




Mentoring for Successful Reentry in a Challenging Era

Presenters: Vance Drum and Johnny Frambo
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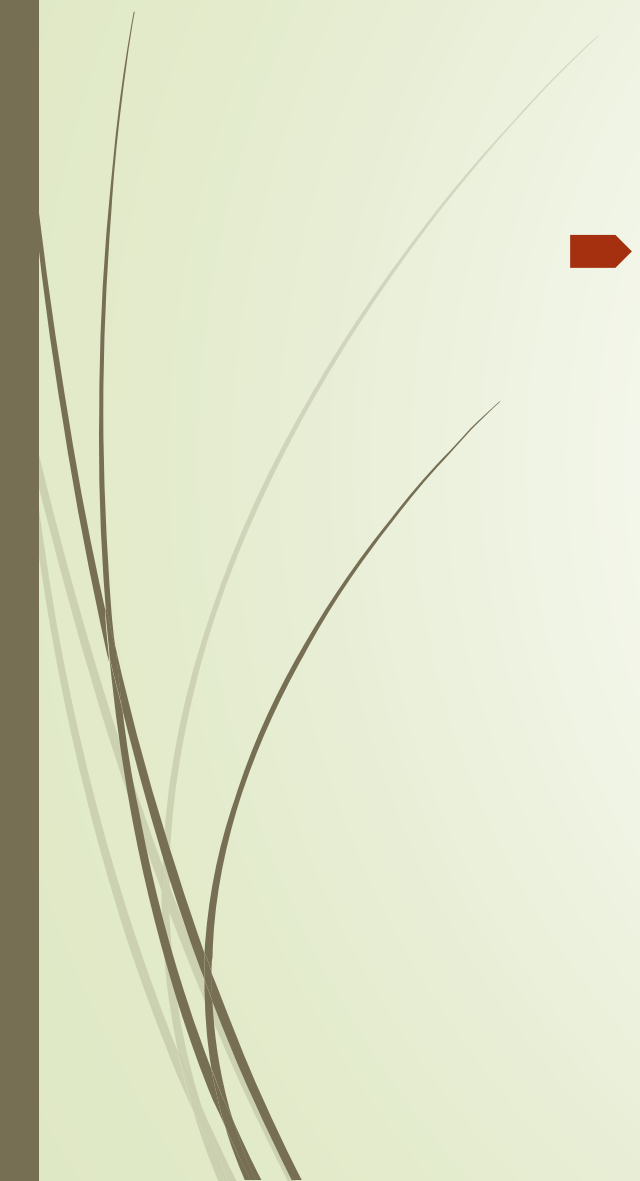


Two Objectives

- 1. Cultural and spiritual challenges in 2024
 - 2. Roadmap, using two case studies, for intentional mentoring, leading to successful reentry
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“You Know He Needs a Mentor”

- Introduction: The Story of Charles T
 - Life sentence from Dallas
 - Up for parole in 2007 after 20 years in
 - “Is he in your mentor program?”
 - “You know he needs a mentor.”
 - Successful reentry
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A Successful In-Prison Mentor Program

- ▶ TDCJ Mentor Program Policy, initiated 1980s
 - ▶ Chaplain matches free-world mentor with inmate
 - ▶ Within two years of parole review or discharge date
 - ▶ Monthly, 90-min post-release focus: Family, Faith, Vocation
 - ▶ Preparation for release: What are you doing now?
 - ▶ 100+ in program, one on one, same gender mentoring
 - ▶ Continuum of care post-release, with pastoral contact
 - ▶ Parole advises post-release parole stipulations

Successful Mentor Program with Coincident Reduced Recidivism

TDCJ Recidivism declined from 80+% to 20% (1980s-2023)





Former Prisoner Needs

[from prisonfellowship.org]

➤ Immediate Needs

- Housing, food, clothing/personal care items, transportation,
- Church home, emotional/spiritual support, proper ID, phone access
- Medical/dental/psychiatric care, addiction treatment/rehab

➤ Ongoing Needs

- Life-skills training/preparation, employment, income for ongoing expenses, continuing educational/vocational training, professional services (attorney, accountant, counselor),
- Mentoring/spiritual guidance/support, family and marital counseling
- Friendships with other believers



Spiritual and Cultural Challenges to Successful Reentry

- ▶ Dechristianization of America (Pew Research, 12/14/21)
 - ▶ “Rise of the “Nones””: 3 in 10 adults now religiously unaffiliated, at 29% (2021), up from 16% (2007)
 - ▶ Self-identified Christians, down from 90% (1972) to 78% (2007) to 63% (2021)
 - ▶ Monthly US church attendance decline: 54% to 45% (2007 to 2018)
 - ▶ **But, see** “2023: A year of revival on college campuses,” in God Reports Online: Revival/mass baptisms in KY/TN/OH/TX/AL/LA/CA/HBCUs/GenZ.



