

Titus House Newsletter

Titus House Ministries, PO Box 2376, Tijeras, NM 87059

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2019

A Grateful Returning Citizen

My name is David and for most of my life I had never heard the scripture in Romans 8:28 that says, “**All things work together for the good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.**”

From a very young age I remember talking to God asking Him, “why would you put me here with no one to love me?” Mother died when I was very young and father was absent, for whatever reason. While I was taken in by a family member there was little guidance in my life. Many of my moral values and ideas about life were instilled by the television, as I spent 1000s of hours in fantasy land. Not a good role model. Long story short, at age 11 I ran away from home. I was taken in by a hippie couple. Sex, drugs and rock-n-roll were the slogans of the day. I started smoking marijuana and by age 16 was shooting drugs. By 24, I was so strung out on every kind of mind altering substance, combined with sex, you can imagine the distortions that were in my mind. Needless to say I wasn't a spiritual man but in hind sight, I was bound together with all the wrong spirits and did not know it. How could this work together for **the**

good?” I was a mess!

At age 28 I met a good woman, began to raise a family, which was one of the most fabulous times in my life. After losing my first born son to my addiction, I entered a faith based treatment program (Teen Challenge) which helped get me clean for 12 years. This was a great inspiration to my vision for ministry. Eventually life's adversities set in and I relapsed. Within 2 years of my relapse I was sentenced to a (4 years to life) sentence for sex assault on a child. While incarcerated I used my time of correction for changing my heart, mind and spirit. Not knowing if I would ever be released I used the time to cultivate the soil of my heart, renew my mind and bathe in God's word daily, developing that relationship. I served 8.5 years of a 4-life sentence. I went into the DOC as an 8th grade drop out. I earned my GED in a short time and went on to take college courses in horticulture, aquaculture while working at a DOC greenhouse/fishery facility. While incarcerated I began to write down on paper and plan my goals for the future. Even though I didn't know if I would be released, due to a lack of a support person, I



trusted that God would make a way if I did the work. I was mentored by men of God, and other very intelligent men, who the enemy had tried to destroy with sin. My goals for the future were to **1.** Be released from the DOC. **2.** To develop a faith based returning citizen project for those who have embraced their time of correction, treatment and have changed their hearts, minds and behaviors. **3.** Assisting by providing resources (jobs, housing, and reintegration) for men and women who have committed sexual offences. **4.** To help the “modern day leper.” Knowing first hand that resources for SOs are in short supply.

Upon my release I found work, became stable; which took over two years to become “un-institutionalized”. I enrolled in college and worked my way through a business degree while working full time job. I got involved in the community by going to city council meetings and work with local

farmers/ranchers and developed a food co-op that encourages beginning farmers & ranchers to join our “**Healthy Food**” movement by growing healthy food. Likewise, I began to develop “**The Returning Citizen's Project**” (501c3) LAMB which assists returning citizens with education in the many areas of agricultural production (horticulture, aquaculture, plant science, management skills, sales, marketing, culinary, food processing, delivery and semi skilled labor positions) that will enhance the RCP as well as assisting the returning citizen in becoming successful assets to their families, friends and community.

I am grateful that our heavenly father never gave up on me. **I believe that all things do work together for the good for those who are called according to His purpose and I believe Abba Father is working in you.**



Insight to Mike's article "40 Years in Prison"

Hello Titus House. My name is Ryan I am currently 34 years old and completing my last month of a ten year sentence in the state of Florida. As I read February 2019 newsletter I felt led to respond to the "40 Years in Prison by Mike." It is a beautiful testimony. It proves that after several chances we can still make it out there. As humans we change. Our past decisions do not necessarily define who we are now. I am glad to read that Alice confirmed her faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. The newness of life in Christ is only received by the grace of God. Change by the power of the Holy Spirit is beyond measure. So, as you go through situations in life that show you have changed, do not forget to look up and thank Him for all He has done and continues to do in you.

I also want to comment on your last statement in the article, "Prison is simply a waste of your time and life." I want to respond to this because I know that Titus House Ministries has a wide scope of members. We are all over the nation, some incarcerated, some not. Not everybody is going to agree with me on this subject and that is OK. Pris-

on is not always a waste of time.

In a book I am currently working on called "The Criminal Metamorphosis" I have written a chapter called "The Correctional System." There I use the Webster's definition of corrections which is "the treatment and rehabilitation of offenders through a program involving penal custody, parole and probation." It is clear that they do not live up to this "treatment and rehabilitation" as we house 24.7% of the world's inmate population (U.S. covers 4.4% of global population). I completely agree that there should be alternatives, with prison as last resort. Sometimes last resort is a necessity.

Another issue we must consider in this is who carries the responsibility for this change. Someone in my family told me while I was in county jail, "You wasted ten years of your life." I responded by saying, "I promise you I will not." This is my encouragement to all who are still incarcerated that prison is simply a waste of time and life if you allow it.

