

# Titus House Newsletter

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

MARCH  
2018



## SHADOW PEOPLE By Sandy

... Some members of our society are shadow people, so marginalized that they are hanging on by their fingernails. Some have a slightly firmer grip, but they are perched precariously close to the edge, so close that they can be hurled into the abyss by a mere word, accusation, or click of a mouse.

In Florida colonies of these shadow people survive, sleeping at night in the woods, under bridges, and in railroad yards, and now the man who is almost solely responsible for this is doing his best to take even those places away from them.

Derek Logue, a long time activist and no stranger to marginalization himself, has visited Florida sex offender encampments, taking food, clothes, and basic hygiene items for those living there. He says of the situation, "Homelessness is difficult to overcome in the best of circumstances, but the homeless registrant crisis in Miami is directly tied to the local residency restriction laws. People at the camps are forced to live there because the law restricts registrants from living virtually anywhere in Miami-Dade. Many people otherwise willing and able to find shelter are unable to do so because of the law alone."

Nor is Florida the only state where stringent residency restriction laws – laws that are unsupported by any evidence — so severely limit housing options for sex offender registrants that cities have seen their homeless population explode. This has



been reported in Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, California, Colorado, and Wisconsin, to name only a few.

Not all on the registry are in such dire situations; some more gifted, more educated, more tenacious have managed to claw out a place, a community, to call their own. Even there, however, their hold on society is so tenuous that it can be easily destroyed.

A Virginia sex offender registrant with a ten year old offense, Daniel Silverman managed to create for himself a successful graphic art business. Going to various conventions, his company offered celebrity photography, a high-demand item, for interested clientele. He had employees; he paid taxes; he contributed to society and saved for the future. He felt secure. Then anonymous, online vigilantes started emailing warnings about him, complete with a link to his listing on the Virginia public registry, to the convention organizers where he displayed his craft. Within a year, his business was all but gone, and he was considering suicide. When he rallied and started rebuilding his business, he continued re-

ceiving harassment in tabloids and on social media. Every attempt he made to support himself was destroyed.

In a little town in Pennsylvania, a man named Roger Gilbert has just been reelected for a second term as the fire chief of the small town's volunteer fire department. The chief is chosen by the body of other firefighters. Roger is also a sex offender registrant in Pennsylvania, a fact known to the fire department, the town officials, and his community members. How or why is not known, but someone decided to make an issue of his status with this election, and the media made the most of the story.

In spite of the mayor expressing her support of the election process and Roger's election, the publicity was too much; he resigned several days after it began.

Roger's single offense was almost twenty years ago. Roger has said, "You know, the story you are telling kids is once you make a mistake, you will be punished for the rest of your life. I've changed my life for the better. Every day I get up and try to do good." That appar-

ently is not good enough for his enemies.

Those on registries throughout the nation, along with their families and their own children, have been and continue to be victims of vigilantes who not only send anonymous hate email but also vandalize, attack, destroy, and murder.

Public notification and registration is shown by decades of research and countless numbers of experts to have little to no public safety value. Given the negative consequences of such policies, the best solution to these issues is to eliminate the public registry.

Until we as a nation accept the wisdom of doing that, we need to decide on a course of action. We can either adopt policies that not only allow but also encourage former, law-abiding sex offenders to assimilate into society, punishing individuals and overturning policies that hinder that goal; or we can pass laws whereby every individual with a sexual offense conviction is released from prison with welfare and disability benefits already established.

We cannot continue as we have been. How can we in good conscience keep saying that we believe in rehabilitation and want former offenders to demonstrate that they have been rehabilitated and can rejoin society as productive members and then not only put in their way every stumbling block imaginable but also punish them over and over again every time they try?



## Senate Leaders Reconsider Ban on Pell Grants for Prisoners

February 15, 2018 By Erica Green, The New York Times

The Senate's top education leaders will consider reinstating Pell grants for incarcerated students, a move that would restore a federal lifeline to the nation's cash-strapped prison education system.

Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee and the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, said the committee would consider reinstating the federal financial aid grants in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act currently underway.

The move would reverse a decades-old decision to strike the benefit from the higher education law and



signal a shift toward recognizing education as a centerpiece in efforts to overhaul criminal justice law. The federal student aid could be used to cover the cost of college courses taught in prisons, online or both.

Mr. Alexander said that he was open to re-examining Pell grants for circumstances is a good idea." pris-

oners, which were banned in the 1994 crime bill passed under President Bill Clinton. In 2015, President Barack Obama's Education Department piloted an experimental program that allowed 12,000 incarcerated students to be eligible for the financial aid. If reinstated, millions of dollars would be made available to eligible students in the United States' prison population of 1.5 million.

"Most prisoners, sooner or later, are released from prison, and no one is helped when they do not have the skills to find a job," Mr. Alexander said in a statement. "Making Pell grants available to them in the right circumstances is a good idea."

