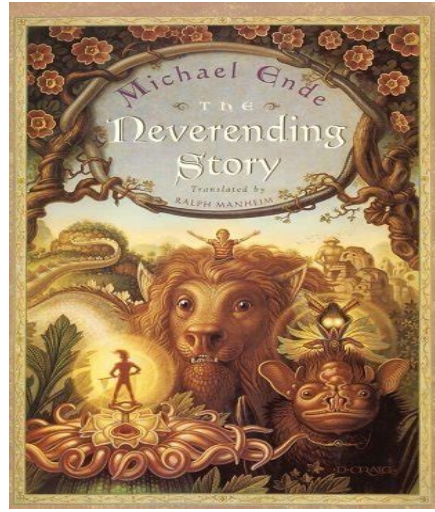


EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP IN CORRECTIONS

THE NEVER-ENDING STORY



The Neverending Story (German: Die unendliche Geschichte) is a German fantasy novel by Michael Ende, first published in 1979. The standard English translation, by Ralph Manheim, was first published in 1983. The novel was later adapted into several films.

Most of the story takes place in the parallel world of Fantastica (Phantásien in the original German version; referred to as Fantasia in the films), a world being destroyed by the Nothing, which represents and constitutes people's lack of imagination in the real world. The first protagonist is a young warrior, who is asked by the sick Empress to set off and find the cure for their world. The other protagonist is a boy from the real world, a reader of the novel with the same title, for whom the story gradually becomes increasingly realistic.¹

Unlike Fantastica some churches are being weakened by a lack of imagination. On the inside they appear to be asleep producing Nothing. One place this lack of imagination may be evidenced is in their evangelism and discipleship programs. Often evangelism is understood as an event that only the church staff performs during specific times and in certain locations. Discipleship is frequently described as a program that the church leadership provides for the new believers only. Without true imagination and unclouded vision for evangelism and discipleship many Christians attend weekly gatherings where Nothing takes place.

This lack is not exclusive to church communities. Often the chaplain brings the same expectations to the prison environment. The results are inmates released back into the community without any concept of becoming a disciple or experiencing transformation. Many chaplaincy programs fail to have the right perspective for discipleship. Often it is understood as: **(1) an event—not a process, (2) a program—not a person, and (3) a method to follow—not a mentor to model.**

When evangelism and discipleship become a never-ending process chaplaincy will become more effective in the transformational process of the inmate's life. The results of transformed inmates will be less recidivism. With greater effectiveness and becoming more essential to corrections, chaplaincy will find its rightful place in the corrections industry as a significant force to combat crime.

A PROCESS NOT AN EVENT

Most evangelicals see evangelism as an event or a moment in time. They will often refer to the moment of salvation but never include discipleship as part of their conversion or conversation concerning salvation. This perception has influenced most outreach programs inside prisons. Because of this, chaplains will spend most of their time and interaction with volunteers counting the numbers of the saved. Little time if any is truly devoted to a long-term commitment of much needed transformational ministry.

It is time for the Protestant chaplains to abandon the concept of inmates getting saved as the only measure of success in the process of evangelism. Witnessing to the point of salvation is not an event but a lifelong process. If one considers Engel's scale of evangelism and the various stages moving toward redemption it clearly supports this understanding for evangelistic outreaches.² What many fail to consider is the other side of redemption.

This lack of perception of evangelism as a process including discipleship often thwarts the chaplain's efforts to combat recidivism. Many chaplains give in to the frustration of trying to change the existing ministry concepts. They become satisfied with weekly totals and try to avoid volunteer confrontation. However, this lack of transformational ministry will eventually show up in the annual reports on recidivism.

Correctional Programming - Built for Failure

The correctional industry continues to struggle to find a solution to its steady rise in recidivism. In a report produced by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2002 they reported that 67% of former inmates released from state prisons in 1994 were arrested for a new crime within three years following release.³ This rate has not changed much over the past decades and indicates our correctional systems and their messages of correction are not working. It also indicates that chaplaincy is included in the failing effort to fight crime.

The prison environment is one of the most resistant and most difficult for programming. Many secular programs operate with a system based totally on behavioral theories that have proven ineffective in most educational systems. The term "Pavlov's dog" is literally transferred to the image of the incarcerated by many of the correctional staff and naïve community. And many will blame the failure of their programs totally on the inmate. In fact, some have gone to the extent of seeing the inmate as a useless dog to be left to their own demise.

