

North American Division

**Prison Ministry,
Consultant and Trainer**

Dr. Cleveland Houser

Justification for Prison Evangelism

"For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, when Lord, saw we thee an

Justification for Prison Evangelism

hungered, and fed thee not? Or
thirsty, and gave thee drink? Or when
saw we thee a stranger, and took thee
in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or
when we thee sick, or in prison, and
came unto thee? And the King

Justification for Prison Evangelism

shall answer and say unto them, verily
I say unto you, : Inasmuch as ye have
done it unto the least of these my
brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Matthew 25:35-40

Note: The Theological Imperative of Matthew 25

- 1. Matthew 25: 25-40 is Christ Great Commission to evangelize the prisons.**
- 2. Prison evangelism was the last ministry that *Christ endorsed* while he was on earth.**
- 3. On Calvary hanging between two thieves, Christ, did prison evangelism: while He**

Note: The Theological Imperative of Matthew 25

was on Death Row, He commuted the sentence of a prison inmate from eternal damnation to eternal life.

4. Christ commands us to go into the prisons and evangelize.



**Is not this the fast that I have
chosen? To loose the bands of
wickedness, heavy burdens, and let
the oppressed go free, and that ye
break every yoke? Is it not to deal
thy**

The Theological Imperative of Matthew 25

deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out of thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him: and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” *Isaiah 58:6-7*

Note: Operation Set Free

- 1. Loose the bands of wickedness. Men and women in prison are sailing upon a sea of wickedness with no compass nor sense of direction.**
- 2. To undo heavy burden through the elevating power of the gospel.**
- 3. Let the oppress go free. The gospel liberates the mind and makes doing time a more tolerable event in your life.**
- 4. Break every yoke – stop the curse.**

Note: Operation Set Free

"The *Spirit of the Lord* God is upon me;
because the Lord has anointed me to
preach glad tidings unto the meek: he hath
sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to
proclaim liberty to the captives and the
opening of the prison to them that are
bound..." *Isaiah 61:1.*

Note: Mashiach to the Incarcerated

- 1. Mashiach made me Messiah – anointed to preach, to evangelize.**
- 2. Preach the good news of salvation and forgiveness.**
- 3. Proclaim liberty to the captives.**
- 4. Opening of the prison – cells of self degradation.**

Prophetic Prison Initiative:

Prison inmates are not insignificant entities floating upon a sea of forgetfulness but they are souls that Christ gave his life for.

“*Christ* identifies Himself with every child of humanity. In order that we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. He is the Son of Man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam.

Prophetic Prison Initiative

His followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them....the fallen, the erring, and the sinful: Christ's love embraces, and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy is accepted as done to Him."

--Desire of Ages, P.638

Prophetic Prison Initiative

“*The* 25th chapter of Matthew presents the fact that when one open the door to the needy and suffering we are welcoming unseen angels. It was I who was sick. It was I who was in prison. While you were feasting at your bountifully spread table, I was famishing in the hovel of the empty street .

Prophetic Prison Initiative

While you were at ease in your luxurious home, I had no where to lay my head. While you crowded your wardrobe with rich apparel, I was destitute. While you pursued your pleasures, I languished in prison.”

-Ibid., PP 639,640

Prophetic Prison Initiative

“In the great judgment day, those who have not worked for Christ, who have drifted along thinking of themselves, caring for themselves will be placed by the judge of the whole earth with those who do evil. They receive the same condemnation.”

-Ibid., p 641

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

Anti-social behavioral patterns dictate the need for more aggressive prison evangelism.

Prisons have become giant suck holes that are draining community man-power.

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

Suffice it to say, the social fabric of society has been marred by the alarming rate of civil disobedience.

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

Often this disobedience is the results of the deterioration of social values that serves as adhesive components for strong families.

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

Social inequities of all magnitudes have quadrupled and have orbited the behavior of humanity into various destructive directions.

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

It appears that the social behavioral patterns of a vast number of individuals are like a run away train that has no conductor or sense of direction.

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

Because of the hopelessness and escalating confusion in the lives of distracted human being, it is imperative that social intervention from help

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

**groups become a high priority;
in order, that the restoration of
normalcy in the lives of the
distracted will become a
materialized reality.**

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

1. There are 2.3 million Americans behind bars in federal and state prisons and local jails.

2. The largest jail populations are:
 - A. Los Angeles County.....21,268
 - B. New York City.....17,680
 - C. Cook County, IL..... 9,321

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

D. Harris County, TX..... 7,587

E. Dade County, FL..... 7,036

3. Texas has the largest prison population in the USA.
4. California has more prison inmates than France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Singapore and the Netherlands combined.

