

FOOTSTEPS

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PRISONS



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I grew up on an island just off the south coast of England, which was famous for having two maximum-security prisons. As a child, the high prison walls held a mixture of fascination and horror for me. I remember travelling past them and wondering what life could be like for those inside.

For some of us, what happens in prisons is a mystery – but it need not be. Many of you will already be working in prisons, but for others, this edition may offer an opportunity to take a glimpse over the prison walls.

There are many ways of supporting prisoners and ex-offenders, showing God's heart of compassion and welcome to people who – like us! – desperately need him. In this edition, prison chaplain Matt Boyes shares tips for getting involved in prison visiting (pages 10–11). We explore what makes a fair trial, and what to do if fair trials are not happening in your country (pages 14–15). Prison Fellowship Singapore discusses ways to support the families of prisoners (page 9), while Red Viva Honduras shares its experience of using football to help young people avoid crime (page 20).

2018 is an important year for Tearfund, as we are celebrating our 50th birthday as an organisation. In the Old Testament, God gave the Israelites laws that commanded them to celebrate a year of jubilee every 50 years. This involved cancelling old debts, freeing slaves and restoring relationships with God, one another and the land. It was a time of release and restoration. This is the first of three *Footsteps* editions linked to the idea of jubilee.


In preparing this edition, it has been such a blessing to partner with Prison Fellowship International, the world's largest prison ministry organisation. Your local branch of Prison Fellowship is a great place to start if you feel called to work in prison ministry.



Zoe

Zoe Murton – Editor

PS I need your help to make sure *Footsteps* is doing its job! Some years ago, we had a group of readers who provided feedback by email on every edition of *Footsteps*. I am eager to restart this group. If you would like to be part of it, please email me on footsteps@tearfund.org and tell me a little about yourself. Thank you!

 Cover shows a prisoner cleaning the floor of Luzira Prison, Uganda. Photo: Andrew Philip



by Lindsey A. Frederick

RIPPLES OF HOPE IN A WAVE OF CRIME

With more than 22,000 prisons worldwide, containing more than 10 million people, crime is a social problem that devastates individuals, families and communities. And prison populations continue to grow.

Much research has been carried out into the question of why people turn to crime. Reasons vary across cultures and social contexts, but research suggests there is no single factor that influences criminal behaviour. Rather, it is the combination of multiple risk factors. These include growing up with abuse or violence in the home, untreated mental illnesses, and lower levels of income and education. In many low-income countries, poverty and unemployment push young people towards crime, particularly in poor districts of large cities.

Stephen, an ex-prisoner from the UK, says his father's alcoholism and physical violence contributed to his choices that eventually led to crime. 'I was brought up in an environment where there was not any love, and no investment in the children to perform academically,' says Stephen. 'We grew up in fear. Eventually, I started behaving like my father. I started drinking, which eventually led to drugs. I was 25 when I was caught with a substantial amount of heroin.'

THE PROBLEM OF PUNISHMENT

Problems in prison and in our systems of punishment add to the issue of the growing prison population. These problems include poor living conditions in prisons, where malnutrition, disease and violence are common. In most

countries, the rate of reoffending is as high as 50 per cent. Many legal systems are heavily over-burdened, as millions of prisoners are held in crowded, unhealthy conditions simply awaiting trial. In some cases, the length of the time spent in prison awaiting trial is longer than the potential maximum sentence for the crime. Without legal advice or money, many are imprisoned for civil matters, such as not repaying a debt, rather than for criminal offences.

Critics of today's criminal justice systems argue that not enough is being done to meet the needs of both prisoners and crime victims. Justice systems tend to focus exclusively on the offenders' lawbreaking, and the culture in prisons is often based on the threat of violence. Prisoners find that prison is a place to either endure or dominate until their release, rather than an environment where they can learn personal responsibility for their behaviour.

After living within this structure, prisoners often have great difficulty rejoining society when they are released. They may have few skills and little work experience, and their criminal convictions follow them around. When ex-offenders are left without acceptable, productive ways to live outside of prison, the cycle of crime and punishment repeats itself.

PRISONERS' FAMILIES

Added to these issues is the psychological impact on prisoners and their families. Prisoners' families may feel ashamed, and reject them to escape stigma. Wilson, a prisoner in Cartagena, Colombia, says things got so bad he wanted to end his life: 'My family had abandoned me, and I felt worthless and hopeless.'



📷 Is prison just a punishment to be endured, or a place where positive transformation can occur?
Photo: Andrew Philip

In many low-income countries, the impact of a father going to prison can be devastating to the family's economic well-being. More than 14 million children worldwide have a parent in prison. These children are exposed to dangers such as poverty, violence and human trafficking. Many children of prisoners are malnourished, cannot afford educational fees for uniforms and books, or must drop out of school to help support their family.

Other children are abandoned altogether. Sometimes their remaining parent remarries and the children are not welcome in the new relationship. In other cases the remaining parent simply cannot handle the burden of caring for their children alone.

The shame and stigma attached to imprisonment drive families from their homes and communities. Isolated and with few options for earning an income, they fall into greater social and economic difficulties.

RIPPLES OF HOPE

Despite the many problems listed above, there is hope for prisoners and their families. Many prison ministry groups are offering solutions, including restorative justice reforms (see page 16), legal aid, health care and educational services.

These help prisoners and their families to find emotional healing, grow in physical resilience and develop vocational skills. We are now seeing the growing effects of these services.

Over the past 40 years, the revolutionary concept of restorative justice has

emerged. This is a criminal justice reform movement that draws on biblical principles of justice. It is helping to shift the prison culture from power and violence to personal responsibility. Restorative justice helps prisoners come to terms with their wrongdoing, take responsibility, learn conflict resolution skills and have the opportunity to begin their own journeys of faith. It also helps victims of crime to find healing and move forward.

Stephen, the ex-prisoner from the UK, met a group of ex-offenders from a local Christian prison support group. Their influence eventually led Stephen to a transformation of faith that turned his life around. He now travels the globe with Prison Fellowship International, the world's largest prison ministry, training prison volunteers to facilitate a prison evangelism and discipleship programme called The Prisoner's Journey® (see page 18). Wilson, the prisoner in Colombia quoted above, attended this programme during the time when he wanted to end his life. He had a life-changing encounter with God during one of the sessions. He is still in prison, but now he is devoted to sharing with other prisoners the story of what God has done for him.

As for families of prisoners, thousands are receiving support from their local prison ministries, which partner with government officials, local churches, NGOs, schools and health centres. These organisations help the families to access vocational training, health care, counselling services and support groups.

Several organisations are sharing stories of families reaching out to other poor community members once their own lives have become more stable.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

While it can be tempting to leave solutions to the government, in reality crime touches all of our communities, and prisoners are our neighbours. As Christians, God calls us to 'look after the orphans and widows in their distress' (James 1:27), to feed and clothe the poor, to tend to the sick, and to visit prisoners (Matthew 25:36). There are many ways we as individuals, churches and communities can do this.

- **Act:** Many prison outreach organisations rely on volunteers to help facilitate their programmes and deliver services. Churches in particular can play a powerful role in filling this need by starting their own ministries or partnering with an existing one.
- **Appeal:** Prayer is one of the most powerful ways we can consistently care for prisoners and their families. Consider hosting a day or a week of prayer in your church, Bible study or family prayer time for prisoners, ex-prisoners, their families, victims of crime, prison and government officials and prison ministries.
- **Advocate:** You can support restorative justice reforms in prison systems, schools and workplaces. You can help raise awareness about unjust prison conditions and the problems families of prisoners face. And you can support organisations actively working in the field of criminal justice.

By caring for the hearts of all those affected by crime and imprisonment, we demonstrate Jesus' love and compassion in a broken and hurting world.

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Lindsey A. Frederick is the Marketing and Communications Manager for Prison Fellowship International. For more information, or to learn how to get involved with your local Prison Fellowship ministry, visit www.pfi.org or email info@pfi.org

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📷 Vocational training and support can help prisoners' families to improve their income. Credit: Prison Fellowship Cambodia





by Joel Rosales Matute



How would we welcome an ex-offender into our church or Bible study group?