What the prison environment does enforce is the concept that "if you are conditioned by what you do, when you do it and how you do it, you will naturally do it." Yet repetition and punishment for reinforcement within corrections has proven to do nothing more than force the inmate to repress or suppress their true desires and goals. Over time the inmate learns to ignore the consequences. They become embittered to the whole correctional process just waiting for the opportunity to "get over" or "get back" at the system.

The fundamental problem with punishment I and II is that they do not teach new appropriate ways to behave, but simply suppress inappropriate old ways to behave. Thorndike found that pleasure was more effective in stamping new bonds in than pain was in stamping old bonds out. Skinner found, similarly, that reinforcement teaches new behavior better than punishment teaches old behaviors.⁴

The modern-day inmate has learned that parole and earning good time are nothing more than a tool to manipulate the daily routines expected from custody. The correctional environment often leads to the suppression and regression of inmates into previously learned behaviors. Inmates comply with directives not out of desire, but necessity, until they are paroled or released. It is only through the transformative power of the Gospel that a shift in behavior begins to occur. The dynamics of discipleship in the classroom are essential for this transformation.

The Christian message of transformational redemption challenges traditional correctional programming. The redemptive work of Christ brings hope to despair and failed programs, viewing inmates not as mere subjects in an experiment, but as individuals capable of profound change.

For a chaplain to genuinely transform an inmate, they must recognize four key elements of inmate behavior. First, they must understand the inmate's resistance to change, rooted in street-learned behaviors and philosophies. Second, they need to reframe the inmate's self-image and worldview. Third, they must rebuild the inmate's life in terms that align with their new Christian reality. Finally, as a role model, the chaplain must help the inmate develop a sense of victory and accomplishment.

Years of cognitive structuring from the streets, dysfunctional families, and deteriorating neighborhoods are challenging to understand and transform. Transitioning an inmate from a life overwhelmed by sin, disappointment, and fear to the new reality of the Christian Walk requires significant effort and often involves setbacks.

A potential pitfall for chaplains is the temptation to impose their personal expectations on inmates. This approach can frustrate inmates, leading them to revert to self-defeating behaviors and ultimately blame religion for their failures. Instead, chaplains should provide inmates with the necessary resources and the freedom to rebuild their lives in Christ.

Providing ideal blueprints of successful models both in scriptures and in the life of the chaplain will help the "directed discovery"⁵ method to develop naturally. It will be hard to balance freedom of choice with your desired outcomes. "We teach a subject not to produce little living libraries on that subject, but rather to get the student to think ... for himself ... to take part in the process ... Knowing is a process, not a product."⁶

Allowing inmates personal freedom and encouraging their problem-solving abilities, regardless of how unconventional their ideas may seem, opens valuable and lasting opportunities for changing the criminal mindset. Rebuilding an inmate's perceptions is both the most challenging and rewarding aspect of the chaplain-inmate relationship. This challenge arises from the inherently anti-learning environment of correctional facilities. However, it is rewarding because, with proper guidance, inmates can continually overcome barriers from past negative experiences and hidden pains.

Chaplains should anticipate repetitive failures and self-imposed barriers from inmates. These expectations should form the foundation of the lesson plan. Lessons may need to be repeated creatively until the inmate gains insight into a new life pattern.

It requires significant effort to be creative, develop an understandable teaching structure, establish new meaning in inmates' lives, and address the unique daily challenges of corrections. Inmates must be guided, not forced, into new knowledge and the Holy Spirit's control of their thinking patterns. Chaplains must help inmates transition from a suppressed behavioral environment to a process of reframing and restructuring their perceptions and responses to the world.

When inmates recognize that their new attitudes, emotions, and values are following a new course as new creatures in Christ, the chaplain has achieved the first step toward lifelong discipleship. How can a chaplain discern whether they are truly transforming an inmate rather than merely providing information to memorize?

Consider the question, "When is a liar not a liar?" Teaching that a liar stops being a liar when they stop lying is worthwhile. Teaching that a liar stops being a liar when they tell the truth is even more valuable. However, true

transformation is evident when the inmate answers, “When they consistently tell the truth even when they have the opportunity to lie.”

Confronting Jail House Religion

Within the competitive correctional environment, religious conversion decisions that are found in corrections are often imaginative counterfeits. Many inmates see religion as another means of escaping from their tragic lives or a means of gaining early parole. Jail house religion has become a pejorative term for false conversions of faith.