Spiritual and Cultural Challenges

➤ Spiritual/Cultural Challenges

- Fatherlessness: from “Healing a Fatherless Generation,” Chris Vallotton, 08/27/2021, Bethel Church (CA)
- 63% of youth suicides from homes w/o fathers
- 90% of homeless/runaways grew up w/o fathers
- 85% children w/behavior disorders from FAless homes
- 71% HS dropouts from homes w/o fathers
- **But, see** BraveCo; fatherhood.org; Malachi Dads

Spiritual and Cultural Challenges

➤ Mental Health Challenges

- “Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation, 2023,” U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community
- Technological Revolution (Internet/social media)
- Facilitates social isolation
- Covid lockdown of schools/churches/businesses
- Increase in anxiety/fear/instability/depression/ideation/lack of purpose
- **But, see:** recent pushback (Dr. Beverly Pell, Smart Digital Kids), et al



Spiritual and Cultural Challenges

Brainstorming Moments

- ▶ We've highlighted three serious challenges:
 - ▶ Dechristianization, fatherlessness, mental health
- ▶ What are some SOLUTIONS to these challenges in 2024?





Reentry Mentoring Case Study # 1

- Carson, 45, released from TDCJ April 2023, served 9 yrs
- Heard of him via associate's letter writing ministry in TX
- During COVID, no services, he taught Bible in rec yard
- Came to our town, visited our church, in my absence
- My associate minister recommended him for supply
- I asked the Board, they said ok, try him out for supply
- He "preached the word" Aug '23, then 3X Sept/Oct '23
- Church loved him; we had lunch; humble/teachable

Reentry Mentoring Case Study #1

- Carson is divorced, no children
- Works in step-FA's taxidermy business
- Feels called to ministry
- Pastor's tenure—25 yrs (Vance)
- Church is gracious/patient/loving
- I think about retiring, but church...
- Oct. proposal: Ministry Assistant
 - Preach 1X/month + in my absence
- I mentor him, with two other ministry leaders. Result?





Reentry Mentoring Case Study # 1

- Board voted 100% Yes to Ministry Assistant, Oct. 2023
- Church voted 100% Yes to Ministry Assistant, Nov. 2023
- Ministry began Jan. 2024; enough comp. to keep him
- We all like him/his preaching; my discernment: he's fine.
- Mentoring: weekly, 30 min. after Sun. a.m. worship, four leaders in the group; on pastoral ministry topics
- So far, so good. No discussion of being my successor
- Caveat: recent releasee; but: offense/attitude/practice



Reentry Mentoring Case Study #2

- James, 31, lives with dad near our church
- FA retired Coast Guard; MO became Jewish—Jerusalem
- FA a Jesus believer, not in church, encourages James in ch.
- James began attending our church 2016, age 23
- Claims schizophrenic from “bad drug use” in HS...
- My observation: emotionally unstable, less so since 2023
- Loves our church and pastor (me); childlike qualities
- Church loves him; church attracts poor/down-and-out
- In TX jail in past for threatening FA, not in prison



Reentry Mentoring Case Study #2

- James and FA invite me to visit in their house, and I do
- James baptized by me in church, Aug 2023
- Dramatic turnaround since then
- Brilliant: memorizes spelling/exact definitions of words (1000+)
- Had said he would never work, dependent on FA, but...
- Got a McDonald's job fall 2023; loves it; computer coding int.
- We meet for informal mentoring at Hot Spot store weekly
- Instability much stabilized; still goes through rough patches
- He acknowledges his struggle; we talk/pray about it.



Mentoring for Successful Reentry in a Challenging Era

- Johnny Frambo: experience and observations
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Reentry Mentoring Case Studies

- Comments?
 - Suggestions?
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BIO



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- ▶ Current, Chaplaincy and Peer Ministry Consultant, Prison Seminaries Foundation, since 2018



Johnny Frambo

- ▶ Administrator of Chaplaincy Services, Florida Department of Corrections
- ▶ U.S. Army (retired, 22 years)