BIBLE STUDY

A FAMILY FOR EX-OFFENDERS

When people are released from prison, many of them have nowhere to go and no job. Worse still, they are not accepted by the community.

- Spend a few moments talking about the conditions people face in prison in your country or local area.
- What do you think people experience when they are released?

God's children form a community of faith – the church – to receive these people. For this to be possible, the church has to have at least three qualities:

1 – THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY OF LOVE

Jesus calls us to love others as he loves us. This is an extreme and unconditional love. At the final judgement, Jesus will say:

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For... I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you... in prison and go to visit you?” The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:34–40)

The arms of the church are the arms of Christ. It is through us that people will receive God's love. We often visit offenders and preach a message of love,

but once they are released, they do not receive this love within our churches. We must remember that when we do something for people in need, we are doing it for Jesus himself.

- How can we practically show God's love to someone who has recently been released from prison?

2 – THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY OF ACCEPTANCE

Society stigmatises ex-offenders, often despising them, but this is not how it should be in the church. We must create the appropriate conditions for them to rejoin society, valuing them and respecting them as children of God. Many of us naturally have a fear of ex-offenders, and we need to pray for God's help to overcome this.

During his ministry, our Lord frequently mixed with those stigmatised by society at that time. For example, we read in Mark 2:16–17:

‘When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”’

- How can we show acceptance to an ex-offender?

3 – THE CHURCH AS A RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY

The Bible presents the church as a restorative community, in which the wounds of the broken are healed. We must welcome those being released from prison, for we are here to restore and not to judge. The Lord teaches us in Matthew 7:1–2: ‘Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.’ At the same time, we must always ensure we are keeping the people in our congregation safe.

- In what specific ways could we help restore a person who has recently gained their freedom?

ROLE PLAY

- Let's role-play how we would receive an ex-offender in our study group.

If our churches love, accept and restore those who have suffered the difficult experience of being a prisoner, we will be faithfully fulfilling our work as Christ's representatives. Through our love and support for them, we can help to prevent them from re-offending.

Pastor Joel Rosales Matute has worked for many years in communities with high crime rates in Honduras.

Email: joelrmdpc@yahoo.com



INTERVIEW

TRANSFORMING AFRICA'S PRISONS

Ten years ago, Alexander McLean set up African Prisons Project (APP). The organisation works hard to improve living conditions in prisons, providing health care, libraries, education and vocational training. But APP also does something even more revolutionary: it supports prisoners and prison staff to study qualifications in law. The results are astounding...

What first inspired you to start working in prisons?

I went to volunteer at a hospice in Uganda when I was 18. Through the hospice I spent three months at Mulago Hospital, Uganda's national referral hospital. There were prisoners in the hospital, and I realised that many of them had been dismissed as worthless by their communities. This was a very formative time in my life.

Meeting sick prisoners, often teenage boys, prompted me to visit the prison they came from. I ended up refurbishing the prison hospital in Uganda's maximum security prison, working with the prisoners and prison staff. We saw the death rate there drop massively. I questioned why, in countries filled with NGOs, so few were working in prisons. So I started African Prisons Project in my second year of university to bring dignity and hope to men, women and children in prison.

What are the problems with living conditions in prisons?

In countries in sub-Saharan Africa such as Uganda and Kenya, the population has grown massively in the last few decades. As a result, there has been huge growth in the number of people being sent to prison, and prison capacity simply has not kept up. Prisons are

hugely overcrowded. This overcrowding puts a strain on all the resources. It means that prisoners often are not well fed and cannot always lie down to sleep in their cells at night. The prison service is under huge pressure and does not have sufficient funding to meet prisoners' needs.

**WE WANT TO
SHARE GOOD
PRACTICE FROM
EAST AFRICA
WITH THE REST
OF THE WORLD**

How do you think large-scale changes in living conditions can be achieved?

For me, the starting point is ensuring that only the people who need to be in prison are there.

Although APP won awards for our work in health and basic education, we realised that most of the people we were serving would not be in prison if they had access to quality legal services. We had the idea of training prisoners and prison staff in law, enabling them to appeal their own and other prisoners' cases. This has led to many prisoners being acquitted or receiving lower sentences, helping to reduce the overcrowding in the prisons we work in.

We do not think that people who are awaiting trial for minor offences need to be routinely imprisoned.

📷 Thanks to prison law student Susan Kigula, hundreds of prisoners were released from death row.
Photo: African Prisons Project



We also think it is important to showcase things that are going right in prisons. Prison services are often in the news because of their problems, but we want to celebrate the ones that are doing great things. We want to work with leaders who have a vision for change, and say, 'We'll help you to mobilise resources and support.'

We aim to be part of a community that is thinking about how prisons can really be celebrated as places where lives can be transformed. And we want to share good practice from East Africa with the rest of the world. There are things happening in prisons in Kenya and Uganda that higher-income countries could learn from.

What would APP like to achieve in the future?

APP is changing from being a prison welfare NGO to an organisation empowering people through the knowledge of the law. We are enabling prisoners and prison staff to train as paralegals and study University of London law degrees. This practical training will enable them to provide the highest-quality legal services to people on the margins of society and those who cannot afford to pay for lawyers.

Around 3,000 people have been released from prisons in Uganda and Kenya as a result of receiving legal services from people we have trained. We want that figure to be 30,000 people by 2020.

We are excited about building a model in Uganda and Kenya for providing high-quality legal services to people in conflict with the law across these countries. We then want to roll out this model elsewhere in Africa and beyond. Around the world, it tends to be the poor who go to prison and wealthier people who become lawyers. But those who have got first-hand experience of conflict with the law are well placed to use the law to serve the poor.

Is there a story that has particularly inspired you from your work?

There are very many! I am particularly proud of Susan Kigula, who was our first



📷 Alexander chatting with a prisoner. Photo: Andrew Philip

female student in Uganda. She started studying from death row, and was one of the University of London's best students in human rights law. She established a legal aid clinic in her prison and led a case that resulted in the mandatory death sentence for murder and armed robbery being abolished. Susan and hundreds of others were released from death row.

I AM PROUD TO BE PART OF A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE USING THE LAW TO CHANGE LIVES

I am proud to be a part of a community of people who are using the law to change lives today and tomorrow. They are winning individuals their freedom, but are also working to change the law at a national level and create more just nations.

What advice would you give to people who want to get involved in prison ministry?

As a naive 18-year-old with a clear sense of right and wrong, I pushed my way into prison work. I have now learnt that prisons are complex communities. My advice would be:

- Build relationships. As people from outside, it is important to listen more

than we speak and to take time to build relationships, even with people whose perspective we may struggle to understand.

- Do not underestimate prisoners and low-ranking prison staff. These people have experience, talents and resilience, because surviving in prisons requires creativity and perseverance. Prison staff are often under-appreciated and underpaid – but they are fundamental to making prisons places of positive transformation. At APP we work very closely with prison staff at all levels, because we know that ultimately they are the ones who change prisons.

- Do not fall into the trap of thinking that prisoners are dependent. I think sometimes we can look at people whose lives seem really hard and think, 'What they need is for us to give them material things.' I think fundamentally what we all need is for people to give us a chance to have a future that is different from our past. We should be slow to judge and quick to love people in prisons and outside of them.

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Alexander McLean is the founder and Director General of African Prisons Project. He is also a graduate of Tearfund's Inspired Individuals programme.

*Web: www.africanprisons.org
 Email: info@africanprisons.org*



by Collins Musona

CREATING HEALTHIER PRISONS

Zambian prisons can be very unhealthy places. Problems include massive overcrowding, insufficient food and poor hygiene conditions. Diseases such as TB and malaria are common. Some 27 per cent of prisoners are living with HIV, which is more than double the figure for the general population.