God is powerful enough to use every good and bad thing in our life to do His

work and accomplish His will. So, Mr. Mike, as hard as it was, it sounds to me by your own testimony that God had to take you out of you to bring you closer to him. This might be a bitter pill to swallow (I know it was for me) but it sounds like God had you right where He wanted you all along, including now!

To all of my fellows incarcerated, don't serve time, force time to serve you. Be productive, take classes, teach classes, work as an orderly, get active in the chaplaincy, study through a seminary. Don't think prison has to bring you down. It can just as easily bring you up. Remember, stumbling blocks can also be used as stepping stones. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, and have been called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28.

Take another look

Attorney General Nessel Weighs in On Sex Offender Registration Cases Before MI Supreme Court by Michigan.gov

February 8, 2019

LANSING, MI – Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel filed amicus briefs in the Michigan Supreme Court today in *Michigan v Snyder* (Case number 153696) and *People v Betts* (Case number 148981), arguing that Michigan's sex offender registration and notification requirements are punishment because they are so burdensome and fail to distinguish between dangerous offenders and those who are not a threat to the community.

"When originally put into place, Michigan's Sex Offender Registration Act was narrow in scope and specifically designed to be an important law enforcement tool to protect the public from dangerous offenders," said Nessel. "But since its enactment, the Act has swelled without any focus on individualized assessment of risk to the

community, which makes it increasingly difficult for law enforcement officers to know which offenders to focus on. It also makes it difficult for offenders to rehabilitate and reintegrate into the community because they are limited in where they can live, work or even attend their children's school functions."

Nessel also pointed out that public accessibility of the registry has led to shaming, ostracizing, and even bullying of registrants and their families. Because the registry now allows the public to submit tips on the registry website, the public is essentially encouraged to act as vigilantes, opening the possibility for classmates, work colleagues and community members to be vindictive and retaliatory.

"There are certainly dangerous sexual predators and the public needs to be protected from them," said Nessel, "but

the current requirements are not the way to achieve that goal."

Amendments to the Act in 2006 and 2011 – especially geographic exclusionary zones and in-person reporting requirements --are onerous restrictions that are not supported by evolving research and best practices related to recidivism, rehabilitation, and community safety. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals recently agreed, holding that Michigan's SORA is punishment and cannot be applied retroactively. A number of state supreme courts have struck down their state registry laws on similar grounds.

"Simply put," said Nessel, "the state Sex Offender Registration Act has gone far beyond its purpose and now imposes burdens that are so punitive in their effect that they negate the State's public safety justification."



When bureaucrats undermine our laws —The Hill

Last month the President signed the First Step Act, the most comprehensive criminal justice reform in recent history. By shifting our federal prisons from merely warehousing prisoners to preparing them to be productive, law-abiding Americans when they are released, the First Step Act received widespread bipartisan support with lopsided votes in Congress (87-12 in the Senate, and 358-36 in the House) and the enthusiastic support of [President Trump](#). You would then expect that the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) would be working hard to implement the new law as soon as possible. But you would be wrong.

The truth, President Trump might be surprised to be learn, is that his administration's deep state bureaucracies are doing all they can to slow-walk and sabotage the reforms. Just one example of this bureaucratic resistance is their misinterpretation of the provision dealing with time off for good behavior. Since 1984, federal law has directed the BOP to "credit toward the service of the prisoner's sentence, beyond the time served, of up to 54 days at the end of each year of the prisoner's term of imprisonment." Congress's intent is not only clear, but rational. Prisoners should be encouraged to follow the rules, and those who do should be given a head start on getting back on their feet in the community.

But remember this is Washington, and things are never that simple for the bureaucracy. In defiance of Congress, the folks over at the BOP implemented a policy that only allowed 47 days of "good time" per year, despite the clear language authorizing for 54 days. Only a federal bureaucrat could find a way to make 54 days into 47. This deliberate miscounting of credits exacts a steep price for the offenders trying to get back on their feet, and for taxpayers as well. In fact, the price tag on those extra days is \$128 million per year in unnecessary government spending. And don't buy the malarkey that the extra time makes the public safer. If 10 years in prison hasn't changed an offender, 70 more days won't either.

In the First Step Act, Congress reaffirmed that when it wrote 54 days into the law in 1984 it meant the credit to be



54 days – not 47. Indeed, [a federal judge recently put it bluntly](#): "The plain language of the First Step Act... makes clear Congress' intent to *reject* the Bureau of Prisons' prior implementation of good conduct credit." It couldn't be clearer: the BOP's interpretation of the statute was wrong.

Yet, rather than put the 54 days into effect immediately despite clear guidance by the First Step Act, the BOP continues to drag its feet. The bureaucrats are now arguing that the First Step Act gives them up to 210 days to implement its provisions.

Why are they delaying a provision that could reunite so many families? Because it's hard for government lawyers to admit they've been wrong for the last 34 years.