I remember on one occasion an Islamic Chaplain telling me that one of his key students defected and changed religions. He said that the inmate told him, “I found Jesus last week.” The Imam’s response, “I didn’t know He was lost?” I found this humorous, but it also illustrates just how far the Gospel message can be misunderstood when seeking successful conversions and not growing disciples.

How does the chaplain counter the ongoing insistence from religious groups to simply “get em saved”? Providing a clear biblical understanding of true redemption is the first step. “Success is sharing your faith and living your life for Jesus Christ. It has little to do with bringing anyone to the Lord. It has everything to do with obedience.”⁷ Salvation is wholly of the Lord and for His good purposes and pleasure to fulfill His sovereign plan, Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”(KJV) The term προετοιμαζω [proetoimazo] “before ordained” clearly indicates that our salvation is part of the divine purpose and plan of God not our good intentions or well-crafted gospel sermons.

Recognizing that our salvation glorifies God and fulfills His purposes and pleasures makes the chaplain a simple messenger. Ministry success is not the chaplain bringing someone to saving faith in Christ all the time. Success is acting out your Christian life becoming like Jesus Christ. [Romans 8:29] Sharing the Gospel and trusting God for the results is fulfilling the purpose and plan of God. [Matthew 28:18-20] Trusting the results to God is giving Him all the glory. [Romans 11:36]

Christians are redeemed for the sake and purpose of Jesus Christ.⁸ In fact the very reason for our very being and existence is for Jesus Christ and His Glorious Good Pleasure!

In addition to a clear understanding of the Gospel, developing a comprehensive vision that encompasses both spiritual and secular aspects of transformational ministry is essential for chaplains and volunteers to effectively address “jailhouse religion.” For instance, the mission of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) is to ensure that all individuals committed to state correctional institutions are confined with the necessary level of custody to protect the public and are provided with the care, discipline, training, and treatment needed for reintegration into the community.⁹

With this shared goal, we aim to create evaluations that demonstrate religious programming aligns with the NJDOC’s mission, rather than pursuing independent objectives. This partnership based on a common vision can be challenging for chaplains, as it may want to conform to secular standards. However, what better way to provide the necessary “care, discipline, training, and treatment” than through the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the life of discipleship?

Through cooperative efforts, evaluative techniques for success can become highly specific and measurable, focusing on transformation rather than just salvation. Christian transformation through discipleship should serve as the model for evaluating behaviors, attitudes, values, ethics, commitment, and heartfelt desires in all religious programming.

Christian programming offers “added value” by evaluating more than cognitive achievements, vocational skills, or crime reduction. It addresses the core of what corrections aim to achieve: changing a person’s motives, attitudes, and values.

With this in mind, we can formulate a vision and mission statement that aligns with correctional goals, ensuring that religious programming prepares individuals for reintegration by living a life in Christ, thereby reducing the likelihood of returning to a life of crime.

A PERSON – NOT A PROGRAM

The greatest barrier to religious programming is the lack of instantaneous results, like certificates, or program completion. Discipleship programs often do not produce true disciples. Nor does it disqualify any inmate from claiming to be a disciple. This causes much consternation for chaplains and speculation from administration.

Yet when we look at the New Testament those termed disciples were and still are a varied lot.

1. Followers of a leader. John 1:35, 37.
2. Various and diverse followers. John 9:27; Math. 27:57
3. The Apostles of Christ. Luke 6:13
4. Early church membership. Acts 9:10, 36
5. The superficial, the shallow and the curious. John 6:60, 64, 66, 71
6. Known enemies with false motives. John 12:4
7. Followers who failed in many ways. Luke 22:31-32, 57, 60-62
8. Those known as Christians. Acts 11:26

Chaplains must understand that true discipleship in corrections extends beyond titles or mere adherence to a movement, person, or school. It requires a total life commitment to Jesus Christ, who calls us to discipleship through self-denial, renunciation of worldly life, and abandonment of worldly desires, fulfilled in steadfastness, fruitfulness, and love (Luke 14:25-35, Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34).

This relationship begins with Christ, is sustained by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and is manifested in the disciple's holy life. True discipleship is evidenced when disciples produce other disciples. In corrections, there is no greater achievement than returning a disciple to their community to foster more Christian disciples.

2 Peter 1:3 highlights the added value of discipleship: "According to His divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness..." A true disciple separates from the masses and lives a Christ-centered life in a challenging world, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit's indwelling, transformational ministry cannot be fully realized.

2 Peter 3:10 states, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (KJV). True discipleship is marked by obedience to Christ's teachings, guided by scriptural principles and a relationship with the Master. The disciple's life, producing the fruits of discipleship, will attract others to Christ through their commitment and loyalty.

