

I got your post to my blog and it set me into some deep thought as how to answer your questions of what you as the general public can do and how you could help. The lack of a rehabilitative presence in prison is an issue largely due to the public's ignorance of how prisons and the court systems operate. The solution is to get involved with prison ministries and or prison services of some sort, and then tell the truth as an outsider so that the public at large would grow more aware of the problem that exists. For the last 50 years or so, politicians have campaigned as being tough on crime to get elected and then neglected what to do with those criminals. It is easy to arrest and convict people regardless of their guilt. Our judicial system has come to the point that justice is left behind in the pursuit of a winning record on the part of the prosecutor. Often, if the person does not have the financial resources to present a vigorous defense, that person will end up in prison. I know that is not true in all cases but it does happen frequently. The question that needs to be asked and answered by each person out there is, "What is prison supposed to accomplish? Is it to lock up people until they die or is it to encourage and motivate each inmate to learn from the past and change their behavior?" Now for those of us that are in Christ, we know that there is no true rehabilitation without Christ and while an individual can become a more moral person on their own, they never have an assurance of staying in that improved morality.

When I was out there, if I had been asked what I thought prison was for and what happens to a new prisoner as they come into the system, I would not have known what to say. I thought that there would have been some sort of assessment of a new arrival to set a baseline to compare and evaluate progression in attitude and behavior. I knew then that it was not financially feasible to house all criminals forever in prison and that which was portrayed in movies and television was probably untrue. What I did not know was the nature of the prison industry that feeds off of the taxpayers and sees a large population of prisoners as job security. This is the aberration that needs to be exposed. Of how there is a lobby to lock up as many as possible to enable high paying jobs that other people with the same educational qualifications as the correctional officers only dream of earning.

These are just some of the issues that the general public must understand if there is to be change in this nation's prison system. The pervasiveness of self interest in all the key players needs to be exposed. To get rich as a byproduct of a public service is an injustice to the society. To get the most bang for the tax dollar, efficiency must be increased which means keeping the prison population as low as possible. We as the public need to wake up and see that the short-term expenditure to accomplish this would more than be offset by the long-term savings and increased tax base by those released as productive members of society. This efficiency must play out in the prisons themselves. At one time prisons strived to be self sufficient, this is no longer true but should be. At this time the industries that inmates work at generating a product results in a shell game of tax dollars moved from one state account to another, all while that particular industry claims a profit.