This is not the first time the BOP has defiantly refused to follow the law – not by a long shot. Nearly four decades ago, Congress authorized "Compassionate Release" so that terminally ill prisoners could be sent to home confinement to spend their final days with their families. Yet, the bureaucrats have denied virtually all dying prisoners' requests. From 2013-2017, of the [5,400 inmates that applied only 312 were approved](#) (less than 6 percent). Tragically, 266 died while waiting for approval.

Similarly, the BOP has refused to follow the law on placement of prisoners in half-way houses. The Second Chance Act allowed twelve months in halfway houses for inmates who completed programs that prepared them to reenter the community and stayed out of trouble in prison. Time in a halfway house allows inmates to reestablish bonds with their family, obtain a driver's license, look for a job, find a house of worship, and other activities that will help them suc-

cessfully transition from incarceration to freedom as law-abiding citizens. This transition requires a significant amount of time, which is why Congress allowed for up to a year in a half-way house.

Yet, the [BOP arbitrarily capped it at six months](#).

The BOP continues to prohibit volunteers who had worked with inmates inside prison to continue to mentor them after their release. The Second Chance Act specifically mandated that the BOP reverse this absurd policy. To an inmate who has been behind bars for a long stretch, having a mentor to guide him or her in the difficult transition to the community is often the difference between staying out of trouble and returning to prison. The process of applying to be a mentor has become so complicated and expensive that the number of volunteers has dropped to nearly zero.

Taken as a whole, the prison bureaucracy is committed to keeping as many Americans as possible in prison. It's one of the reasons many of these previous policies had to be corrected with clear directives in the First Step Act. That has many in the BOP and DOJ upset.

A tried and true tactic of the deep state to advance its own agenda has been to "interpret" the law rather than follow it. In the case of the First Step Act, the bureaucracy isn't misinterpreting the laws in order to keep the public safer. No, the rear-guard action is driven by simple self-interest. As Mel Brooks said in "Blazing Saddles": "We've got to protect our phony baloney jobs."

No matter how much nameless, faceless bureaucrats may chafe at long overdue accountability with the First Step Act, we should not allow them to substitute their opinions for unambiguous language adopted by Congress. Their sabotage doesn't just harm inmates; it undermines the rule of law.

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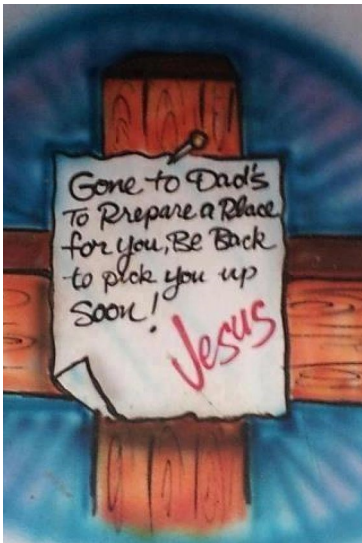
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Hebrew 13:3 - Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Remember if you change your address you need to let us know if you want to continue to receive this newsletter



Roy @ Fremont CF, Canon City, Colorado

I'm being blessed every day in so many ways. One is the very special quiet time for devotion and prayer in which I share with Him. I thank Him for the extremely valuable quiet time that I can speak to Him in solitude. I continuously thank Him for being my wonderful, loving and forgiving sovereign heavenly Father, and for His unconditional love!

When I was in county jail in 2002, and making a feeble attempt to renew my relationship with God (which I had set aside in about 1964), I had a very "gray-haired moment." I was extremely worried that I wouldn't have enough years left in my life to learn enough about God and serve Him the way "I thought" He would want me to. Of course now I know that I have been serving Him in various ways and didn't even

realize it until the Holy Spirit and others brought it to mind. In this environment, it's possible to serve Him through the way we act, for actions do speak louder than words. I've observed that, as I see the actions of some who claim to be Christians. When I first recognized how some of the incarcerated Christians act in our Sunday services versus how they act immediately following their exit from that service, well... that's when the Holy Spirit brought to my mind that I need to carry a mirror in my pocket. When I recognize that I'm pointing a finger at one of the "Convenient" Christians, I need to get the mirror out of my pocket and remember that there's still a lot of work that needs to be done in my life and as long as I'm still on this earth, I'll not have any authorization to be judging. My job is to be praying for that person.

I'm not lucky... You have no idea how much I've prayed.



Circle of Concern

Circle of Concern is aimed at breaking down isolation and fear by providing a safe place for registrants and their loved ones to get together, build community, and learn ways to step out and take charge of their lives and overcome the stigma

they face. The Circle of Concern is a group of concerned registered citizens, family and friends that meet together on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We are meeting this month on March 17, 2019 at 4 pm—6 pm. We will be having a potluck. We meet at Foothills Fellowship



Church, corner of Tramway and Candelaria on the far east side of Albuquerque. We encourage and try to help each other. It is a safe place to share our strengths and struggles. We hope you will join us. If you are planning to attend call Don at (505) 315-7940.