## Editorial

by Alice

I joined Foothills Church this last month after checking out possible acceptance for "our people" (those on the Sex Offender Registry). So far, so good. At first some of our friends sat closely near us or in the same area. Now they say "Hi" to families who are eating snacks in the same vicinity with them after the service. When we first came to the church they hired a new guard but as far as I know there hasn't been an incident. We have had some people recently out of prison and we have had people who were released ten years ago, who work at good jobs, were looking for a church that would not only accept them but love them which they have found here Foothills. I am so thankful for leadership who believe the building should be used for the Lord. We have our monthly Circle of Concern there and have had several other gatherings. I was even given a key to the front door. Leadership says since the building is there it should be used. We agree.

Pastor Mike has been preaching the last few weeks from the book of Romans. It has been quite serious and challenging. Paul, the author of Romans, had done it all and can relate to his audience. In the first chapter of Romans, he bears down on many sins including the sin of immorality and the gay lifestyle. Some of us pause here and say, "Oh no, not me." But we good church goes find reference to being gossips, arrogant, boastful, and ruthless and other selfish categories which we are guilty of.

Do we take the new visitors to lunch, pray with them about their needs? If that is too scary we can at least get their names during the greeting time and let them know we are happy they have come, show them love, invite them to snack time.

Most of you know sex offenders have a recidivism rate of only 3 to 5% and even lower with treatment. We have literature to help you con-

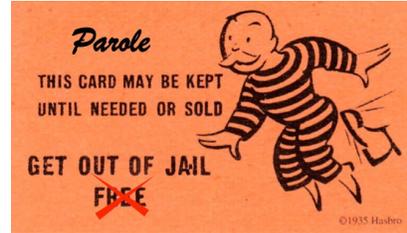
vince your church leadership if you are struggling with unnecessary restrictions. Such restrictions and regulations make sharing our faith much more difficult because we give forth an air of fear and distrust. If you are new in a church it will take a little time to build trust. Therefore, do not give up. God has a church which is a body of believers for you.





## In-house parole a broken system

By John Heard



With my limited resources in prison I have found 3 Federal case laws that deal with parole.

#1. It is usually left up to each state to set the standards of parole.

#2. There is no guaranteed right to parole (see *Greenholtz v. Inmates of Nebraska Pen.*)

#3 Parole is part of your sentence (NM) *State v. Smith* 1985

In most states, parole is designed to get out early. On P.B.S., on Frontline that aired on July 18, 2017. They stated; The purpose of parole is to reduce the prison population. Parole is a chance to get out early. This backs up, and stands to reason #1 and #2 above.

In New Mexico Parole is added to the end of the sentence. New Mexico is quick to quote #1 and #2 above. Stating there is no Guaranteed Right to Parole if all 3 are correct, and parole is part of your sentence. How does New Mexico, or why does, New Mexico add parole to the backside of the sentence. After the sentence is completed?

Even a stronger argument is, if you received the maximum sentence for your crime. How come, or why, does New Mexico “add” 2 or more years to that sentence?

I use this example. In other states that offer parole, if you receive a 10-year sentence with say 50% Goodtime possible, then that sentence could be done in 5 years (with all Goodtime received) but, with 2 years parole completing the 5 years.

This also backs up #1, #2 and #3! Using the same example, with 85% Goodtime for a violent offense. You would be “eligible” for parole in 6-1/2 years.

However, in New Mexico you will do every day of your 85% (8-1/2 years) plus, if you have no place to parole to, you will do 2 more years “inhouse parole” (in prison). Now doing 10-1/2 years for a 10 years sentence!

After the 10-1/2 years they will literally give you a bus ticket and throw you out the door! Generally, people in this last scenario go to a homeless shelter, or live in the streets! To some it is actually an incentive in New Mexico to do inhouse parole!

Going back to our example, (10 years 85%). After doing 8-1/2 years in a New Mexico prison. By then the general attitude is, what 2 more years? If I do 2 more years in prison then I can walk out the door, and do whatever I want, with no supervision at all? Referred to as killing my number. With this scenario who is most likely to reoffend? Is this keeping the public safe? No help, or services whatsoever after the “inhouse parole” is Completed! In many cases no record of where this person even is!

If in New Mexico, parole was used as it was intended, to get out early. This would be a great incentive to comply with all the Rules of Parole!

When if released early on parole, a person could be monitored, watched, and receive help. Get a start, a place to live, and a job. A little bit of stability, a chance to succeed.

In the same P.B.S. Frontline program previously mentioned, Connecticut uses parole as a chance to get out early. They reported a 30% Recidivism rate. (New Mexico is 85%) so the present system of parole in New Mexico is not working. It has been reported since 2014, that inhouse parole costs New Mexico at least an additional 10 million dollars annually. Recently it was mentioned on 2 New Mexico News channels, KOAT TV 7 on January 29, 2018, in the 5 pm newscast, and on the same date at 10:00 pm on KRQE channel 13.

In the August 2016 edition of Prison Legal News was quote by then Secretary of Corrections Gregg Marcantel, he stated, “It is a term that doesn’t make sense”. (Referring to inhouse parole).