At Prison Fellowship Zambia (PFZ) we believe that health education can empower those in prison to live healthier lives. We run a range of interactive health education sessions with prisoners to discuss issues that are affecting their well-being.

MOBILE MEDICAL CLINICS

Working in collaboration with the government, we provide mobile clinics that go into prisons. These are staffed by volunteer health workers. If prisoners need more complicated treatment, we arrange a referral to one of the bigger health facilities.

We encourage prisoners to get tested for HIV, and deliver counselling before and after their test. For those who are

diagnosed as HIV-positive, we provide help with accessing treatment. We also give them nutritional supplements and regular check-ups to see how they are doing.

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

PFZ runs health education sessions to teach prisoners about issues such as hygiene, nutrition and HIV. We give the prisoners information leaflets on the topic in question, and make sure these are translated into local languages. However, many prisoners are illiterate, so we also use drama. We hire a drama group to present health messages in prisons using singing, drums, acting and picture demonstrations.

I remember seeing a good example of a drama on the importance of following your HIV treatment plan. One actor played the part of a prisoner with HIV who had just been prescribed HIV treatment. The actor expressed thoughts such as, 'I am in prison and I will never see my family again – it is best to die here and now, so I will not take my medication.' Then another actor came alongside the first actor to support him, explaining all the

reasons for taking the treatment. Dramas like this help people understand and engage with health messages.

SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

As workers with PFZ, our time in prisons is limited to certain hours each day. We therefore train prisoners as peer educators so they can spread health messages among their fellow inmates. These peer educators run individual and group discussions on subjects such as HIV prevention. In peer groups, prisoners are better able to express their concerns openly and feel that everyone identifies with them. Many peer educators are HIV-positive themselves. When the prisoners see them working with PFZ in responsible roles, this helps to reduce the stigma of living with HIV.

We also train certain prisoners to be something we call 'treatment supporters'. As shown in the drama above, when prisoners are first diagnosed with HIV they often feel a sense of despair and cannot see the point of taking their medication. The treatment supporters offer encouragement to these inmates. They help them realise they will have a future outside prison one day, so it is worth taking the medication.

Prison Fellowship Zambia sends mobile medical clinics into prisons.



DISCUSSION QUESTION

- How could you help improve the health care in your local prison?

Collins Musona is the Health and HIV Programme Officer for Prison Fellowship Zambia, a Tearfund partner organisation.

Email: kolintocollins@gmail.com

CARING FOR PRISONERS' FAMILIES

When someone goes to prison, the whole family suffers. Family care is an important part of the ministry of Prison Fellowship Singapore (PFS). We support about 70 families of inmates through the programmes below.

- **Support groups.** When a loved one is imprisoned, the spouse tends to suffer greatly. Wives and mothers often isolate themselves because of a sense of shame. Support groups offer a safe place for them to express their feelings without feeling judged. They also provide a platform for social activities and group counselling sessions.
- **Home visits.** The Family Care team and volunteers regularly visit prisoners' families to offer friendship, comfort and counselling. Visits are especially helpful if family members are ill or bed-bound.
- **Employment, vocational training and financial assistance.** PFS helps inmates' families to find jobs by providing training in language skills, computing and crafts.

We also provide short-term financial aid to families needing urgent help.

- **Referrals to family service centres, counselling providers and the faith community.** PFS partners with various organisations to provide professional counselling and social work services. While doing this we maintain friendships with the families, with a view to helping inmates rejoin their families after release.
- **Parents' ministry.** The parents of prisoners often become the caregivers for their grandchildren. For the parents of inmates, PFS provides emotional, medical and other practical assistance.
- **Support for children of prisoners.** Prisoners' children often experience isolation, shame and poverty. They may suffer from a lack of attention from their caregivers, who are often struggling to cope themselves. Care Club is a weekly club for the children of prisoners. We organise activities such as tuition classes, reading, music, art and dance on



Creative activities help the children of prisoners to relax and have fun. Photo: Prison Fellowship Singapore

Saturdays with the help of volunteers. Care Club also organises outings and camps to provide fun-filled activities for inmates' children during school holidays.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

- How could your church or organisation support the families of prisoners?

By staff at Prison Fellowship Singapore.

*Web: www.pfs.org.sg
Email: admin@pfs.org.sg*

CARING FOR A PRISONER'S CHILD

The imprisonment of a loved one can be overwhelming for both children and caregivers. If you are caring for a prisoner's child, below are some simple ways you can help her through tough moments.

- **Build security.** In the morning, let the child know some of the things that will happen throughout the day. For example, 'Grandma will pick you up from school. Then you will go to the park, and later we will all have dinner together.'
- **Share your heart.** Give the child a paper heart to keep in her pocket. You might say, 'This is to remind you that I love you and will always be there for you.'

- **Express emotions.** Take time each day to ask the child, 'How are you feeling?' Remember to let the child know that it is okay to have big feelings, no matter what they are.
- **Answer honestly.** When explaining where an imprisoned parent is, you can say, 'Daddy is in a place called prison (or jail) for a while. Grown-ups sometimes go to prison when they break a rule called a law.'
- **Stay connected.** If phone calls are possible, they are a great way for the child to stay in touch with her parent. Help her to think of something she would like to tell her parent, and give

her a photo of her parent to hold during the call.

- **Prepare together.** Before you visit your loved one in prison, let the child know some of the things she can expect to happen. For instance, 'We will not be able to sit in the same room with Mummy, but we can see her through a window and read a story together.'

Adapted from the Sesame Street toolkit, Little children, big challenges: incarceration. See Resources page for details.

by Matt Boyes

PRISON VISITING FOR BEGINNERS

In the Bible, so many of God's people end up in prison. Joseph, Samson, Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, Peter, John, James, Paul, Silas, Aristarchus, Andronicus, Junias and even Jesus, when he was arrested, all spent time behind the walls and bars of prison.

They all experienced the distress of being cut off from loved ones: the darkness, the oppression and the loneliness. It is not surprising that Christians are called to go into prisons to visit and care for those there. God wants us to be light in the darkness – to be beacons of hope where there is often despair.

BRINGING HOPE

For me, as a prison chaplain, my inspiration comes from Isaiah 58:10: 'Spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed.' Oppression comes from many sources: the loss of freedom, loss of dignity, harsh

surroundings, shame, guilt, depression and anxiety. Prisoners are also hungry for good news, acceptance, understanding and the chance to make things right.

MY DESIRE HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO GET CHRISTIANS INTO PRISON!

Prison visiting can be one of the most challenging and rewarding services we can offer. We can hold out hope and love to prisoners who have lost almost everything. We can bring the free offer of the gospel of forgiveness and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit to those condemned. We can offer the possibility of new life and change to those who have been mastered by sin.

My desire has always been to get Christians into prison! I want them to see how powerfully God acts in the worst circumstances to redeem and save. In prisons, Christians can demonstrate the acceptance and love of God through acts of kindness and words of encouragement. Of course, we never force the gospel on people. But I have seen so many prisoners come to faith and find a new reason for hope and life in Jesus. It is wonderful to see them find ways to put right some of the wrong they have done. Relationships with families are restored. This experience can help us to have faith for the communities in which we live and work – that God can work in the same way there, too.