In summary, discipleship is a relational process that begins with redemption in Christ, is sustained by the Holy Spirit, and is evidenced in the disciple's holy life, lived according to God's word. To achieve this, inmates must be challenged to fully consider and understand their future as Christians. This future often does not promise prosperity, miracles, or always answered prayers, as sometimes suggested by "jailhouse religion."

Counting the Cost of Discipleship

Just like the Apostle Peter, I often find myself being impetuous resulting in a poorly planned controlled chaos. My path with Christ is blurred with self-fulfilling desires and wishes. It is at these crossroads that Jesus warns us of poor planning in Luke 14:25-33.

Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife, children, brothers, and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand {men} to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." (NASB)

Counting the cost requires a clear understanding of discipleship goals and a commitment to the entire process. It demands a character that embraces change with confidence and creativity.

From the outset, the discipleship program must be recognized as a lifelong pursuit. There must be a vigilant effort to maintain the vision of discipleship from leadership to laity, ensuring it is not lost in the daily routine of prison life. The chaplain's ministry of discipleship should be seen as a dynamic, ever-evolving outreach, not a static component of traditional prison ministry. Without a clear and consistently understood vision, goals, and objectives, the chaplain's programs will drift.

Counting the cost also necessitates a lifelong commitment to the ministry. Supporters, including the chaplain, administration, and volunteers, must demonstrate sacrificial loyalty to the ministry.

Often, the commitment to discipleship wanes in the face of demands for worldly success. Successful prison programs may challenge the success of discipleship when comparing outcomes and goals. Correctional discipleship must be evaluated differently. Without loyal commitment, it is easy to abandon what seems ineffective and revert to programs that appear to work.

Like a king entering battle, the chaplain must demonstrate a character of conquest in the face of opposition, battles, and barriers. There must be an attitude of expecting trials and certainty of victory in overcoming barriers to disciple-making. These barriers should be viewed as opportunities for growth, not as burdens or defects.

The greatest periods of personal and corporate growth in chaplaincy often occur during significant battles and trials. The ability to adapt and overcome with the power and presence of Christ should guide the entire chaplaincy program. This quality can turn defeats into victories and opposition into opportunities.

Any experienced builder knows the importance of accepting change. The final product rarely matches the original blueprint exactly. Disciple-making requires being a champion of change in the process of personal and corporate spiritual growth in corrections.

A continual process of evaluating the vision for discipleship is essential. Change should be anticipated daily and celebrated when recognized. The discipleship program and the disciple should evolve over time. Following Christ's blueprint is not a robotic process but a transformative journey for everyone involved.

Change is often seen as a threat to the stability of the Christian life and the church. Normalizing and celebrating change can create an environment of enthusiasm and combat boredom.

Any successful builder or general knows that the greatest victory or strongest tower is only as strong as the support surrounding it. Leadership must exhibit confidence in the disciple-making environment for the process to be effective and complete.

The emerging church has undergone significant changes over the past few decades. It is crucial to integrate these changes into the church environment while maintaining the foundational teachings of Christ and the Apostles. Creativity and adaptability are essential for the success of all prison programs.

Two often overlooked characteristics inherent in God's creation of humanity are imagination and curiosity, which drive the desire to discover and understand. Unfortunately, these traits are frequently suppressed or undervalued within the church. However, it is within the church that we can achieve our deepest understanding of God and ourselves.

Disciples often feel discouraged when they lack inspiration or opportunities for exploration and growth. Discipleship is frequently framed as a duty-bound activity, with an emphasis on obligatory study and adherence. This approach can make obedience to Christ seem like a monotonous and burdensome task, with severe consequences for non-compliance.

An effective discipleship program should foster an atmosphere of creativity and discovery, encouraging individuals to learn about Jesus Christ and their identity in Him. This process can be both enjoyable and exciting, even in the face of significant trials and challenges, by tapping into the unique human traits of curiosity and imagination.

Discovering the Power for Discipleship

After years of impulsive mistakes, peer ridicule, and challenges to his authority, Peter recognized the true power of a disciple of Christ: living a holy life in a world bound for destruction, thereby manifesting the divine nature. To experience the transformative power of redemption, one must live like Christ.

