"The Birth Of The Barabbas Project"

I guess you could say that it simply began with one question that arose within the hearts of many... There just has to be more than this, right? I mean, just turn on the news, look at a newspaper, log onto the web, or talk to a friend or family member. Our Society is a broken mess, and there does not appear to be a solution in sight. People are hurting people everywhere. They are killing, raping and stealing, dealing drugs to our kids and adults... But, WHY???

HURT PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE!!! Our Society is facing today a problem directly related to what we have allowed to happen and never dealt with for thousands of years... broken people are all around us. Most prisoners inside prisons around our country have grown up as children of severe abuse that was never treated or dealt with. Most of them have grown up in broken homes... if they were lucky to ever know their father. Churches, Society and Families have all let them down, and it is not over with... Millions of people are still wandering around out in Society just broken inside, probably hurting others as I write this. Then, without trying to actually provide them the healing that they need, we continue to overwhelm an already over-populated prison system by trying to fix it by creating stiffer prison penalties and throwing people away for life, in the process. If these prisoners are lucky enough to ever go home again, they return just as broken as they came into prison in the first place, which leads to a guaranteed return for them to prison through a revolving door. Sadly, it only makes Society press for even longer penalties every time someone returns to prison, instead of causing someone to ask why so many come back again. Fact is, that in the last 30 days alone, the prison where we live at currently has released at least 20 people out into the world directly from Segregation at a Maximum Prison. I mean they literally walked out the front gate from prison inside of prison, because they couldn't even function in here without getting in trouble. The newscast recently quoted our prison officials as saying that almost 80% of all these men here have existing mental health issues that are not ever going to be treated. This prison killed every single group that helped people from a psychological standpoint, and they then killed our Chapel Programs by removing all of our Protestant Volunteers... They killed everything that gave hope at all. Yet, I personally know at least 30 people going home right from here in the next 6-12 months... most of whom I know will return.

This is just one prison in Wisconsin. So, when will someone care enough to help these men and women in prison return home healed and for good??? Seriously, Minnesota, my home state has an identical population to Wisconsin, and they have Minneapolis, once dubbed Murderopolis, to compare to Wisconsin's biggest problem child, Milwaukee. There is no excuse when Minnesota has less than half the prison population as Wisconsin. The money is running out, and all I hear is about building bigger prisons? All of the prisons are already massively understaffed, and no help is in sight. Our prison is right now, on Lockdown Status related to supposed understaffing, and many staff members are running towards the door as I write
this. The media is being fed massive lies about prison violence in order to get the public support needed for more money. I live in a very secret unit that no media knows about in Green Bay. My unit is called a Dorm, and is basically a big gymnasium filled with 117 beds that make it look like a homeless shelter. We have no more than 2 officers on our unit at any time, unless it is at meal time when one extra officer comes in to eat his supper or when some random officer is bored and visits the unit. I have friends that have lived here in the dorm for 10 years, and have never seen a single officer attacked...117 prisoners and 2 officers?? And it isn't safe?? At the Chapel, we have had many days where a single lady officer that weighed less than 110 lbs was the only security on site the entire day, with 75 prisoners present...never attacked. Up at Recreation, over 150 prisoners and 2 officers?? There have only been 2 legitimate attacks on staff in the entire time I have been here at this prison, since 2012. We get locked down when it happens, we know when it is real, yet I hear the media broadcasting numbers like 300 plus attacks in the last few years. I watch our regular 2nd Shift female officer lock herself in a room alone with an inmate every day of the week that she works, and for 10-15 minutes at a time. The man is the unit janitor and a convicted rapist. This same 115 lb female often works 3rd shift overtime, and she will walk through our sleeping area until 1:30 am, in the complete darkness, with her hands in her pockets as if she is on a casual stroll in the park.

I say all that to say this...the truth is that just in this dorm, there are at least 30-40 men that I know could be released out into the world and never return. They have changed their lives over time, or through God...point is, they have changed. Many are those that Society has just thrown away with life sentences. This prison system is holding at least 5,000 men and women who fit this description. Releasing that many, alone, empties at least 4 prisons, provides several hundred staff members to work at the other prisons and fill the vacancies...it also allows the Prisons to eliminate staff members who make it their hobby to hurt prisoners...Everyone wins. It's just simply time to decide...are we making prisons our 2nd leading form of job creation in Wisconsin on purpose, or do we actually understand that these are people with families that need them...people not trash...people that love can fix, can heal. It is time for answers...not fear!!! It is time for love, not fear!!! It is time to start making dramatic changes, healing those who are out in the world before they hurt someone and come to prison, and heal those already in prison so that they can go home healthy and contribute to Society and their families. It is time for the Church of this State to stand up and love like Jesus...That is where the Barabbas name even came to us from...Jesus took Barabbas place in prison, on the cross, and on the whipping block. Jesus did this as a picture of what was to come...prisoners being released after they were condemned, released into our arms as we are the Body of Christ now. Love looks like something tangible...and it operates without fear.

Warden Cain's program down in Angola, Louisiana was placed on our hearts a couple of years ago for the state of Wisconsin. A program that took the bloodiest prison in America to the
safest prison in the country. He brought the prison Jesus...He brought them a 4 year Bible College for the prisoners to attend and become pastors, or just educated. He created this amazing program that ended up affecting not only every prison in Louisiana, but in the surrounding states as well. We knew that Wisconsin needed this. We expected it to somehow come to Green Bay, until last spring, when out of nowhere, I told my friends that God had showed me it would come from the heart of the Wisconsin Prison System, and the 4 prisons in the Waupun area. Literally 3 weeks after I shared this, the prison announced the launch of a 4 year Bible College at Waupun Correctional.

Fast forward to the day when the download of what the Barrabas Project would eventually look like, and it came to me that prisoners should be released into church custody instead of to probation and parole. At the time it came, on a Saturday, I had been watching this unopened Angola Video that I had found in the Chapel, and the video sat unfinished back at my job, as Chapel Clerk. So, I get back to work on Monday and press play on the video, to finish, and I find out that in 2008 Warden Cain had already done exactly what God showed me, he had petitioned the Governor of Louisiana for a pardon of a man sentenced to double life sentences, released into church custody of a church in New York...a thousand miles away. The Governor approved it...FOLKS IT ISN'T IMPOSSIBLE IF YOU ONLY BELIEVE!!! It isn't even precedent setting, Warden Cain already did much of it...God just gave us a bigger vision of this for Wisconsin...We just need help.

Then, after all this was revealed, we get a new chaplain, and he happens to be a man who had actually hired a former felon from Tacheta Prison for Women, here in Wisconsin, as his new chaplain when he ran Social Services in Fox Lake's Prison, one of the prisons God told us would be at the heart of this in Waupun.

This isn't a pipedream...this will take massive effort and patience...HUGE FAITH!!! Does anyone out there love enough to help us bring this to pass?? If so, read on, as we have a blueprint in this blog of what The Barrabas Project looks like on the surface.

May our Heavenly Daddy show you the way,

The Barabas Group