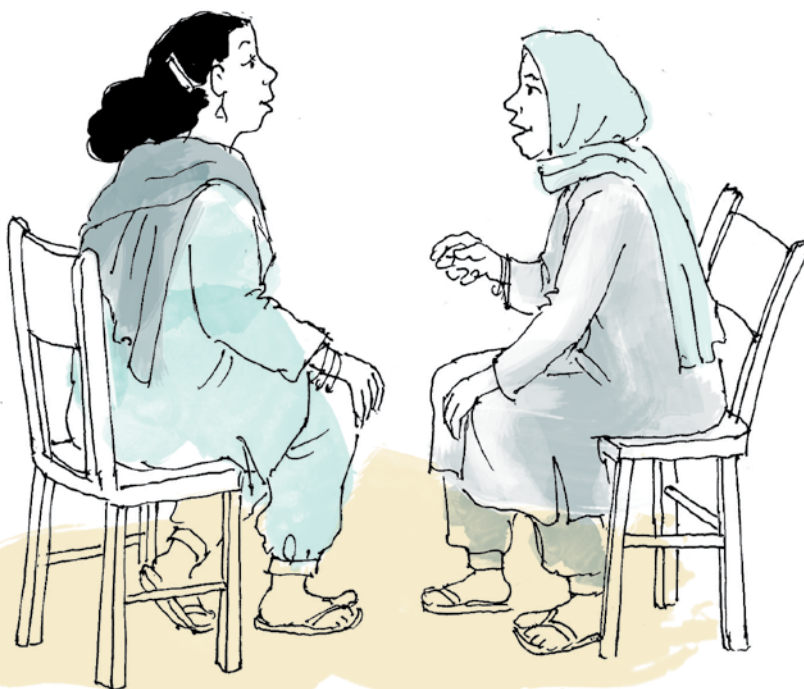
THE POWER OF TRANSFORMED LIVES

God moves powerfully in prison, and prison volunteers often feel they gain so much more than they think they are giving. Love costs, so be prepared for disappointment, but hope for the best. A released prisoner who has found living faith goes back to his or her community as a testimony to the power and presence of God. Churches need to be ready to receive these people. Wisdom and grace are required, as there may be areas where ex-offenders still need to change and grow. That will be true of us, too.

For those of us who are Christians, prison ministry is an act of worship to our God, who seeks and saves the lost. We can pray for our local prisons and for the light of Jesus to shine into the darkness.

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Matt Boyes is Managing Chaplain at Feltham Prison in the UK.

Email: matt.boyes@hmps.gsi.gov.uk



Having someone non-judgemental to talk to can be very healing.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN PRISON VISITING

1 MAKE CONTACT

So how do you go about getting into prison? The first step is to make contact with any prison chaplains already working there to offer support and prayer. They will be able to tell you what is needed and the processes to follow for getting access to the prison. **The most important thing is for visitors to be humble and willing to serve in any capacity.**

If there is no prison chaplain, then you can contact the prison governor offering practical support. **In some countries, the offer of food for inmates is very much needed**, especially for those who do not have family nearby. This practical offer of help may open doors to a wider ministry. If you have a professional qualification and are a teacher, doctor, nurse or counsellor, then the prison governor may be very pleased to hear from you.

Prison Fellowship International (www.pfi.org) is an international Christian organisation with branches all around the world. They are a great place to start when finding out what the needs are and whom to talk to.



2 GO THROUGH ANY CHECKS AND TRAINING

In many prisons there will be a vetting process to go through, and this will vary from country to country. Some prisons will offer training to new volunteers, and this should always be done. Volunteers need to be mature in faith. They should dress simply and behave appropriately at all times.

Some of the most effective prison visitors are those who have a criminal record themselves, but they may be told to wait a number of years before they are allowed to visit prisons. Humility and patience again are key.



3 ALWAYS FOLLOW THE RULES

Governors are responsible for keeping everyone in the prison safe, both inmates and staff. Prison ministries can be easily destroyed if security rules are not followed or if inappropriate relationships develop.

Prisoners may ask volunteers to bring forbidden articles into the prison or to take messages out. The golden rule is: 'Nothing in and nothing out.'



4 BUILD GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

Do not ask a prisoner why they are in prison, as their answer can affect the way we respond to them, and they will notice. Instead, remember that all prisoners are made in the image of God. All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, and all can be redeemed by faith in Jesus. So prisoners are just like us! Having this attitude opens the door for many amazing conversations and opportunities.

We should seek to meet prisoners' needs and befriend them. Having someone to talk to who does not judge them and believes the best for them can be very healing. Try not to ask the prisoner too many questions, as that can feel like an interrogation. Instead, allow them to express their fears, hopes, questions and needs. **Never make a promise to a prisoner that you cannot fulfil**, as they have been let down by many people in the past.

You should not give your personal details or too much personal information to prisoners. This keeps the relationship on a professional basis and protects our loved ones.



5 KEEP CONFIDENTIALITY

Finally, one of the hardest things is not to talk with others about the prisoners we meet. We can talk generally about what we have seen and experienced, but never mention prisoners' names or any details that might identify them. Keeping this confidentiality increases trust and helps us to work with integrity.



INTRODUCING... TEARFUND LEARN

Our resources website has a new name! The Tearfund International Learning Zone (TILZ) is now Tearfund Learn.

We think the name Tearfund Learn is clearer than TILZ, and better reflects our vision for sharing Tearfund's knowledge and learning.

If you have not used Tearfund Learn before, here are our top tips for finding your way around the website:



We have a blog! Read posts from people around the world as they share their stories, insights and learning.



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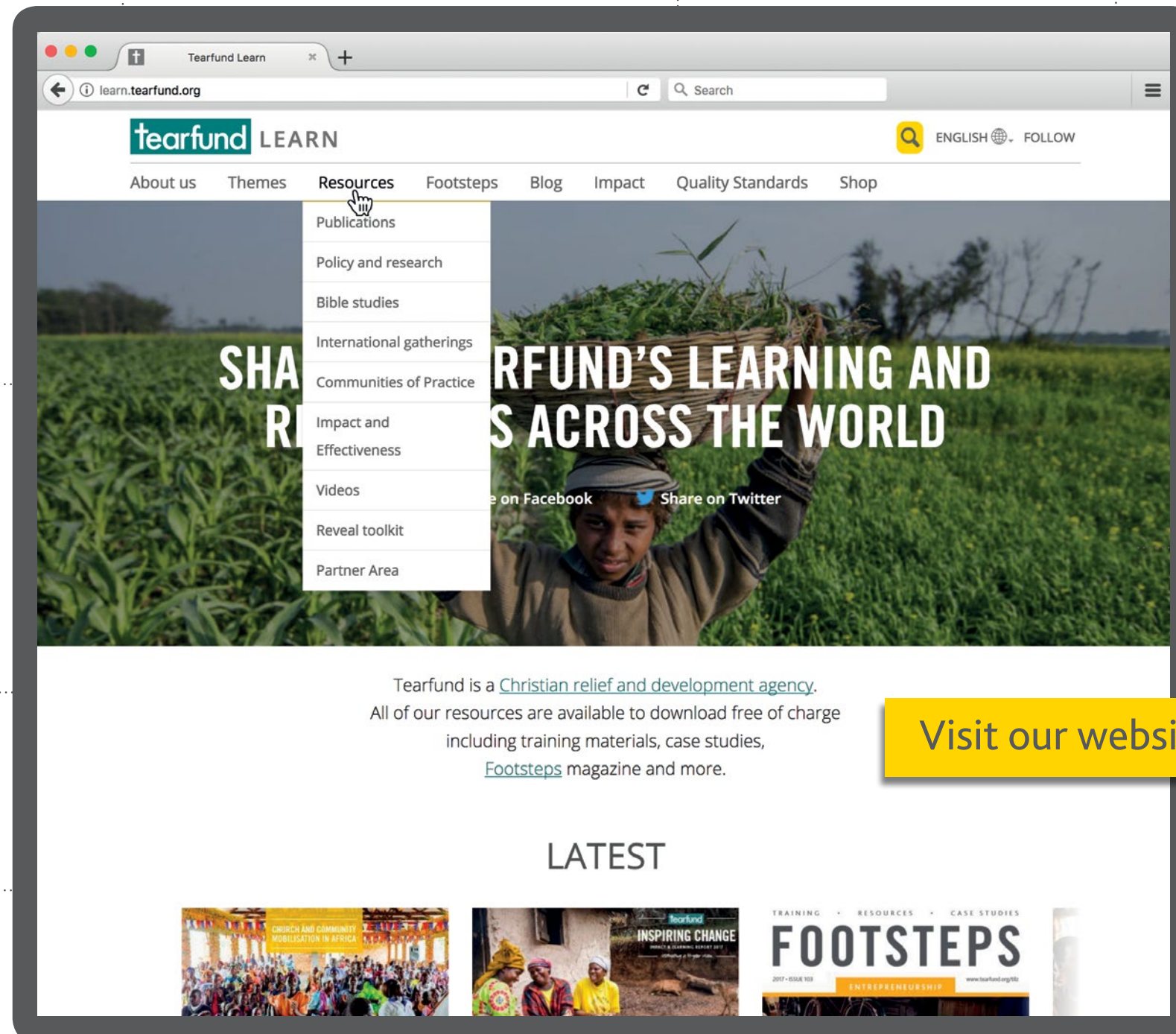


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By Sara Baines and Jordan Mary, who work for Tearfund's Communications for Development team.

