes by the name of Angola. And so if you can imagine, churches in a prison where inmates are the pastoral staff, and they have elders, deacons within these congregations, and there are ministries, and they meet all the time. And and it's a pretty unusual situation. And what we've tried to do is to, you know, go and attend observe, take notes, to interview people, and then analyze any and all data that we can get, get our hands on to see what kind of an effect these congregations and the Bible College have had over the last 20 some odd years.

Stavem. It's an amazing story. We're gonna get into it in the moments ahead, as we unpack the Angola prison seminary, and we'll talk the effects of faith-based ministry on identity transformation, desistance and rehabilitation as the title of a new work as summarizing these years of study by Bryon Johnson, distinguished professor of the social sciences at Baylor University and founder and director of the Institute for Studies of Religion. He's the author of the book, *More God, Less Crime*. He's my guest today, and we're gonna continue on our conversation in a moment. I invite you to stay tuned for this amazing story and hopefully out of that learn some lessons about what we can do in sharing and working in these dark places, stay tuned to connecting.

Stavem breaks for a commercial

Johnson. We're talking today with Byron Johnson, founder and director of the Institute for Studies of Religion ... *continued to repeat his introduction* ...

Johnson. Yeah, it's so remarkable, I mean, I hope your listeners will appreciate this one, and they understand that most maximum security prisons are not big, because they provide so much security. So you might have a minimum security prison or a medium security prison that has 3,000 inmates, something like that. But the maximum security prisons tend to be smaller, so they can provide much more supervision. So, now you have this prison, with over 6,000 prisoners. And about, I don't know about three years ago, they were around 5,000. But they closed a prison, and sent about 1,100 prisoners, which is the size of some prisons themselves, about 1,100, or there about, such as it not a small prison, and sent those inmates in mass to Angola. So, if I were the warden, and I'm thinking, okay, we're getting inmates transferred in not just 575, but over 1,000. You know, I would think you can't get ready, because there may be riots, without any event whatsoever.

There were no problems, bringing in that many people, you know, that was another indication that this place has become something quite different than what it used to be. As a result of so much faith-based ministry taking place there. And, you know, one of the things that's that is also important for for listeners to hear is that there's, there's been what we would

call kind of cultural change in this place that was once known for violence and corruption. It's, it's not that it's a perfect prison. But, but now you have inmates that lead something called a hospice ministry. It's a, it's just a whole wing where you have elderly inmates that are dying of various kinds of illnesses, because as we said earlier, they don't get out. So they're like three, maybe three prisoners per month that actually die at Angola. And so, and guess who does the funerals? The inmate ministers that are trained at the Bible College. They do these funerals. They do grief counseling, and they did, they have the hospice ministry, and many, many other kinds of ministries taking place within the, the prison itself. And a number of their professors at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary that provide the education have said, you know, "These guys provide us a model of what the church really should look like outside the prison."

And, and the other thing that's really interesting is they have these 29 different congregations in the prison. And they, you know, they're from different denominational perspectives, all over the place, you know, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecostal, Catholic, and it's the most ecumenical environment you can imagine, because so many of these people, and, and they share different chapels. So you, know you, may worship at a Presbyterian Church on Monday night, but then on Tuesday night you're, you're worshipping at a Methodist Church. Now, not everybody does that, but plenty of these inmates actually go to different churches and support those other churches. And I thought, well, that's kind of interesting. I don't know how many people attend multiple churches and get along well with each other as they do here.

So it's, it's a, it's an incredible thriving kind of religious economy in the prison where people are free to, you know, free to be religious. And then what is really incredible is as these guys get training both in the congregations and in the Bible College. Then, they are free to serve other people, and that's the thing that we try to capture in the work is that these guys literally give their lives away. And, and if you could sum up everything about this project, what we've learned, one of the titles of a paper we wrote, "Serving Life by Dying to Self."⁵² I mean they're basically just giving their lives to others.

