

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I have accepted the invitation to talk about the importance of aftercare.

It is my view that, because of the Christian identity, prison chaplaincy and aftercare are essentially linked. The prison chaplaincy is credible only if it actually contributes to the futures of the inmates.

In this lecture I will give you my vision in five parts how these two forms of pastoral care are related and what pastoral aftercare entails.

Part one addresses a number of theological concepts. This is followed by my description of prison chaplaincy as a function of the church community. Finally, I will present four central focus points for pastoral care to inmates.

In part two I will first of all discuss the necessity for a local analysis of the need for aftercare. Secondly, as an illustration, I will describe the set-up of a concrete aftercare project in the Netherlands, based on the Dutch analysis.

Part three is about the motivation of inmates to take part in aftercare and the responsibility society has in enabling this aftercare.

Part four is about the need to ensure a broad integration of aftercare both within the church and in society. Society itself must reintegrate former inmates!

Part five is about the significance of the relationship between prison chaplaincy and aftercare for the process of reintegration.

To describe the relationship between prison chaplaincy and aftercare based on the Christian identity, I will start with a few theological concepts.

1. Theological concepts for prison chaplaincy

1.1 Remember those that are in bonds, as bound with them.

Part one.

An important quote from the Bible for the content of prison chaplaincy is The Epistle to Hebrews 13 : 3, where we read: "Remember those that are in bonds, as bound with them." This call to "remember those that are in bonds" is found under the title "let brotherly love continue". It signifies that dealing with prisoners is more than a Christian virtue; dealing with prisoners is all about love. Remember those that are in bonds

"To remember" in the Bible is a word of salvation. It is in contrast with words like "to forget" or "to ignore". "To remember" expresses the mutual relationship between Yahweh and Israel and between the members of society. God's remembering manifested itself in the arrival of the Messiah (Luke 1 : 54-72). Wherever human lives break under the heavy weight of factual existence, God creates new life when he remembers people.

God's remembering is the gift of a child to the childless (Gen. 30 : 22; 1 Samuel 1: 11-19; 1 Samuel 1: 19 and 20: "The Lord remembered Hannah and she bore a son named Samuel"). It is all about the reversal of a hopeless situation, about creating a future. In God's world people can be the bearers of a new history.

They are not prisoners of the past, but they are destined for the future. It was this

perspective that a criminal also crucified on the same day with Jesus appealed to when he faced death and said to Jesus: "Remember me when you come into your kingdom".

Remember those that are in bonds as bound with them. As bound with them ... The word "as" signifies a correlation. It is a mutual "as". Not us against the prisoners, but prisoners and non-prisoners communicating as fellow human beings.

The church in prison is not about taking the faith to the inmates, but rather having faith together with them.

For the community of Christ, dealing with prisoners is all about God's salvation. Prison chaplaincy is more than just the religious communication between God and people, the vertical dimension. It is also about the horizontal dimension, the development of life. It is about arising, healing, facing a new life. Prison chaplaincy is all about healing life.

1.2 Judicial pastoral care is not an individual goal, but rather a function of the community / parish

Under the gospel, dealing with prisoners is a core task of the faithful. It is part of the mission of the Christian community.

In today's world chaplains who have been appointed for this work do not work independently. Instead of working alone in the institutions, their position represents the whole of the outside church community. Entering behind the prison walls, they take the whole community with them. This is an essential and meaningful concept. It provides inmates in detention with a connection to the outside world. It also involves the outside community in the aftercare projects.

1.3 Pastoral focus points: Being an individual - community - sense of responsibility - perspective

Prison chaplaincy is of great importance. The prison chaplain helps people come to terms with their past and to focus on the present and future. Central themes from Christian theology and the Christian view of life are topical in prison chaplaincy.

I quote from the new policy document published by the protestant prison chaplaincy in the Netherlands: Quote: "The Christian notion of the creation of man by God expresses man's basic right to live. Man's existence is not random. Instead there is a reason for existence that is the result of having been created by God. This makes every man unique, regardless of the direction his life has taken. In Christianity's view on man, man is not solitary, but living in a community with others. He or she is a man or woman, only related to other people.

He bears responsibility for himself, his fellow people and the earth on which he lives. Moreover, he is accountable.

If he fails to take this responsibly and is guilty, there continues to be a perspective to heal. In principle, human life is about love and mercy.