Email: publications@tearfund.org



by Sabrina Mahtani and Jennifer Riddell

WHAT MAKES A FAIR TRIAL?

Fair trials have special protections that make sure everybody accused of a crime gets treated fairly, or justly, within the criminal justice system.

WHY ARE FAIR TRIALS IMPORTANT?

Fair trials are critically important in every country. They ensure that governments cannot convict someone or take away their liberty without following fair and just processes. They make sure that anyone accused of a crime can understand what is happening to them. Fair trials ensure that people can trust and have confidence in the criminal justice system in their country.

The right to a fair trial is included in many constitutions around the world. It is a central foundation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948. Though individual countries will have varying rules and procedures, below are some basic principles about what makes a fair trial:

- the right to information about the situation
- the right to a lawyer
- the right to be heard by a competent, independent and unbiased tribunal

- the right to a public hearing
- the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty
- the exclusion of evidence obtained in a way that breaks international standards (eg through torture)
- the right to have adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence, and the right to be heard within a reasonable time
- the right to be present at trial
- the right to call and examine witnesses
- the right to an interpreter and translation, if necessary
- the right to appeal a conviction and sentence

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

In many countries, fair trials do not always happen. Reasons for this include weaknesses in the legal system, such as insufficient or poorly trained judges and lawyers. Many people lack an awareness of their rights. Another big challenge is corruption. Corruption can be found at all levels, from the court administrative officers, who may decide which case is heard next, right up to an appeal court judge.

HELPING ACHIEVE FAIR TRIALS

1. The first step is to know what your rights are. Then you can try and claim them, and can share this knowledge with others.
2. Get information about lawyers or legal aid NGOs that you can contact if you need assistance. Some may offer legal rights training.
3. Be aware of the individuals and organisations in your country to which you can report violations of fair trial rights. These include the Human Rights Commission and the ombudsman (an official who investigates people's complaints against public officials and institutions).
4. Be aware of international bodies that you can contact about violations of fair trial rights (eg UN Special Rapporteurs).
5. Ask your government representatives to do more to ensure fair trial rights (eg more funding for courts, police and legal aid).

.....
To read a longer version of this article, visit www.tearfund.org/fairtrial

Sabrina Mahtani is the co-founder of *AdvocAid*, an organisation providing education, empowerment and access to justice for girls and women in Sierra Leone. Jennifer Riddell is a Senior Crown Prosecutor for the Crown Prosecution Service in England (writing in a personal capacity).

Web: www.advocaidsl.org
Email: info@advocaidsl.org





CASE STUDY: FROM DEATH ROW TO FREEDOM

In 2003, 'MK' (name protected for her privacy) was arrested and held in Sierra Leone for the murder of her step-daughter.

The truth was that MK's husband had accidentally sat on the six-month-old baby, suffocating it. They were both arrested, and he told the police that she had poisoned the baby with battery fluid. They believed him. He told MK to confess and that the matter would be resolved in a traditional family way. MK put her thumbprint on a confession (which she was not able to read), and this was later used against her in trial.

Between 2003 and the beginning of her trial in 2005, MK received no legal advice or assistance. It was only at the start of the trial that she was given a state defence lawyer. He was so busy that he had just three meetings with her of less than 15 minutes each. MK was illiterate, terrified and alone.

AN UNFAIR CONVICTION

During MK's trial she had no idea what was happening, as proceedings were conducted in English, a language she did not speak. She was found guilty of murder, sentenced to death and transferred to a maximum security prison.

Unable to read, write or pay for a lawyer, MK had to rely on the state-provided Prison Welfare Officer to file for appeal. This was not done properly or followed up. When she was convicted, no one informed her she had just 21 days to appeal. Furthermore, her file was not sent to the President's office for further review, as required by law.

MK was imprisoned in a small, dirty cell in the overcrowded Pademba Road Prison. Shortly after her sentencing, the legal aid organisation AdvocAid met MK in one of their prison literacy classes. They took on her case and began the long process of trying to obtain her court file from the provinces. This took several months due to poor filing procedures.



AdvocAid's paralegal Nenny provides legal aid and practical help to female prisoners. Photo: AdvocAid

CAMPAIGNING NEAR AND FAR

AdvocAid hired a lawyer, who filed an appeal before the Court of Appeal in 2008, but MK's case was rejected due to being out of time. An old law in Sierra Leone says that extra time to appeal can be granted, but not in cases where a person was sentenced to death. MK was devastated when she heard this news.

AdvocAid did not give up, though. They drafted a policy paper called *21 Days: Enough Time to Save Your Neck?* They also began lobbying various parts of the justice sector for reform. They requested support from senior Sierra Leonean lawyers, lawyers in the UK and the specialist UK NGO, The Death Penalty Project.

They also began a campaign with civil society organisations in Sierra Leone to have the women on death row pardoned, and intensified their lobbying against the death penalty. They wrote press releases sharing the stories of women on death row, spoke on numerous radio and TV programmes and asked the women's movement to back the cause.

In November 2010, the Court of Appeal agreed to hear MK's case. Arguments for reconsidering the case included the fact that MK's husband, the primary witness, had never been cross-examined.

PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF

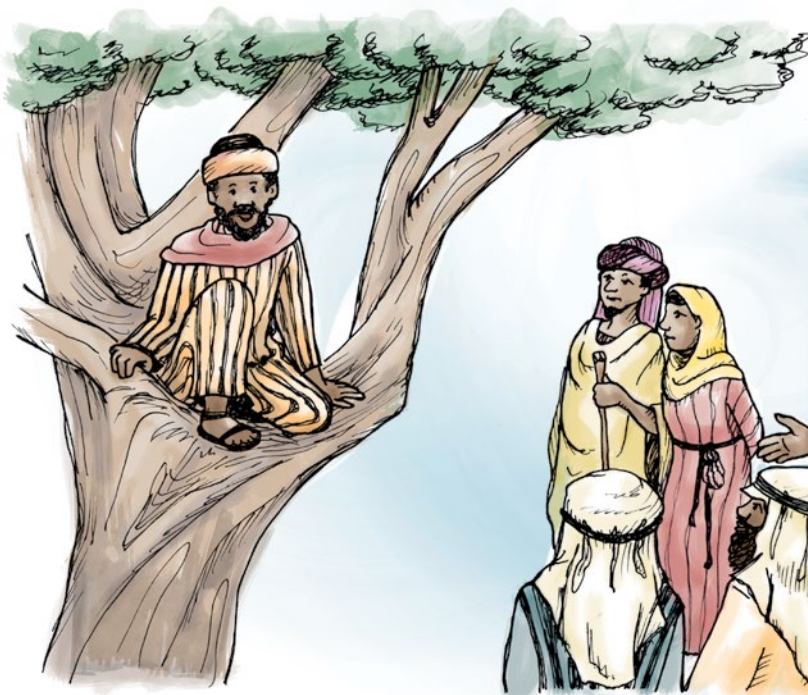
In March 2011, MK's case was heard by the Court of Appeal. With dedicated legal support on her side, the case against MK quickly fell apart. The court agreed with the AdvocAid lawyer's demonstration that the initial trial had been unfair. The judge overturned the earlier ruling, and the prosecution dropped its case against her.