Peter's life is rich with lessons from his committed, sacrificial journey. His denial of Christ likely prompted his warnings to readers to "not forget" and "not become near-sighted." Similarly, the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians chapters 1 and 2, echoes Peter's sentiments about God's power. Paul admits that he preached with "trembling" and without "eloquence," relying instead on the assurance from Christ. Both apostles demonstrate that their life experiences serve as valuable lessons for disciples.

Both Peter and Paul emphasized the importance of focusing on the Holy Spirit, the source of life within believers. This focus assured disciples that the apostles' teachings and guidance were divinely inspired, not of human origin. Paul clearly states in 1 Corinthians 2:10, "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." This divine direction gave credibility to Peter's statements in 1 Peter 1:13 and 1:12, assuring disciples that God's influence was paramount in their teachings.

The inspired word of God provides a similar assurance, verifying the truth in the disciple's message. Young believers naturally question, challenge, and explore other possibilities of truth. During these times, the word of truth serves as a reliable foundation. Peter reminds disciples that he witnessed God's glory and miracles, yet we have the "more sure word" delivered by God. Paul challenges disciples to explore the "foolishness of the world" and discover that God's wisdom is incomparable. In both cases, the revealed word of God is the guiding principle for both disciple and disciple-maker.

Disciples must be allowed to explore and validate in their own hearts what they discover as truth. Peter inspires disciples to live a holy life empowered by the Holy Spirit, ensuring they are well-equipped for heaven. Personal testimonies, especially from ex-offenders, can be highly inspirational within correctional settings. Each student faces barriers to faith transformation and must be inspired. The life experiences of the teacher and the Spirit's guidance provide life-changing messages. Opportunities to share personal testimonies will yield noteworthy results.

This is critical to understand in the correctional environment. Often there is a desire to borrow lessons from already established studies found in the church or online. "What didn't work in discipleship is the "borrowing of materials" for discipleship formed somewhere else. A prison chaplain must clearly recognize this concept.¹⁰

My life experiences of drugs, alcohol and crime, my total dependence on the Holy Spirit's guidance for my source of discipleship material, and my trust in the authority of the Word has always provided a unique lesson plan designed for the disciple in prison. I could hardly imagine presenting the same sermons, teachings, and concepts to the local church with the same impact. Not only do I believe that we must work harder to develop our own lessons but the motivation I have seen when the disciple realizes and recognizes that this message was specially formed, just for him, is phenomenal.

The inmates need to realize that the true power of the Christian does not come from safety in numbers, safety in position, or safety in tolerance. It comes from living the divine holy life, in the divine power of God freely given to each one who believes. The source of lesson plans should draw on life experiences, being led of God, and creating an environment of trust so the disciple could face the coming trials and tribulations of ex-offenders.

The Heart of Discipleship, Putting Off and Putting On

In the book the Resilience Revolution,¹¹ the author opened my eyes as to the nature of our troubled youth and how to reach them based on their created image of God and inner instincts. "In one sense, we must believe in ourselves, in everyone's ability to affect another's life for the better. We must also believe in youth's capacity, with our help, to grow beyond the limits of a traumatic past or a risk-filled environment: We must believe in resilience."¹²

Perhaps if we stop being so coercion and punitive oriented and provide the four basic needs that youth and adults truly desire, they will respond with resilience as well as their newfound faith.

To satisfy the need for belonging, build trust

To satisfy the need for mastery, recognize talent

To satisfy the need for independence, promote power

To satisfy the need for generosity, instill purpose¹³

This reflects the basic nature of creation, and it is a means for healthy human development, apart from redemption of course. The family is the ideal environment created by God to provide these basic needs and because of the family's deterioration, we, the church, should fill the gap.

We must realize in disciple making that these basic needs, although met in Jesus Christ through redemption, still need to be addressed by the disciple maker. How he is accomplished is clearly taught in Scriptures.

In Paul's command to "put off"¹⁴ and "put on"¹⁵ we find the core of the transformation curriculum for disciple makers. We must continue to address the basic needs of family and disciples, but with the new concepts of the heavenly kingdom and holy character as the fulfillment.

As a disciple maker our goal is to recognize the four basic needs, assist each disciple to make the necessary changes to remove those things that fulfilled them in the past, and replace them with those things of God that will make them into the new image, that of Jesus Christ.

A MENTOR TO MODEL

NOT A METHOD TO FOLLOW

The Search for the Missing Link and Its Parallel in Crime Prevention

The scientific community is fervently searching for the missing link in the evolutionary chain that connects humankind to the Big Bang theory. Periodically, claims about discovering this link emerge in the media, only to be replaced by new theories as the search continues.