Regarded from Christian theology and view of life, every man has a future. "

Based on this background, helping people by prison chaplaincy is about four mainpoints:

1. The first mainpoint is: Being or becoming an Individual¹. Believing gives people an identity.
2. The second mainpoint is: Forming a community or restoring it. In all circumstances we are members of Gods people.
3. The third mainpoint is: Being responsible. We see prisoners as responsible for their lives.
4. The fourth mainpoint is about creating a perspective.

2. Local aftercare analysis

Part 2

In order to flesh out aftercare projects it is necessary to make an analysis of the inmate's personal and social situation. This analysis is essential to be able to develop aftercare in a result-driven and efficient manner.

The analysis and concrete interpretation may differ across the various European countries.

2.2 An analysis of the situation in the Netherlands

Let me give you a brief analysis of the situation in the Netherlands.

The majority of all prisoners in the Netherlands will return to prison. Seventyfive percent of all prisoners are repeat offenders.

Life histories of inmates show that crime does not usually come on its own.

Many inmates are not only detained in prison, they are also bound by their own life story.

The problems are usually complex. There are personal problems and there are society-based problems, involving a lack of the basic social preconditions that should provide the foundations of being. Many people often face both personal and social problems.

In the personal area, there are problems such as

- retarded personal development,
- retarded interrelation, social skills and education;
- the inability to manage a household,
- instability in day-to-day activities;
- addiction problems;
- problems connected with the own religious-cultural background;
- problems with motivation and having a goal in life;
- a lack of long-term significant contacts;
- loneliness and problems with relations.

As regards the social conditions, there are a number of factors that play an important role, such as

- having no job, no home,
- the social environment,
- not enough supporting contacts,
- the criminal record.

¹ The use of the word 'individual' refers to each person's uniqueness

The importance of not having a bond with society is increasingly being recognised in the Netherlands as playing a role in crime. It is an essential point quoted by a crime expert.

I quote:

"Having a bond - with your fellow men, your loved one or your parents, but also with institutions like school, work, friends or the sports club - having a bond is a key factor in integration. Children and adults need to have a bond with the society in which they live. After all, if there is no bond, they are unaffected by the demands society places on them. They have nothing to lose, they do not
End of quote.

Due to these complex background problems and the lack of a bond with society, many prisoners find themselves caught in a vicious circle out of which they cannot escape without help.

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2.3 The aftercare model provided by Exodus

One of the bigger aftercare organisations in the Netherlands is a Foundation called Exodus.

The foundation was created by Roman Catholic and protestant prison chaplains and church volunteers.

In the Netherlands, prison chaplains are civil servants. They are government employees, but their mission is directed by their churches. So they are both civil servants and church officials.

The founders of Exodus noticed that many prisoners had contact with social workers and that the prison chaplains played an important role.

After detention, many former inmates are alone without any form of assistance. It is a time when they need strong guidance in their lives.

Exodus started in 1981 as a small aftercare project run by volunteers. Now Exodus has ten homes with professional staff and four hundred and fifty volunteers. The homes offer a professional guidance programme, which is followed by three hundred and fifty former inmates each year. Another two hundred and fifty former inmates who live on their own, are guided by volunteers.

I would like to tell you something about the Exodus programme.

Exodus's guidance philosophy is that these complex problems can only be tackled in a broadly-based and cohesive guidance programme. A cohesive and integral guidance programme was therefore developed for all aspects of life, offering cohesive guidance in living, working, establishing relationships and giving meaning to life. The relation between these different aspects is important. There is nothing to be gained if you only offer people just guidance in the field of living, or merely in the field of relationships, or just in the field of working. A new existence needs a construction, involving all of these aspects of life.

Giving meaning to life

An important part in the comprehensive guidance is attention for immaterial meaning in a person's life.

Man's life unfolds from inside. A new future starts deep in the "inner room" of

the prisoner himself, not in the office of the professional.

The choices a person makes, the values and standards he observes, the responsibility he takes - these are all based in his religious background or his philosophy of life. If life cannot be regarded in a broader, meaningful existence, then there is no anchor for existence. It means that people may drown in the waves of life that wash over them.

Let's go back to religion and the philosophy of life that differs for every resident. For example, some of the residents are Muslims. If they have questions on religion or any other questions on life, they can turn to an imam for guidance. It is important that every resident can develop his own personal roots and sources that will give him the strength to support life and a basis for building his new existence.

