

GANG VIOLENCE IN PRISON

March 5, 2014: 11:00am: Listening to: "TEAR THE WHOLE WORLD DOWN" BY: WE ARE THE FALLEN

I SIT HERE IN MY CELL, LOCKED DOWN NOW FOR ALMOST 48 HOURS NOW OF NOTHING. THE POWER WAS JUST RECENTLY TURNED BACK ON. THEY CAN FLIP SWITCHES AND TURN THE ELECTRICITY OFF TO OUR CELLS IF THEY WANT, THEY CAN TURN VALVES AND TURN OUR WATER OFF AND THERE IS NO AIR. THE AIR CIRCULATION VENTS HAVE BEEN BROKEN LONG BEFORE I CAME TO THIS PRISON AND THE WINDOWS ARE CLOSED ALL WINTER NOW. SO THIS MEANS NO FRESH AIR, NO SHOWER, NO HOT FOOD AND NO SUNSHINE. PEOPLE FIGHT IN PRISON, IT'S JUST A FACT. YOU PUT TOGETHER 2,000+ MEN, MOST WITH VIOLENT CRIMES, AND MEN GET ON EACH OTHERS NERVES AND WE FIGHT. THATS JUST HOW IT GOES IN HERE. SO AFTER ABOUT 10 DIFFERENT GANG FIGHTS YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, THEY DECIDED TO LOCK THE PRISON DOWN AND DO A SHAKE DOWN, THATS MEANS TO SEARCH EVERY INCH OF THIS PLACE FOR CONTRABAND. BUT SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE, OVER 10 YEARS NOW, THE MOST THEY USUALLY FIND IS TRASH. NOTHING SERIOUS. SO GUARDS ARE BEING PAID 30, 40 AND EVEN 50\$ AN HOUR TO COLLECT TRASH IN HERE. TODAY IS ASH WEDNESDAY, A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION FOR ME AND MAY OTHER CATHOLICS IN HERE BUT BECAUSE OF A FEW FIGHTS, WE WILL BE UNABLE TO ATTEND MASS. THIS IS PRISON AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW, THERE ALOT OF GANGS IN HERE. GUYS JOIN GANGS ALL THE TIME FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. I'VE SEEN GUYS JOIN SO THAT THEY WERE NOT EXTORTED ANYMORE, OR SO THAT THEY WOULDN'T GET BEATEN UP ANYMORE. SOME JOIN JUST TO FIT IN OR TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING. I'M NOT HERE TO JUDGE THEIR REASONS BUT NOT EVERY BODY JOINS ONE AND NOT EVERYONE IS EVIL TO THE CORE. RECENTLY THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS APPROVED IT FOR US TO BE ABLE TO EVENTUALLY PURCHASE MINIATURE TABLETS. SOMETHING SIMILAR TO A SMALL KINDLE OR IPAD. BUT THERE WILL BE NO INTERNET ACCESS AND THEY WILL BE SOLD FOR \$50. THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT 4-5 INCHES IN SIZE. SO PRETTY SMALL. THE LOCAL NEWS WENT OUT IN THE STREETS AND INTERVIEWED THE PUBLIC AND ASKED THEIR OPINION ABOUT THIS TO SEE HOW THEY FELT. I WATCHED IT ON THE NEWS AND THE LOCAL PUBLIC IS NOT HAPPY. BUT THEY ARE NOT BEING TOLD WHY THEY ARE ALLOWING US TO BUY THESE TABLETS, LATER ON THIS YEAR. THE ENTIRE FEDERAL SYSTEM ALREADY HAS THESE TABLETS AND SO DO 8 OTHER STATES. THE ONLY THING WE CAN DO WITH THESE TABLETS IS USE THEM TO CHECK OUR ACCOUNT, STORE MUSIC ON, RECEIVE E-MAILS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN SCREENED BY THE SECURITY COMPUTER PROGRAM, (BUT WE CANNOT SEND E-MAILS, ONLY RECEIVE THEM), AND WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DOWNLOAD BOOKS FROM A MACHINE THAT HAS THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF BOOKS STORED ON IT. NONE OF THIS IS FREE, OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS WILL BE FOOTING THE BILL FOR IT. WHAT THE PUBLIC FAILS TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT WE ARE HERE FOR A REASON. AND IF YOU DO NOT ALLOW US TO HAVE THINGS TO KEEP US BUSY, OCCUPY OUR MINDS, GIVE US GOALS, THEN WE REVERT BACK TO OUR FORMER SELVES. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE HERE WHO SIT IN THEIR CELLS ALL DAY AND NIGHT AND WATCH TV. THEY ARE NOT INVOLVED IN ANY VIOLENCE OR TROUBLE. THEIR FAMILIES PAID FOR THEIR