Similarly, efforts to prevent recidivism among inmates face ongoing challenges. Each year, researchers propose new theories on the causes of criminal behavior. However, these theories often encounter a significant issue: there are always exceptions—individuals who defy the predicted patterns of criminality. Like their scientific counterparts, these researchers often overlook divine explanations in their quest for answers.

The true missing link is simple: it is sin.

In over thirty years of chaplaincy, I have yet to find a secular alternative that matches the transformative power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No other program or treatment offers the same potential for total life transformation. Despite this truth, chaplaincy has struggled to provide sufficient evidence to support its claims. A significant step towards lasting change post-release is the implementation of small group ministry.

Many current programs and volunteers attempt to disciple inmates through classroom or worship-style frameworks. While they diligently present the Word each week, they often fail to help inmates apply these lessons to their lives. Volunteers provide information and beliefs without clear expectations or practical guidance. This is where small group ministry and mentoring add significant value to transformational efforts.

Mentoring has become a major focus in corrections over the past decade, particularly when pairing mentors with inmates' children and their families. Churches and organizations have observed substantial positive impacts on incarcerated families through such interventions. The primary reason for this success is mentoring's ability to influence the direction of inmates' children's lives.

By fostering personal testimonies, especially from ex-offenders, and emphasizing the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit, chaplaincy can inspire inmates and their families. Small group ministry and mentoring provide the practical support and guidance necessary for true transformation. "No other model has been proven to change a child's direction in life than the one-on-one mentoring that Big Brothers Big Sisters provides. There are many programs in the nation that help the incarcerated, but not nearly enough programs that provide support for their children, he said."¹⁶ Mentoring leadership does not just lead but transforms lives.

This uniqueness to mentoring makes it different from other types of training especially when applied to the way that Jesus Christ modeled mentoring leadership.

Mentoring is a relationship process between an older, more mature, more knowledgeable, or more skilled person and another person who learns in some intentional way. Age cannot necessarily be equated with a higher level of maturity, knowledge, or skill. One of the primary components of mentoring is the relational process itself. For this reason, some people may be more skilled at mentoring than others. Relational skills are needed to make mentoring partnership work. What distinguishes a mentoring relationship from other informal learning is intentionality. In a mentoring relationship the mentor establishes with the mentee specifically what he wants to learn and together they establish how they will learn it. With the focus on learning, rather than teaching, both people in the relationship will have a deeper level of responsibility in the process.¹⁷

There are two significant observations to be made from this definition. First is the term intentionality which creates a purpose for the relationship and a responsibility to keep each time the parties meet. Second is that relationship skills are needed to make the partnership work. With these two concepts as foundational aspects mentoring is taken to the next level when applied to imitating Jesus Christ. For with Jesus the intentionality is found in the Great Commission and the relational skills are developed in conjunction with the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit that the mentor possesses.

By looking at the process used by Jesus Christ for mentoring we can further develop these two concepts. The first step for mentoring is to select the mentees. Jesus chose twelve disciples and in doing so did not necessarily choose the elite or the best the world had to offer.

They were not trained, but they were trainable. They had not been taught but were teachable. Nothing more in learners should a teacher desire, and nothing more does a teacher need!

In summary, the disciples were roughhewn, imperfect, self-centered, and untrained when Jesus chose them. They were normal people, with all the problems and potential of people today. Yet from among these twelve came leaders who turned the entirely known world upside down for the Lord.¹⁸

This is the first significant difference between worldly models of mentoring and Christian models. Christian mentors discover that the selection is not limited to selective choice but is directed by God in His sovereign plan.

The next step after selection is developing the mentor relationship. Here again we see the significant difference between human based mentorship and that of Jesus Christ. "I have seen some of the most athletic, popular, and brilliant students fail miserably in their Christian Walk and I have also seen some of the most unlikely students blossom into Christian giants. God's criteria for success are different than our own."¹⁹

The chaplain should be cautioned when developing criteria for selecting mentees, There is a dangerous practice in contemporary ministries to focus discipleship efforts only on those who have the highest potential. While the intent may be to not waste time on followers, we perceived to be insincere, there is a danger of discouraging someone God could powerfully use.²⁰

Selection for success is not an option for the mentoring program in prison, although it will be tempting. God enjoys making something great out of something small. Who would ever imagine that a tiny mustard seed would produce a gigantic tree? From a human perspective, the trivial things in this world are rarely important. In God's eyes, however, they can develop into great harvests. We must never underestimate what God can do

in our lives or in the lives of others because He sees tremendous growth potential in every believer who has a heart for God.²¹

These first two steps are perhaps the most significant. Without fully understanding them and the commitment they require the mentor relationship will quickly deteriorate. The mentor must make a sacrificial commitment to this process that can be recognized by the mentee. This provides the motivation for the follower to provide the same level of commitment to the process. The time spent selecting and developing the relationship will be invaluable when moving to the next stage of providing a purpose or goal for the relationship that both parties accept.