On that day, MK was released from death row, six years after her sentencing and eight years after her imprisonment. She was the longest-serving woman on death row in Sierra Leone.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In what ways did MK's case fail to meet the requirements for a fair trial (see page 14)?
- What could have helped prevent MK's unfair conviction?
- What do you think made AdvocAid's approach so effective?
- Do you know any other stories of unfair trials? Could you use any of the approaches described here to work towards more just outcomes?



The Sycamore Tree Project restorative justice course takes its name from the story of Zacchaeus.

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Typically, justice systems around the world focus solely on punishing the wrongdoer. Critics of this system point to its many flaws: most prisoners reoffend within five years, and victims of crime are generally ignored unless they are needed as witnesses. But in the last 40 years a movement has emerged that suggests a better way...

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Restorative justice is a response to crime that emphasises healing the wounds that criminal behaviour causes or reveals in victims, offenders and communities. It involves a way of thinking about crime and its effects that is different from traditional criminal justice in three important ways:

1. A restorative perspective focuses our attention on the healing of victims that needs to take place after a crime.
2. Restorative justice underlines the obligation of offenders to repair the damage they have caused by making amends to the people they have harmed.
3. Restorative justice seeks to involve all parties who have been affected by the crime and who have a stake in its resolution, or in the prevention of similar crimes in the future.

Restorative justice programmes often involve bringing offenders and victims

together to share their experiences. They do not have to be each other's actual offenders and victims, although in some cases this is possible. These programmes give offenders the opportunity to understand the harm that crime causes and consider practical steps they could take to make amends. Victims have the chance to reflect on their own experiences in a way that assists their healing, and to understand the humanity of offenders.

Restorative justice approaches are now being put into practice all over the world. For example, in Rwanda, elements of restorative justice have been used successfully with perpetrators and survivors of the 1994 genocide.

THE SYCAMORE TREE PROJECT®

The Sycamore Tree Project is a restorative justice course that was started in 1996 by Prison Fellowship International. The course arranges for crime victims to come into prisons and take part in a number of group sessions together with prisoners. The prisoners and victims are not related; they are not each other's victims and offenders.

A trained facilitator guides the group through a series of topics, such as:

- responsibility
- telling your story
- forgiveness
- making amends
- building peace.

At the end of the course, offenders share letters and resolutions that express how they feel about the past and how they wish to move forward. Victims consider ways in which they can take control of their lives and continue their journey towards healing and restoration. The group's final meeting is a time of public celebration.

The programme takes its name from the biblical story of Zacchaeus and his encounter with Jesus (Luke 19:1–10). Zacchaeus confessed his wrongdoing, repented and tried to put right the wrongs he had done to others. Although the Sycamore Tree Project uses biblical principles, there is no requirement for participants to be Christians. The most recent edition of the course, Sycamore Tree Project® NEW LEAF, contains two versions: the standard version that freely uses biblical stories, and an alternative version for contexts where public expressions of Christianity are not permitted.

BENEFITS ON BOTH SIDES

Research studies of the Sycamore Tree Project have shown that the programme benefits both victims and offenders. It increases prisoners' empathy for victims and changes their attitudes away from reoffending. It also increases victims' sense of well-being and decreases their anxiety and depression. One prisoner in England who participated in the

programme said, 'The course has made me appreciate and understand the effects my offending has had on my family, friends and the victims. It has also given me a stronger resolve for the future.'

A victim who took part in the course in New Zealand said, 'It's been a life-changing opportunity. Having been a victim of crime, I needed a lot of answers to a lot of questions. It has not yet solved them all for me, but I am a better, more understanding and, I think, more forgiving person than I was.'



TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

The Ripple Effect exercise is memorable for prisoners.

- Be sure to talk to the prison authorities to get their permission to bring the bucket and stone into the prison.
- You could do the same exercise but with a very small coin and challenge the participants to put the coin in the bowl without disturbing the surface of the water. This demonstrates that it is not possible to avoid making ripples.

This article was adapted from resources kindly supplied by Prison Fellowship International.

To learn more about the Sycamore Tree Project NEW LEAF, please contact Prison Fellowship International.

Web: www.pfi.org
Email: info@pfi.org

ACTIVITY: THE RIPPLE EFFECT

This is a sample activity from the Sycamore Tree Project course. Its aim is to help prisoner participants to understand the effects of crime on victims and communities.

YOU WILL NEED:

- An unbreakable bowl or bucket
- Water to fill the bucket
- A small item such as a stone.

DEMONSTRATION

Take the bucket filled with water and the stone. In dramatic language, describe the impact of a large rock being thrown into a still pool of water. As you describe the rock hitting the water, throw the stone into the bucket of water as a visual demonstration of the impact. Ask participants:

- What happens after the rock hits the water?
- What happens after the rock disappears below the surface?

They will note that the ripples continue after the initial impact and last for a long time before slowly fading away.

INDIVIDUALLY

Give all the participants a copy of the diagram below. Ask them to think about the crime they were involved in. In your own words, tell them:

- Pretend that, like a stone dropped in water, the crime creates ripples spreading out to touch more and more people.
- In each one of the circles, write the name of the people or groups that were harmed by your crime. The immediate victim and you would be closest to the centre. Then think about other people who were affected (for example, the immediate victim's family and friends, your family and friends, community members, and so on) and add their names in the next circles.

AS A GROUP

In a circle, encourage the group to discuss what this exercise tells us about the ongoing effect of a crime after it takes place.



GOOD NEWS BEHIND BARS



Photo: Andrew Phillip

Several courses have been designed to offer prisoners the opportunity to explore the Christian message while in prison. These courses allow prisoners to reflect on their lives and choices together in an understanding environment. For many prisoners, beginning a journey of faith enables them to experience forgiveness and make a fresh start.

One study showed that the reoffending rate dropped from 58 per cent to 17 per cent for short-term prisoners who completed the Alpha course and signed up for help from Alpha's partner charity, Caring for Ex-Offenders.

ALPHA FOR PRISONS

The Alpha course is currently running in more than 800 prisons in 55 countries. It is also frequently used with people outside prison.

The course is run by local volunteers trained by national Alpha offices. It is made up of ten sessions that cover the main aspects of the Christian faith. Topics include 'Why did Jesus die?', 'Why and how should I pray?' and 'How can I resist evil?'

Each session includes a talk on the week's topic, which can be delivered in person or watched on video. After this, participants share their thoughts in a discussion session.

THE PRISONER'S JOURNEY®

The Prisoner's Journey® allows prisoners to explore Christianity using the gospel of Mark. The course is run by Christian volunteers, who first receive training from their local Prison Fellowship branch. Over a period of eight weeks, the participants learn about who Jesus is, why he came

and what difference he can make in people's lives. Each week, the prisoners take part in group discussions facilitated by the volunteers.

After prisoners finish the course, the volunteers invite them to enrol on a choice of discipleship programmes.

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Materials for both courses are available in a range of languages.

For further details about running The Prisoner's Journey, visit www.pfi.org or email info@pfi.org

Visit www.alpha.org/prisons or email prisons@alpha.org for further details about running Alpha in prisons. Countries with Alpha offices include Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia.

TOP TIPS FOR PRISON ADVOCACY

by Sabrina Mahtani

People often think that advocacy is just about trying to get the government to change something. But advocacy can happen at many different levels. For example, advocacy can be simply speaking to a prison guard about getting health care for a prisoner.

Here are some top tips:

- 1. Take time to understand the issues.** Why is this problem happening, what would it take to change it and what are the barriers?
- 2. Base your advocacy on solid research.** For example, if you say,

'People are kept in detention for far too long before their trial,' make sure you have evidence and statistics to back this up.

3. Build good relationships. Spend time building relationships so you can have discussions with the government or police. Map out who has the power and who your allies are.

4. Be clear about what you are asking for. For example, do you want a law to be abolished, or do you want cases to come to trial more promptly?

5. Work in partnership. Try to find other organisations working on similar issues. Working in coalitions gives you a stronger voice and means you have people to support you.