TV AND WE PAY A MONTHLY CABLE BILL. CABLE IS NOT FREE. THERE'S PLENTY OF SPORTS, ONLY 4 TELEPHONES FOR EVERY 200+ PEOPLE. BUT HAVING CONTACT WITH FAMILY IS SO VERY IMPORTANT. IT GIVES YOU HOPE, MAKES YOU FEEL LOVED, AND THESE TABLETS WILL HOPEFULLY HELP STRENGTHEN FAMILY TIES FOR MYSELF AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER PRISONERS IN PA. OUR CHILDREN CAN GO RIGHT TO THE WEBSITE AND SEND US AN E-MAIL ON THE COMPUTER. HOW MANY KIDS SIT DOWN AND WRITE LETTERS THESE DAYS? HARDLY ANY. SOME GUYS IN HERE HAVE NO FAMILY SO THEY JOIN A GANG WHEN THEY COME HERE AND YOU KNOW WHAT, NOW THEY HAVE ONE. I HAVE A FAMILY, I HAVE FRIENDS, I HAVE GOOD PEOPLE IN MY LIFE. I DO WISH I HAD MORE BUT I AM VERY HAPPY WITH WHAT I HAVE. LENT TO ME IS APPRECIATING WHAT I HAVE, WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN ME, AND TO KEEP THE PROMISES I MADE TODAY. I WILL NEVER JOIN A GANG BUT I DO UNDERSTAND THE MEANING BEHIND IT. THE SAFETY AND SECURITY IT GIVES YOU IN HERE. PRISON CAN BE A VERY DANGEROUS PLACE. BUT I STAY AWAY FROM THE DRAMA. I HAVE ENJOYED WORKING ON MYSELF AND GETTING TO KNOW MYSELF EVEN BETTER THAN EVER. MOST GANG MEMBERS IN PRISON WANT TO MAKE MONEY. MONEY IN HERE IS TOUGH. WE RELY ON FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND SOMETIMES THATS STILL NOT ENOUGH. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU MAKE 19¢ PER HOUR WORKING. THERE IS NO MINIMUM WAGE IN PRISON. TOP PAY IS 42¢ AN HOUR AND NOT EVERYONE CAN GET THAT. ACTUALLY, MOST CAN'T. SO GUY BECOME INVOLVED IN RUNNING A STORE, LOAN SHARKING, SELLING WHATEVER DRUGS THEY CAN GET THEIR HANDS ON. IT'S ABOUT MONEY. I DON'T EVEN MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO BE ABLE TO BUY MY DAUGHTER A BIRTHDAY PRESENT. BUT I THANK GOD EVERY SINGLE DAY FOR GIVING ME THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE TAKEN SUCH WONDERFUL CARE OF MY BABY GIRL ON SPECIAL DAYS LIKE HER BIRTHDAY AND CHRISTMAS. ONE DAY I AM HOPING HANNAH AND TANYA CAN BRING HER TO SEE ME. AND IF YOU'RE READING THIS HANNAH, PLEASE DON'T FORGET THIS. MY DAUGHTER TRUSTS HER AND THE ONE PLACE YOU WILL NEVER SEE ANY GANG ISSUES IS IN THE VISITING ROOM. I DREAM OF SEEING MY LITTLE GIRL AND I CAN ONLY SIT HERE AND PRAY THAT HANNAH AND TANYA CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN. RIGHT NOW I'M IN THE POSITION WHERE I DON'T NEED A GANG. IF I'M BROKE, THEN I'M BROKE. I'LL DO WITHOUT. I DON'T CROSS ANYONE AND I HAVE MORALS AND PRIDE SO THERE ARE JUST CERTAIN THINGS I WOULD NEVER DO. NOT EVERYONE IN HERE IS A COLD BLOODED KILLER, GANG MEMBER, OR EVIL HUMAN BEING. AND I'VE LEARNED THAT THE MORE GOOD PEOPLE I HAVE IN MY LIFE, THE BETTER MAN I BECOME. WE HAVE OUR ANNUAL CURSILLO CHURCH RETREAT COMING UP AND I AM HOPING THAT JUST 1 GANG MEMBER SIGNED UP TO PARTICIPATE. THIS RETREAT WAS AN AWAKENING FOR ME AND IT COULD BE FOR MANY. WELL I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH THAT. TAKE CARE, SPRING IS COMING SOON. GOD BLESS. CIAO.