These guys actually tithe in the prison. They tithe to other inmates that are indigent. And you may think, you made, that may be a real head scratcher, because *all* of these guys are indigent. But, you know, sometimes they'll, they'll tithe just even things like toothpaste to, to another inmate that doesn't have one, have it, have a toothbrush or toothpaste. I mean it's just, it's just remarkable the kind of change that we've been able to document. And then, as you might expect people hear about these things, and so, they, they're coming from all over the country to see what's happening here. Can we take an implement anything from Angola and use this and other prisons around the country? And that's another thing that that I'll share with your listeners here in just a moment.

Stavem. Although we'll talk more about that just ahead. I'm just curious enough, you you said they're inmate lead, and they're free to be religious, it just seems like that—how does that work with security issues? Obviously a max security prison, so how are things inmate led? We got a couple minutes before a break, so say a bit about that.

Johnson. But, you know, in most prisons you have people from the outside that come in, and they do ministry: they'll, they'll preach, they'll lead Bible studies. This is the very, very common. If you go to any prison in America, you'll see that. But in Angola, the inmates lead the Bible studies, the, the inmates preach the sermons. They had guests come in, but the guests come there to listen. I remember the warden telling me, "You know, you won't hear anybody

⁵² Could not find that article through Google or from Johnson's Baylor ISR search engines.

preach any better than an inmate that's, you know, really trained and knows how to preach." And, and there's something about a way in which an inmate can minister to another inmate that maybe a free-world person like you or I couldn't.

Stavem. Amazing story, at one of the largest prisons in the, I guess it *is* the largest maximum security prison, and many of those in there are a life sentence without parole. So, what's their motivation for actually changing for the better. That's something that you've been studying for some time. Want to hear maybe a bit about how New Orleans Baptist decided that, "Yeah, we could, we could set up a seminary in a prison." I mean, is that, did fit with their, their mission of, you know. How how's it going to get paid for? All those things, we're going to hear more about, you know, maybe how others can take some lessons from this. We'll do that all coming up in a moment. We're gonna take a little break, and so we'll return in a moment, with the Byron Johnson, who is founder and director of the Institute for Studies of Religion and distinguished professor of social sciences at Baylor University. He has been working as a leading authority on scientific study religion and faith-based organizations, dealing with domestic violence and criminal justice. And he's written a wonderful book called *More God, Less Crime*, and he's part of a new book that's just come out, *The Angola Prison Seminary*.⁵³ We're going to hear more about it in a moment. If you have a question or comment you can certainly send one to us online at MyFaithRadio.com and click on the connecting face show page, or the email link there, or you can call us at 877-93FAITH, that's 877-933-2484. And we'll talk more with Byron Johnson in just a moment [*Radio Break Begins*].

Stavem. We're talking about a life change taking place at the largest maximum security prison in the nation, Louisiana State Penitentiary, better known as Angola. And out of there, there are some 29 churches, inmate-led churches, and the seminary trains graduates from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, training bi-vocational pastors to serve throughout the prison. This is spreading around the country. We're hearing an update on today from Byron Johnson, distinguished professor of social sciences at Baylor University, and founder and director of the Institute for the Studies of Religion. He's written a book *More God, Less Crime*. And, Byron, this is, this is a moving across the country, as I understand, right, this, what's happening at Angola, because it's so amazing that others are saying we want to be a part of this.

Johnson. Well, you know, Neil what's happened, so many states are just strapped for funding, and what, they've also had to cut. And so, when you cut programs, in, any prison will, will want to have as many programs as they can, and they want to keep the inmates busy. They hope that they can help them need to get rehabilitated, but this, this all requires funding. And when states become, you know, in these tough, in these tight places, how do you cut, cut, cut? And so a lot of states are saying we need programs. And then you have faith-based efforts, like this one, where, this—this is all privately funded—the Angola thing doesn't cost Louisiana a penny.

And, and so what's happened in Texas, for example, is that at the Darrington Unit, which is a prison south of Houston, about 20 minutes south of Houston, modeled after Angola, there's a foundation called the Heart of Texas Foundation led by Grove Norwood. They raised funds to help support the launching of a Bible college at the Darrington Unit, and, and we're now

⁵³ Byron R. Johnson, *More God, Less Crime: Why Faith Matters and How It Could Matter More* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2011; 312 pp.); and Michael Hallett, Joshua Hays, Bryon Johnson, Sung Joon Jang, and Grant Duwe, *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation* (New York: Routledge, 2017; 248 pp.).

studying that. And now, it's a four-year program as well, and it's Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, that provides the education. And these inmates that have graduated are now being transferred, as what they call Field Ministers, to other prisons across the state of Texas. And we're now tracking these people over time to see what kind of effect they're having in the prisons where they're now ministering to inmates. So they're sending them out in groups across the state of Texas, and the goal is eventually to have Field Ministers from the Darrington Prison at every prison in the state of Texas, and there are over 100 prisons in Texas.