6. Make sure your work is of a high standard. If the government, donors and NGOs see that you are doing quality work in prisons, they are more likely to invite you into discussions.

7. Share the message creatively. Use personal examples and case studies to create interest and understanding.

8. Involve the people you are trying to help. Consult them about what you are doing, and try to give them as much space as possible to be part of the process.

.....
Sabrina Mahtani is the co-founder of AdvocAid and a graduate of Tearfund's Inspired Individuals programme. See page 14 for details.

A FRESH START ON THE OUTSIDE

When prisoners are released at the end of their sentence, starting a new life outside the prison gates can be incredibly challenging. Many ex-offenders will need help finding a safe place to live and a way to make a living. Just as importantly, they will need supportive relationships and encouragement to help them reintegrate (rejoin society) and lead lives free from crime.

In 2004, at the invitation of the government, Prison Fellowship Cambodia (PFC) set up the first-ever reintegration service for prisoners in Cambodia. Below are the main elements of the service.

1 – PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

Before prisoners are released, we work with them both one-to-one and in groups to help them address the issues that led them to prison, and to help them plan for their future. We begin working with prisoners on their future plans 6–12 months before their release. Where possible, social workers also visit the families to help them prepare for life as a reunited family. We also contact the churches near to the family so they can provide follow-up and encouragement.

2 – SUPPORT AT THE POINT OF RELEASE

This is a vital aspect of the programme. Previously, prisoners were let out at the

gate with nothing. They were usually many kilometres from the nearest town and often in very poor health; the risk of re-offending just to survive was high. PFC partners with local churches to provide any support the ex-offenders need at the point of release, such as food and the fare for their transport home. If necessary, the churches can provide short-term accommodation while they get back on their feet. They give ex-offenders a starter pack of supplies to take home, so that they can contribute something to their families on their return.

3 – FAMILY ASSISTANCE

Crime and imprisonment places the families of prisoners under great financial strain. Because of this, people leaving prison frequently return to a home situation that is worse than before they left for prison. PFC identifies families in need in the months leading up to the release of a prisoner. We arrange initial housing repairs, schooling support and medical care. We then help families to find ways of improving their own economic situation in the longer term.

4 – COMMUNITY FOLLOW-UP AND SUPPORT

When a person returns home, our social workers continue to do follow-up visits for up to three years after release, providing as much support as needed

to ensure long-term rehabilitation. They visit the ex-offenders in person at least once every 90 days. PFC also organises meetings where ex-inmates can share their reflections on how to live successfully after release.

5 – INCOME GENERATION SUPPORT

An essential part of reintegration is being able to earn an income. PFC provides vocational training, and may give ex-offenders a grant to help them set up a small business. Vocational training and literacy classes are offered during an inmate's time in prison. Prisoners can learn skills such as tailoring, hairdressing, motor mechanics, computing and agriculture.

'When we were sent to prison, we lost the opportunities in our life,' says a member of the sewing classes. 'But because PFC helped us learn skills and make plans, as well as encouraging and motivating us, we can live in happiness and hope.'

RESTORED LIVES

We believe we have established a sound model for prisoner reintegration in Cambodia. Many of the ex-offenders we have worked with are now restored and empowered, living in harmony with their families and able to earn an income.

Many prisoners need to learn ways of making a living after their release. Photo: Prison Fellowship Cambodia



DISCUSSION QUESTION

- How might your church or organisation get involved in any of these five practical steps?

With thanks to staff at Prison Fellowship Cambodia for their help in compiling this article.

Web: www.pfcambodia.org
Email: director@pfcambodia.org

CRIME PREVENTION IN HONDURAS



📷 Pastor Joel's church helped young people like Jasmine (far right) take steps towards a better future. Photo: Zoe Murton/Tearfund

When it comes to crime and imprisonment, prevention is better than a cure. One church in Honduras has been helping to change the local culture of violence and criminal behaviour...

It was 11 o'clock at night, and Pastor Joel's car came to a halt in the empty street. A threatening figure stood in the middle of the road, blocking his path.

After an anxious few moments, a voice came from the shadows: 'Come here – that's the pastor!'

It was the local gang leader, calling off the attack. With the tension broken, Pastor Joel rolled down his window and chatted easily with the gang members before driving safely home.

That was just one of Pastor Joel's stories from his 20 years ministering in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Honduras's capital city, Tegucigalpa. In the early years of his ministry, the greatly feared Mara 18 gang was active in the community. Violence was common, with two or three deaths every week.

'It was a period that was just horrible,' says Joel. The community was torn by poverty, drugs and family breakdown – widespread problems in Honduras. But gradually, the gang disappeared from the area and life began to improve. When asked the reason for this change, Pastor Joel has a simple answer: 'It was not the police station – it was due to the church's work.'

BREAKING PATTERNS

'God put this feeling in my heart to work with these people,' Pastor Joel explains. He began by talking to the gang leaders, and little by little he earned their trust. Knowing how much the young people loved football, he started a football tournament that also featured a talk on biblical values.

'They started to see us with respect,' Pastor Joel remembers. Eventually, he was even able to lead the gang leader to faith in Christ.

The church started working with the younger children, too. They set up a kindergarten where children from the poorest homes could receive tutoring, healthy snacks, medical and dental check-ups, and teaching about biblical values. Every few months the church also ran parenting classes. The aim was to break historic patterns of family breakdown and violence.

The children from the project are now growing into young adults. Many are succeeding in ways no one had thought possible. One young woman, Jasmine, became the secretary of the church, and recently completed a degree in Public Administration with top marks.

'I come from a broken home, and the church has really helped me,' she says. 'There are very few people who actually get to study at university from this community. I am who I am today thanks to the church.'

Pastor Joel Rosales Matute is a member of Tearfund's Inspired Individuals programme.

Email: joelrmdpc@yahoo.com

USING FOOTBALL TO CHANGE LIVES

Football is a great tool for preventing violence and building life skills among children and young people. It gives them a positive way to spend their time, and teaches them to work as a team and build good relationships.

If your church or organisation is interested in starting a football group for young people, here are some tips:

- Find helpers and coaches who have a love for working with young people and a vision of a better future for them.
- Look for materials relevant to your context that teach biblical values, such as what it means to be

a good citizen, equality between men and women and the need to avoid violence. Use these in talks and discussions when the club meets.

- Do not get discouraged when you face challenges. At the beginning it is very difficult, but the love of helping young people will produce great results.

.....
By Rosibel Martínez and Sara Chamale, who work on a football and crime prevention programme called Viva Sport with Red Viva Honduras. Please contact Executive Coordinator María Luna on mluna@redviva.hn for more information.



FORGIVING OTHERS

All of us have done wrong things – even the best person you know. The great news is that God is always ready to forgive us. And he asks us to forgive other people who hurt us, too. Sometimes that is quite a challenge, especially if we are still feeling hurt.

ACTIVITY: THE FORGIVING HEART

- Think about something that you need to forgive someone for.
- On the heart shape, draw a picture of what happened, or how you felt when they did this thing.
- Then ask God to help you forgive the person.
- Remember that forgiveness is not a feeling. It is a decision we make, and it takes a lot of courage.

A PRAYER FOR PRISONERS' CHILDREN

If grown-ups break a rule called a law, sometimes they go to prison. This can be very sad for their children. Here is a prayer you can pray:

Dear Lord, please help all the children whose mum or dad is in prison. Please comfort these children and give them people to love them and care for them. Amen.



BIBLE VERSE MEMORY CHALLENGE!

Can you learn this Bible verse by heart?

'Forgive as the Lord forgave you.'
(Colossians 3:13)



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SHORT GUIDE TO THE REVISED UNITED NATIONS STANDARD MINIMUM RULES FOR THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

This Short Guide summarises the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which were revised by the UN in 2015. Available in English, French, Spanish, Amharic, Georgian, Kinyarwanda, Swahili and Thai. Visit www.penalreform.org/resource/short-guide-to-the-nelson-mandela-rules to download a free copy.