The guidance structure

The highly-structured and round-the-clock guidance is given by professional staff.

Each resident has a personal counsellor. The programme is divided into periods. There are three periods: orientation, development and independence.

The first two weeks of the orientation period is dedicated to a wide range of basic activities, such as going to the social security or job centre. This is the time the former inmate makes his room his home.

During the orientation period of two months the counsellor and the resident write a personal guidance plan. This plan is the leading factor during the development period.

This period is followed by the independence period when the resident has a great degree of independence.

Before transferring to the next period, the results are evaluated by the team.

The guidance programme offers a wide range of guidance aspects, such as:

- budgeting,
- social skills,
- re-establishment of family relations,
- relationships in general,
- anger management,
- daily routines,
- sports and recreation,
- dealing with other residents and the local community,
- functioning on the work floor,
- debt restructuring,
- finding living quarters,
- identifying and avoiding potential crime risks,
- looking for new contacts
- and giving meaning to life.

An important point in the Exodus development is providing a tight guidance structure. All residents must observe the clear house rules and rules of conduct.

There is a total ban on soft and hard drugs as well as alcohol.

If a resident fails to observe any of the house rules, rules of conduct or any

agreement made, he is given a yellow card. Ten yellow cards means a red card. This means that he must leave the home. Instead of giving yellow cards, "task and work duties" can also be given. Residents who have a large number of yellow cards for failing in a specific learning point, such as getting up on time, are thus spared from leaving the home.

The power of believing in people

Exodus' guidance programme is hard. It demands a lot of motivation and commitment. The tight structure is difficult to accept. However, we are convinced that this tight structure is essential to be able to create a new basis for life. Crucial is the understanding that the structure is not a goal in itself, but that the structure offers a stable ground to build on. Within the tight structure it is essential that the counsellors are highly committed in their work with the residents. This is more than just professional guidance; this is professional guidance from the heart. Involvement with the residents and their future is an essential basic attitude of the counsellors. This commitment of the counsellors and the volunteers can motivate people to continue. A resident once said in an interview: "they have more faith in you than you have faith in yourself".

Concrete guidance results

The guidance programme offers concrete results. When the residents leave the home, they will have accommodation, work and a fresh start with new relationships. They have a solid basis on which they can build their future. They have created a bond with society.

/> In order to realise concrete results in the guidance project, Exodus has constructed a broad network of churches, probation service, employer organisations, housing corporations, foundations and funds, combining target 1 of Exodus (personal guidance) with target 2 (creating social opportunities).

Volunteers

As I have told you, guidance in the homes is provided by professional counsellors. But the Exodus homes would be nowhere without volunteers. In consultation with the counsellors, volunteers participate in activities, accompany residents when visiting, for example, aid organisations, or join them during exciting activities. One of Exodus divisions is run by volunteers assisting former prisoners in living independently after detention. They give support in a wide range of activities, such as going together to the Social Service or job centre, doing something together, for example in entertainment or sports, practical help in daily life, or just being there for a small talk, to offer a listening ear. The volunteer contacts are not open-ended. They are restricted to a certain term. But they can be renewed. The purpose is to help people live independently and construct their own social network.

3. Dual focus in aftercare project: the inmates (motivation) and society

Part three.

As I said before, the problems faced by inmates are both personal and societybased.

I assume that this duality is to be found in every nation across the world.

Aftercare therefore has an individual and a social side. An aftercare programme must focus on both sides, which requires both a commitment from the inmates, and a commitment from society.

Let' s start with the inmates. Successful reintegration starts with the inmate himself. He must believe in it and make an effort. If the person in question is not motivated, there can be no reintegration, no matter how good the conditions are. Many inmates in the Netherlands lack this motivation or have motivational problems.

The prison chaplaincy can play an important role in motivating inmates to start a new life. At the heart ofthe gospel lies the principle that a man's life is constructed from within. Life's innovation starts within people.

Metanoia. Conversion. These words mean an appeal to us. Redirecting life. To leave the road of disaster and to join the path of salvation. An orientation, aimed at the arrival of the Kingdom of God.

What can prison chaplaincy contribute to reinforce people's motivation?