So, other states, of course are hearing about Darrington. Obviously, they had already heard about Angola. And, so now, in West Virginia, in Michigan, in Florida, in Georgia, in Mississippi, New Mexico—they're launching these, these Bible colleges within the prison with private funding. So taxpayers are not having to pay for this, but yet taxpayers are receiving the benefit of, of programs like this. And so, the, the key question becomes, is this something that can spread even to more prisons around the country? We don't know the answer to that. We're sitting back right now just trying to keep tabs, because we keep hearing about a new seminary that's popped up in a prison, and we didn't know about it.

Stavem. Well, and I guess that is the bottom line, isn't it? When we, if, if, if we believe that our criminal justice system actually includes *justice*, then we want to see life change right when, when these men and women get out. Right? And that doesn't always happen.

Johnson. That, that's, that's it. And you know the other thing that's interesting is if you look at this just from kind of a, an innovations point of view, and then the book by the way is not a faith-based publisher, this is Routledge, and they've published our book as, in their innovation series. And we see this as a very innovative approach. Because at Angola, it's not just that they train them with the Bible college, they train them in all kinds of areas. So they have great vocational programs that take place there. And a lot of the guys that lead that are from the Bible College. So, what, what we see happening is not just in prisons, but I see it in other faith-based ministries is that these ministries are very holistic, they're very innovative, and and so you see some of these great new programs that can help drug addicts, or can help people that are homeless—they are faith-based. So, where's the innovation coming from? It's coming from people that are faith motivated to address a real serious problem that society can't quite fix.

Stavem. You know, just thinking, as you mentioned that many of these in Angola, at least, are, have life sentences without parole, so the motivation to change for the better certainly isn't necessarily isn't there. How does that, but I would think that would lead to hopelessness in a major way. Talk about, maybe, how this, these churches really provide hope and help for some of these inmates.

Johnson. You hit the nail on the head. I mean, inside of prisons, I mean one of the reasons why we have such a huge drug problem in our country and especially among teenagers is the issue of despair. Kids find themselves in those kinds of predicaments, they tend to isolate themselves, and then they medicate themselves. And it's a, it's a, it's a spiral that only goes down. And, and in that way, they're not different than prisoners, because prisoners who have no hope, no direction, no purpose—that, that puts you in a place where you're not only, you don't care about hurting yourself or anybody if you find yourself in that kind of a predicament. Then, and, but we're finding just the opposite. And, and we've done surveys with these prisoners. And it's very clear that the power of the gospel helps these guys not only to cope with living in a difficult situation knowing they're not going to get out. And now, what do they do, they have hope. Many of them have told us, you know, "Going to prison is the best thing that ever happened to me. I would, I would be, I would be dead if it weren't for prison. I was

on a, I was on a collision course. And you know God sent me to prison, you know, I got my life together. And now I serve God in here, and you know I want to help other people.” And so again it’s, it’s, it’s not the typical narrative. These guys are actually getting a chance to rewrite their whole life narrative. It’s a very powerful. And that’s why we call it identity transformation: they really are able to say you know I used to be that but this is what I am now.

Stavem. Words like dignity and humanity, seems like, have to be central, if we’re really believe in, in the right treatment for, for prisons and what’s going on criminal justice. Say more about the importance of, you know, just the general population, everyone listening today, whether they know someone in prison or not that.

Johnson. Right.

Stavem. We need to do more than what we’re doing.