ROOTS 4: PEACE-BUILDING WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES

This book looks at conflict and reconciliation theory and gives the biblical basis for involvement in peace-building. It also contains many practical ideas for peace and reconciliation initiatives, with learning points from Tearfund's partners. Visit www.tearfund.org/roots to download a free copy in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, or contact us to order a printed version for £12.



INSIDE JOURNAL MAGAZINE

Inside Journal is a magazine published four times a year by Prison Fellowship. It provides information, encouragement and inspiration for prison inmates. Prison chaplains and volunteers in North America can email insidejournal@pfm.org to order multiple copies. Alternatively, visit the website below to print a free copy and post it to friends or relatives in prison. A Spanish edition is available, as well as men's and women's editions in English.

www.prisonfellowship.org/resources/inside-journal-archives



SEAN INTERNATIONAL

SEAN International provides theological education courses by distance learning. SEAN licenses or sells the courses to churches or organisations, who have run them in prisons in many countries with great results. The courses have been translated into 70 languages, including French, Portuguese, Spanish and Swahili. Subjects include an overview of the Bible and practical topics such as how to lead church services. The courses are easy to understand and accessible for people without higher education. Website available in English and Spanish.

Web: www.seaninternational.com
Email: contact@seaninternational.com



USEFUL WEBSITES

www.pfi.org

Prison Fellowship International works in 120 countries and territories around the world.

www.prisonfellowship.org

Contains a wealth of resources for working with prisoners, ex-offenders and the children and families of prisoners (click on 'Resources' from the menu at the top).

www.restorativejustice.org

Information and resources on restorative justice, including Bible studies and guides for starting a programme.

www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/incarceration

A practical, fun toolkit for helping young children who have a parent in prison. Available in English and Spanish, online or as a mobile phone app.

www.chalmers.org/work-life

A work preparation course for ex-offenders and other low-income learners, designed for churches to run.

www.penalreform.org

Penal Reform International is an independent NGO working to improve criminal justice problems worldwide.

www.who.int/topics/prisons

The World Health Organization's resources on health issues in prisons.

Footsteps is a magazine linking health and development workers worldwide. It is a way of encouraging Christians of all nations as they work together towards creating wholeness in their communities.

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Footsteps is also available in French as *Pas à Pas*, in Portuguese as *Passo a Passo* and in Spanish as *Paso a Paso*. It is also available in Hindi.

Editor Zoe Murton

Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, UK

Tel: +44 20 8977 9144

Fax: +44 20 8943 3594

Email: publications@tearfund.org

Website: learn.tearfund.org

Translations Editors Alexia Haywood, Helen Machin

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Editorial Committee Barbara Almond, J. Mark Bowers, Mike Clifford, Jude Collins, Steve Collins, Paul Dean, Helen Gaw, Alice Keen, Ted Lankester, Melissa Lawson, Liu Liu, Roland Lubett, Ildephonse Nzabahimana, Amos Oumounabidji, Naomi Sosa, Shannon Thomson, Rebecca Weaver-Boyes, Joy Wright

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WHY THE CHURCH NEEDS TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS

It was encouraging to read the discussion in *Footsteps 103* and the Tearfund Learn blog about wealth generation by Christians and churches. I have asked the following question to many dear Christian friends in low-income countries: on the one hand, churches are praying on their knees for God to bless them with resources and wealth. On the other hand, the church is very quick to criticise any activities that generate wealth. Where does the church think the wealth comes from?

People often quote the verse about it being more difficult for a rich man to go to heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. But I believe what Jesus is criticising is the rich man's attitude towards money, not the money itself. There is also the story of the Good Samaritan looking after an injured stranger. My guess is that he was a good businessman who had some



Photo: James Morgan/Tearfund

money, but more importantly, that he used the money he made from business to help his neighbour.

We do not need to withdraw from the world to serve God. We glorify him in all of life. An Indian colleague pointed out that many talented men and women are leaving their businesses to work in 'full-time ministry'. This is a misunderstanding of the Bible and often a huge waste of their business talents. As long as it is legitimate and honest business, it is pleasing to God.

LIU LIU, PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS ADVISER, TEARFUND WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA TEAM



KNOTTY PROBLEM

Question: We want to welcome an ex-offender into our church, but how can we make sure our congregation is not put at risk?

Answer: The church has a unique role to play in welcoming and showing love to ex-offenders. But this process can bring with it practical challenges that need careful consideration.

It is very important to protect the congregation from harm, especially children and other vulnerable people. Churches should decide on some key policies to keep people safe. For example, anyone who has committed a sexual offence against children should never be asked to work with children or have unsupervised contact with them. Some form of background check should be

carried out on anyone wishing to work with children or vulnerable adults. Your denomination's head office may have some guidelines on developing appropriate policies.

The church leadership should form an agreement with the ex-offender about any necessary boundaries. Ideally, a mentor should be identified to offer ongoing help and encouragement.

Ex-offenders who are truly repentant should understand that these measures are put in place for the safety of the congregation and to avoid placing the ex-offender in a position of temptation. The church can play a huge role in providing accountability and support.

Do you have a knotty problem you would like the Footsteps community to help with? Write to us at the address below.

Please write to: The Editor, Footsteps, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, UK

publications@tearfund.org www.facebook.com/tearfundlearn www.twitter.com/tearfundlearn

by Cally Magalhães



☞ Cally Magalhães and her team are bringing transformation to São Paulo's youth prisons. Photo: Jenny Barthow/Tearfund

BREAKING THE CHAINS FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS

In Brazil, children go to prison from the age of 12. Tragically, most of them are back in prison within a month of being released. After many years of working in São Paulo's youth prisons, I wanted something radically different to help these boys. I longed to help them think and behave differently so that they would stop reoffending. So I started praying about how we could reach them in a better way.

A NEW APPROACH

Before I went to Brazil I worked as a professional actress and drama teacher. I started wondering if I could use drama with the boys. I read two books: one about restorative justice and another about psychodrama (a type of therapy where participants act out different scenarios to gain insight into their problems). After further study, I decided to put restorative justice and psychodrama together. I created a new project called 'Breaking the chains', working with a team of professionals at the youth prison.

We started the work in a unit for young offenders who had committed serious crimes – murder, kidnapping, bank robberies, armed burglaries. They had been in prison multiple times.

The programme involves three elements. For at least 12 weeks we run weekly psychodrama sessions with a group of about 10 boys who are nearing the end of their sentence. During the same period, someone from our team visits each boy individually to provide counselling. The third part of the programme is working with the families. Some of the families are so poor that when the boy comes out of prison, he will steal again just to put food on the table. So we try to assist the family – for instance, by helping the mother find work.

INCREDIBLE RESULTS

The results from the programme are amazing. To give just one example, we had a boy who was a real hardened criminal. He would steal up to ten motorbikes a day. In one psychodrama session, he played the part of the owner of a motorbike, sitting at the traffic lights. Two of his mates acted the part of robbers wanting to steal his bike, pointing their imaginary guns at his head.

I told them to freeze in that position and asked the boy, 'What are you thinking right now? What are you feeling?' He said, 'You cannot steal my bike! I worked hard to buy this bike! It was not easy for me to get it, but it is my bike and you cannot

steal it!' At that moment he suddenly understood what he was doing to other people every day.

And he changed. After he left the youth prison he trained as a barber and started a salon in his grandmother's garage. Over time, he saved money and opened a proper salon with a friend. Now you have to wait four hours for a haircut because there are so many customers. And he teaches hairdressing for three different charities every week.

It was the psychodrama that made all the difference for that boy. I could have sat with him for two years and said, 'It is really wrong to rob people at gunpoint,' and it would have had no effect. When we evaluated the programme, we found that as long as boys completed at least 10 sessions, 80 per cent of them did not reoffend. Normally the reoffending rate is almost 100 per cent. That is quite a victory!

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Cally Magalhães runs The Eagle Project in São Paulo, Brazil. She is a graduate of Tearfund's Inspired Individuals programme.

Web: www.theeagleproject.org
Email: callygeorge@gmail.com