The primary goal of the mentor relationship is to make disciples who can in turn make their own disciples. This is accomplished by abiding in Christ, living in the Word, developing prayer disciplines, fellowship, witnessing and ministering to others.²² The best method of challenging the mentee to follow these principles is by being a consummate mentoring modeling.

Modeling is the most critical aspect of mentoring in prison. Without the mentor living a life of zeal and fervor in his walk with the Lord the mentee will lack motivation and desire to follow.

If we expect others to follow our values, we must be passionate about what we teach. Moses was keenly aware of this principle when he began his instruction to the Hebrew parents with the challenge recorded in Deuteronomy 6:5-6. Modeling suggests that one of the best ways to affect behavior of others is to passionately live the values you want to teach in front of your students.²³

Of course, Jesus is the perfect model to follow. He demonstrated that godly character is the basis for Christian mentoring. His characteristics include:

1. He was what He taught,
2. Comfortable with people of all kinds,
3. Compassionate toward learners,
4. Possessed a strong Father-focused self-concept,
5. Man on a mission,
6. Dynamic humility,
7. Calmness under attack
8. Patient with disciples
9. Identified with the Father through prayer
10. Knew His learner,
11. Master of the Old Testament²⁴

It cannot be stressed enough how important modeling the life of Christ is when the mentor desires to teach the mentee about living the life of Christ.

After mentor has selected to mentees, developed a relationship, and emphatically stressed that the mentee should follow the model of Christ there needs to be a venue of application. The mentor should place the mentee into various situations where he may explore his giftedness and his calling from God. Delegating small acts of leadership while being supervised is the true test of how effective the mentor has been. It is also the stage of mentoring that requires accountability from both parties. "To be effective, mentoring relationships need to have some form of accountability, so that both parties know what is expected of them. Yet it is important to keep the structure flexible to the mentee's needs and personality."²⁵

It is often at this point when many mentoring relationships fracture when the mentee does not live up to expectations. Or they have a major failure to follow the standards and patterns set for his life. Again, it is here where Christian mentoring separates itself from worldly standards. that forgiveness and restoration are the guiding factors.

This is demonstrated in the life of Peter and Christ’s responses to his failures. The Lord permitted these experiences and provided the process for restoration.

1. Identify your need to make corrections in your life.
2. Acknowledge the Lord at work around you and in your life.
3. Renew your relationship with Christ in both words and action.
4. Settle the commitment question up front.²⁶

Of all mentoring relationships the one that takes the most commitment, the longest to develop and requires the most strength from the Lord is that of those whose lives are riddled with failure. Commitment must be the foundation for mentoring.

It is difficult to estimate how long this process might take. For each person it may be different. The most important thing is that the mentor sticks with the person until successful patterns of growth are established and the new believer has become interdependent on others within the larger church fellowship. This transfers the responsibility, over time, from the individual mentor to the collective body of Christ—the group that has been given the primary responsibility to “make disciples.”²⁷

In the Never-Ending Story, a boy from the real world, a reader of the novel with the same title, the story gradually becomes increasingly realistic. In evangelism and discipleship, the chaplain must use imagination and creativity when developing a mission and vision for the ministry behind bars. As he sees the life-long learning process of discipleship, create true disciples for a lifetime, the process becomes more real to him.

PLEASE NOTE: the following assignments are to be completed and submitted at the end of your courses of study.