Johnson. Absolutely. And I think it’s because of the economic situation the country is in, there is a tendency to, to kind of cast people aside and not think about second chances. But not every prison is like Angola. Most prisoners do get out, most prisoners do come home. Angola is, is the extreme. But, you know, the reality is you don’t lock people up typically for, for forever. They, they tend to get out, and, and, you know, we want these people coming back to our communities as different people. We don’t want them coming back as people that are even more discouraged, with more despair and hopelessness than when they went to prison, which, which oftentimes is, is the reality. And so that’s why I think that, that there are so many lessons to, to learn from a prison like Angola: that prisoners can find hope, they can find meaning, they can find purpose, and then they can become law-abiding citizens that really do contribute. People that we want in our communities, not people that we want to hide from. And so this is, this is a really compelling story of hope and, and purpose that I think is a lesson that we, that we really could learn, and I think it’s exciting for people of faith to be involved in one of the greatest problems that we have for providing a solution.

Stavem. The latest *Christianity Today* I just saw my desk this morning has the lead story about that with a subheading on the lead stories is, “one of the hardest days of incarceration maybe the day it ends,” and it talks about how the church can play an important role in this transition back into culture, society. You, you talk in the, the, *The Angola Prison Seminary* study about a couple of key courses, grief counseling and conflict management. And I thought, you know, those are probably ones that you know we need in life in general, but they’re probably especially important here in a situation like this.

Johnson. You know, I, we can’t tell you how many inmates, inmate ministers have told us the level of counseling that they provide, and especially these Field Ministers now that are being transferred to other prisons. Because they have family members that, you know, have issues that they’re struggling with on, in the free world, and, or they have a family member that dies, and they can’t even get out to go to the funeral. So inmates in prisons struggle with a lot of grief. And yet these other ministers now—because they’ve had these counsel, these counseling courses—while in the seminary are able to minister to others.

We’ve had, I had a warden telling me, just recently, said, “You know, we have suicide watch, guys regularly on suicide watch, and now we send the Field Ministers to intervene in these cases to prevent a suicide. And so this, the whole issue of conflict resolution, you know, most of us don’t have a course in that. But here you have inmates. And this has been one of their problems, that they don’t know *how* to solve conflict. That’s why they’re in prison in, in many cases. And so for them to be able to take, you know, something ugly and make something

beautiful out of it and help others, it, it helps *them* change. And that's how they change, by serving others, they change themselves. As we know, this is, this is the gospel.

Stavem. As one of the phrases I caught in this book was relationship theology, which was probably something where, where, I mean we *all* need to apply that, don't we? Say a bit more about that.

Johnson. Yeah, they had something called sidewalk counseling, And, you know, they walk the sidewalks ministering to people and listening to them. That's one of the things they say that they were trained to do is, "Hey, listen, just listen." And then some of them walk the tiers, the cellblock tiers, just to see if there's someone that wants to chat. And, you know, what happens is, of course, they wind up putting many, many hours into this. I we've had some guys tell us you they don't get a day off because there's, there's such a need. And you might think that other inmates wouldn't take them seriously, but they actually do, because they see them as authentic. And you know inmates can see you through people real quick. If you're the real deal or not. And, and I think that when they see people out there giving their lives away, they know that there's something unique about them.

Stavem. Got a note from listener Cindy, who has just sent a note and said, "I've listened to your show on Angola," said, "two of my sons spent their spring break for 10 days at Angola last year 2015 with a program through Wheaton College. They lived, ate, and served within the prison. It was a life-changing experience for sure. There are amazing things happening there through the power of God." And she just says thanks for this program. And, I'm thinking, Byron, you've, you've seen it. Right?

Johnson. I've seen it. I've seen these groups come there. And a number of congregations actually send delegations there. Because they want to know, "How can our congregation be involved in something like this?" You know, we're in a completely different state. And, and I think they come to Angola and learn how, "Okay, you know, maybe we can help in, in our neck of the woods." And, I think, I think, there's many ways in which people can do that. So this takes us way beyond people going into a prison and sharing a Bible study. This is a whole new way of thinking about transformation.

Stavem. Well, Byron, we only have a minute or so left. Is, is there anything you'd recommend, if people want to find out more, or should they just connect to you, with you at the center?

Johnson. Yeah, they can, they can reach out to us, but the website here is www.BaylorISR.org, BaylorISR.org. And then, if they were interested in getting the book, and by the way, if you go that website, you can find my name; and if you find my name, I direct the center, you'll see a bunch of publications that deal with Angola and other related things like faith-based drug treatment. All those publications are free, you can just download them. And then if you want get the new book, you can go to amazon.com and it's there.