Now a real injustice is for inmates who have 5 to 20 parole or as referred to by New Mexico as an indeterminate sentence. Right now, there are a least 2 people that I am aware of, that have the 5 to 20 parole, and have done more than 5 years in prison on parole! Some sentences after 2007, have 5 to life parole! In New Mexico a person can receive up to 20 years, or even lifetime parole! These people are not convicted of a capital crime that carries a life sentence! Most of these are not even First-Degree Felonies! Yet carrying parole sentences that far outreach the maximum sentence they received, for the crimes they were convicted of!

Our Governor Susana Martinez claims she is keeping the citizens of New Mexico “safe” by keeping these violent offenders off the street. Recent studies have suggested that longer sentences do not reduce crime.

In an article by the Albuquerque Journal, February 2014. Then Deputy Secretary of Corrections Joe Booker was quoted as saying “In fact 97% of all state prisoners in New Mexico will at sometime be released”! So, what is in the best interest to all citizens of New Mexico both incarcerated and free?

#1 The current way of doing business spending on additional 10 million dollars a year on a program that as former Secretary of Corrections Gregg Marcantel says “doesn’t make any sense” on inhouse parole. Upon completion kicking them out the door, OR

#2 Providing an incentive to do what’s expected of them. Helping them, monitoring them, and allowing them to once again become a productive citizen of New Mexico! (Remember 97% of them are going to get out at some time). At the same time saving 10 million dollars a year in tax payers money!

Money that could go to much better uses. It cost, 28,000 to 34,000 a year to house a single New Mexico prisoner. All studies and reports agree that education is the key to reducing recidivism, as well as the prison population. It greatly reduces the chances of going to prison in the first place! **CONTINUE ON PAGE 4 In-House Parole**



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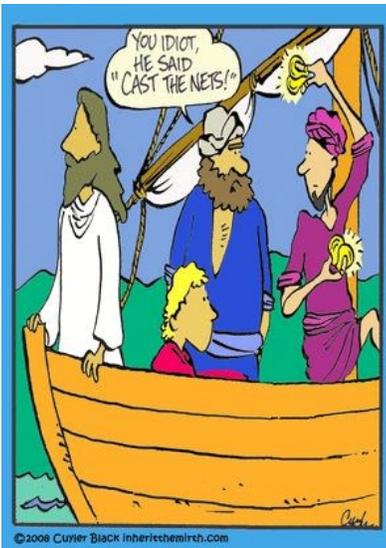
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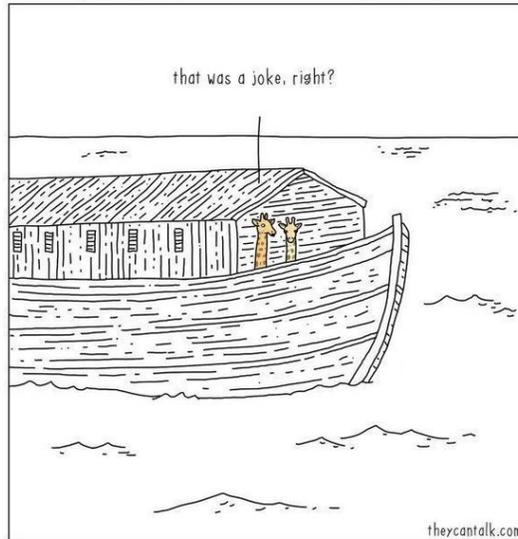
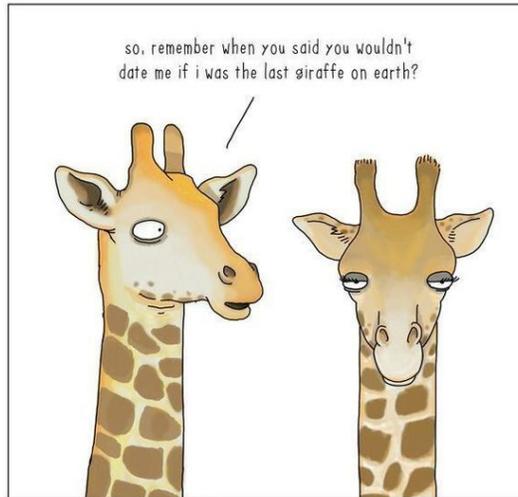
Hebrew 13:3 - Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

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



## In-House Parole

In New Mexico school age children grades K thru 12 receive an average 1,200 to 1,400 per child per year! New Mexico is spending on average of 20 times more to incarcerate a person than they are spending to educate our youth! Can you think of a better way to spend 10 million dollars a year? 10 million dollars to keep a prisoner (that's going to get out anyway) a few more days, months or years? This does not include the additional cost, (ultimately to the tax payers) when the state is sued and settles some of these cases for keeping these people past there release date. How much does it cost to keep a broken system going?



Happy St. Patrick's Day



St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland.

## 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 offenders, family and friends that meet together on the 2nd Sunday of each month. We are meeting this month on March 11, 2018 at 6 pm—8 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.