7	<p>Reading Assignment: <i>Evangelism & Discipleship</i>, The Never-Ending Story</p> <p>Research: Use the internet to discover the various religious resources that assist inmates in their reentry, in their discipleship, and in their recovery in your community.</p> <p>Discussion Question: The discussion question will require you to make and extensive study in the book of Philemon. The following is an <u>example</u> of formulating prison ministry from this epistle. Provide your own insights or expand on the following.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prison Ministry depends on close Christian Relationships <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Confidential ministry b. Committed ministers c. Common bonds 	<p>Brief Essay of assigned Reading Write a brief reaction paper of 250 words or less containing what you consider to be important in <i>Evangelism & Discipleship</i></p> <p>Submit the progress you have made of your required “Community Resource Notebook” to be completed at the end of the studies</p> <p>Your discussion will require intensive research and development of formulating guidelines from the Epistle Philemon for a prison ministry by the end of your studies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Prison Ministry Finds True potential in Restoration <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Transformed from uselessness to usefulness b. Transformed by discipleship
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Challenging friends 2. Prison Ministry Depending on Challenging Community Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prayer Partners b. Resource Partners c. Refreshing Partners d. Loving Partners 3. Prison Ministry is discovered in Redemption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Offenders become dearly beloved b. Offenders become transformed c. Offenders become 'our passion' for ministry d. Offenders become the heart of the minister 4. Prison Ministry is revealed in Reconciliation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The ability to forgive the offender in Christ b. The ability to focus the offender on God's redemptive plan c. The ability to find true peace in the offender d. The ability to fulfill the purpose of God for the offender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Transformed by the Holy Spirit, the Word, and the ministry of the church 6. Prison Ministry is empowered by Regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Power to transform into Christlikeness b. Power to transcend other rehabilitative programs c. Power to discover and apply spiritual gifts d. Power to train in ministry 7. Prison Ministry Prepares for new Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Offenders receive the same status as prison ministry members b. Offenders receive the same treatment as ministers of the Gospel c. Offenders receive the respect of being fully pardoned 8. Prison Ministry Seeks a means of Restitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Repay the victims b. Repair the emotional trauma of victims c. Restore the sense of community
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END NOTES

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Neverending_Story Ende, Michael. Die Unendliche Geschichte, Germany, Thienemann Verlag, 1979.

² William McRaney Jr., The Art of Personal Evangelism, (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Publishing, 2003), p. 50

³ "Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994" Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. DOJ, June 2, 2002, executive summary.

⁴ William R. Yount, Created To Learn, (Nashville, TN : Broadman & Holman, 1996), p. 168, Many of the terms used in this section are from Yount's section on teaching for understanding and **transformational education**. It would be a significant asset to the correctional chaplain to purchase or at least read "and" study this text. It seems to be ready made for understanding the process for correctional transformational learning. Finding and studying similar resources will help the chaplain to understand and reframe the way they teach. They will also be able to recognize the religious programs that will be more effective for the inmate's ultimate transformation beyond the prison walls. Just like the inmate many chaplains will reject the thought of learning secular teaching trends for their theological studies. As a result, they become part of the ongoing problem in recidivism because they fail to teach with transformational concepts.

⁵ Ibid, p. 218

⁶ Ibid, p. 201

⁷ William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, Share Jesus Without Fear, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1999), p. 3, 17, 37, and throughout rest of text the author's repeat the theme of "no failure."

⁸ Ephesians 1:5 "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will..." Colossian 1:16 "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him..."

⁹ [Microsoft Word - 230215 NJDOC Mission Values Statements](#)

¹⁰ George Barna, Growing True Disciples, (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), p. 119-122

¹¹ Larry K. Brendtro & Scott J. Larson, The Resilience Revolution, (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, 2006)

¹² Ibid, p. 45

¹³ Ibid, The Resilience Revolution explores the basic needs of the young person and how the family was designed to provide those needs.

¹⁴ Col 3:8-9, “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ” Rom 6:6, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Eph 4:22, “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ”

¹⁵ 2Cr 5:17, “Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Col 3:10, “And have put on the new [man], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Gal 3:27, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Rom 13:14, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof].”

¹⁶ Isadora Vail, Mentor program aims to steer inmate's kids to different path; “Go Kids Articles”, San Antonio Express News, 3/20/2006, <http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/pgm&svcs/gokids/gokids-articles-mentor-pgm-aims-steer.htm> found on the Texas Department of Correction Web site under a section for inmate’s kids. <http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/pgm&svcs/gokids/gokids-interesting-articles.htm>

¹⁷ Gary Newton, Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity, (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 1999), p. 78

¹⁸ William Yount, Created to Learn, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Hollman, 1996), p. 345

¹⁹ Gary Newton, Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity, p. 7

²⁰ Ibid, p. 8

²¹ Ibid, p. 8

²² Towns, Elmer, Biblical Models for Leadership (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2007), p. 166

²³ Newton, Growing, p. 66.

²⁴ Yount, Created to Learn, p. 365

²⁵ Ibid, p. 84

²⁶ Elmer L. Towns, Biblical Models, p. 153-154

²⁷ Newton, Growing, p. 82