Stavem. Alright so, Byron, so good to talk with you again, and recommend your, your previous book, as well, *More God, Less Crime*, which really kind of set, sets up the conversation today: we're talking been talking about *The Angola Prison Seminary*, and this new years of study showing the effect of faith-based ministry and identity transformation, desistance and rehabilitation, Byron Johnson, who's the founder and director of the Institute for Studies of Religion. You can find, find them at BaylorISR.org. And Byron good to visit with you again blessings.

[*Breaks with a song*]

Stavem. I always enjoy talking about Byron Johnson and the great work they're doing at the center, and this area of criminal justice—*so* important, as far as Christ, how do we live out our faith and, and provide good news and hope to the prisoners, as Jesus called us to do that very thing. And I'm talking about it today. I would love to get some feedback. We've got an important highlight coming up from Craig DeRoche, the president of Prison Fellowship, and we'll get to that in a moment. But talk some takeaways. Caruso, what was what was your thought?

[Takes a caller and repeats some of above]

Stavem. We want to take a different angle, as we often do here on Connecting Faith, just to look at the topic from a different lens. And Craig DeRoche from Justice Fellowship was on with me not long ago. We're talking about kind of the broken justice system, and one of the challenges is that we're incentivizing maybe the wrong things. Listen to these couple minutes from, from Craig DeRoche.

*PF Craig DeRoche.*⁵⁴ Some of the structural things that we've gotten wrong in America is we've incentivized arrest and incarceration and conviction of people. So what we've really done is we've told the folks who work the job, whether they're white or black, racist or not racist, that how they get paid how they protect their income, how they protect their pension is by arresting and locking up more people. That's the metric that we care about, not justice as a metric. And so what we saw was a lot of policies that were passed that, that, and a lot of behaviors where people would target the folks that couldn't defend themselves, because if you're getting paid in, in the federal and state draw downs are based on many people you're arresting and convicting, it wouldn't make sense to go arrest and try to get convictions from people that could afford lawyers. It would be more expedient to arrest people that can't defend themselves. And so just at a human nature level, what I've seen in the numbers, and I speak quite frequently to is, is human beings, you know in their performance out there. They're, they're being told, "I need to arrest and convict as many people as possible to justify my existence. So, that's what I'm going to do." And you get far more reckless policies that we're seeing the tide turn against, like in New York City, where they're literally stopping and frisking people based on how they looked. And, you know, more than a half a million people a year on the sidewalk with no warrant, no, no other reason. So again, you're incentivizing the police to target people based on how they looked, and naturally the police were gravitating toward people that looked like they couldn't put up a fight or defend themselves.

And in America with over 97% of all of the arrests never going to trial, we've created a system where once you're arrested, you're essentially pushed into a situation where it's a negotiated situation, and not necessarily justice meted out by your peers, through a jury system in sentencing by Judge. And so the system has moved incredibly distant way from what we might think it is or what we see on the primetime television shows. And that has led to a number that, if you look at it from a socio economic standpoint, you see that, whether it's Caucasian, Hispanic, or African American person in the criminal justice system, those that are there are, by and large, on the lower end of the American socio-economic scale. And that who has been, that's who has been targeted. And because of the population of minorities in America that are on the lower end of the socio-economic scale, they are disproportionately represented in the ranks, which speaks poorly of America, on so many ways, including, you know, of course, the

⁵⁴ Craig M. DeRoche was GOP speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, then elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; 2012 became v.p. then in 2013 president of Justice Fellowship, the criminal justice and public policy reform arm Prison Fellowship Ministries; in Dec. 2020 was named as president and CEO of Family Policy Alliance.

race issues. But, you know, it's kind of a horrifying thing that we're doing is kind of preying on and targeting the least of us.

Stavem. Craig DeRoche, Justice Fellowship and Prison Fellowship, talking about some of the breakdowns in our system, and I encourage you to do a little search online. You can go to the Connecting Faith show page at the MyFaithRadio.com, and you can search for that, the conversation and Craig DeRoche, and hear the full interview. It was pretty fascinating.