I mention the following five points:

1. First ofall, the heart ofthe proclamation (the core ofChristian identity).

This is one ofthe points I made in part one. We believe that every man is created by God in His image and likeness. This makes man's existence anything but random. His right to exist is anchored in the fact that he has been created by God. People always have a future.

2. In the second place: Every person is created as a unique human being in community with others.

Many inmates feel that they don't belong to society anymore. Prisontime is as a continuing burden. On the other hand, prison chaplaincy in connection with the churches, try to make them experience that they will always belong to the community.

3. In the third place: The development of a new life requires coming to terms with the past. The prison chaplaincy has a unique role in dealing with life.

It takes man seriously in the brokenness of his existence, in his despair and disillusion, but also in his desire to renew and heal his existencce.

4. In the fourth place: The development of life requires material conditions such as housing, work, contacts and relations. But the development of the material dimensions is impossible without an immaterial dimension. Faith gives direction and purpose to man's existence.

5. And last but not least: prison chaplaincy has a unique relation with prisoners. It has a special relation of confidence because of the official secret.

In order to realise a successful reintegration, the focus must be on both the inmate's motivation, and on society.

Let me give you a few points on the focus on society.

1. First: Specific aftercare projects are required. I have given examples.

2. Secondly: Aftercare projects alone are not enough. One condition to guarantee the successful reintegration of former inmates is that society is prepared to give inmates a new chance. It's all about the possibility to live, to work and to entertain contacts. Stigmatisation must end and society has to be prepared to offer people another chance.

3. Thirdly it is important to make clear that crime is prevented most effectively by investing in people. Offering people another chance contributes to prevention. In that respect, aftercare is an investment that pays itself back.

Aftercare, therefore, focuses on the inmates and on society. People and organisations who give attention to aftercare can influence motivation of inmates.

I believe that people's faith in themselves can grow through the faith others have in them. This is in fact the heart of the gospel. God has faith in us, and therefore we can have faith in ourselves.

A simple example from practice.

When I was working as a prison chaplain, one of my volunteers was an eightyfive-year-old lady. She would visit every Sunday, serving coffee and talking to the inmates after the service. After the service, she would hand out flowers. The inmates started to respectfully call her "Grandmother". They adored her.

One day an inmate came to me and told me that he wanted to talk about an aftercare project to see if it held any possibilities for him.

At first my reaction was one of surprise, as he had always told me that he no longer wished to think about a new life. He had tried so often, and it had all failed. He no longer wanted to give himself and his family false hope. He had said "Maybe I was born for crime".

I asked him what had brought on this change. He said: "Last Sunday, after the service, I talked with "Grandmother" for a while. And Grandmother told me that she comes to prison every Sunday because she believes in the men here, including me. Grandmother believes that there is a future for all men. She said that she has believed in this her whole life. It is something she learnt from the Bible. When I was having coffee later that night in my cell, I suddenly thought: It's absurd that Grandmother at age 85 still believes in me, but that I, at the age of 30, have lost all faith in myself."

4. Embed aftercare projects into the church and society. Society must reintegrate.

Part four.

I regard the embedding of aftercare projects in church and in society as very important. Aftercare projects should never be on themselves, but should always be supported by society. Not only to make them viable financially, but also to create the widest possible support for reintegration.

Churches are vital communities. They are communities where people with different social responsibilities meet. Churches have broad networks. Churches are communities that have a social responsibility.

It is my experience that focusing on prison chaplaincy and aftercare in the churches may inspire broad social involvement.

5. The significance of the relationship between the prison chaplaincy and the aftercare for the process of reintegration

Finally, I would like to mention the significance of a strong connection between prison chaplaincy and aftercare for the process of reintegration.

I believe that early in detention the focus must be on finding a new way of life.

Too many people leave prison entirely unprepared. Preparing for the future during detention is essential.

The Christian identity of prison chaplaincy makes it future-oriented.

The organised connection between prison chaplaincy and aftercare can also provide the concrete basis early in detention for a new existence.

Because of the Christian identity (the message of God's merciful care for people), because of the relation of confidence with the inmates and because of the connection with the churches, prison chaplaincy can make a concrete contribution to the future for inmates. And so it ensures that in God's world there is life beyond brokenness.

I hope that prison chaplaincy in the renewed Europe can inspire politics and society to fight crime also by investing in people and in their possibilities for the future.