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

5. Texas has executed more inmates than any state in the USA followed by Oklahoma.
6. Less than a third of prison inmates have committed violent crimes.
7. One out of every 150 Americans are incarcerated.
8. Prisons are a 40 – 50 billion dollar a year industry.

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

9. There are over 2,350 children locked up in adult jails every day.
10. Over 1000 new prisons have been in the past 20 year.
11. Over 90,000 women are confined to Department of Correction Facilities.
12. The women's prison population has increased by 138% over the past 10 years.

Anti-Social Behavioral Patterns

13. 54% of the women in prison are of ethnic origin.
14. The average age of women in prison is 29 and 58% have not finished high school.
15. There are 198,000 children in the USA whose mothers are in prison.
16. The vast majority of women in prison are incarcerated for defending themselves from abusive husbands.

Why Should You Be Interested In Prison Evangelism?

It is only a group of:



Murderers



Sadistic Killers



Rapists



Child Molesters



Drug Dealers



Robbers

Why Should You Be Interested In Prison Evangelism?

1. ***You*** are the best channel for communicating God's grace.
2. ***GOD*** calls you to be a *fisherman*.
 - a. ***Just, fish***
 - b. ***God didn't ask you to clean the fish***

Why Should You Be Interested in Prison Evangelism?

3. Follow the method of Jesus as He identified with the downtrodden and disenfranchised. . .

a. *Mary Magdalene*

b. *Publicans*

c. *Criminals*

d. *Gross depravity*

Why Should You Be Interested in Prison Evangelism?

4. Isaiah 58:6,7 delineates Prison the Evangelistic Commission.

a. Set the captives free

b. Undo heavy burdens

c. Loose the bands of wickedness

5. God is in need of YOU! (Luke 19:31)

Evangelistic Fervor

The evangelistic fervor of any prison is dictated by the security climate of that same institution.

Security Attitudes:

- a. Maximum**
- b. Death Row**
- c. Medium**
- d. Minimum**

Methods of Prison Evangelism:

- a. Cell to cell**
- b. Inmate worship services**
- c. Revivals or crusades**
- d. Bible studies**
- e. One-on-one pastoral visits**

- f. Pen Pal ministry**
- g. Ministry to inmates families**
- h. Support group ministries**
- i. Transitional House ministry**
- j. Ministering to inmates children**

Non-Acceptable Evangelistic Attitudes Toward Prison Inmates

- a. They need to be preached to
- b. All inmates are religiously inadequate
- c. Make sure the inmates know that you have the truth and other religions don't

**Non-Acceptable Evangelistic
Attitudes Toward Prison Inmates**

- d. Go in- preaching about the
Sabbath, Health Reform and the
Mark of the Beast**
- e. Having a judgmental attitude**

**Non-Acceptable Evangelistic
Attitudes Toward Prison Inmates**

- f. Using denominational jargon like the Spirit of Prophecy, the Truth, etc.**
- g. Disrespect toward other religions**
- h. Quench in-mate participation**

**Non-Acceptable Evangelistic
Attitudes Toward Prison Inmates**

- i. Don't make an issue out of inmate misunderstanding of Bible Truth**

- j. Abstain from personal opinions and philosophies, *JUST PREACH JESUS.***

Essential Characteristics for Evangelizing Inmates

- a. **LOVE** – is an outgrowth of unselfish concern for all persons involved
- b. **EMPATHY** – is the ability to feel with people and put one's self in their place
- c. **SENSE OF MISSION** – A desire to give this priority; a belief that this is something

Essential Characteristics for Evangelizing Inmates

**that you would rather be doing than
anything else in the world**

**d. SPIRITUAL GROWTH – As you lead others
to a new spiritual growth, you must be
willing and anxious to grow as well**

Essential Characteristics for Evangelizing Inmates

e. TACT AND WISDOM – The Savior never suppressed the truth, but He always uttered it in love. In His intercourse with others, He exercised the greatest tact, and He was always kind and thoughtful. *Gospel Workers P.*

Essential Characteristics for Evangelizing Inmates

- f. GENUINENESS – There must be no pretense in the lives of those who have so sacred and solemn a message as we have been called to bear.**