BUILDING WEALTH IN CHANGING TIMES

The Solari Report

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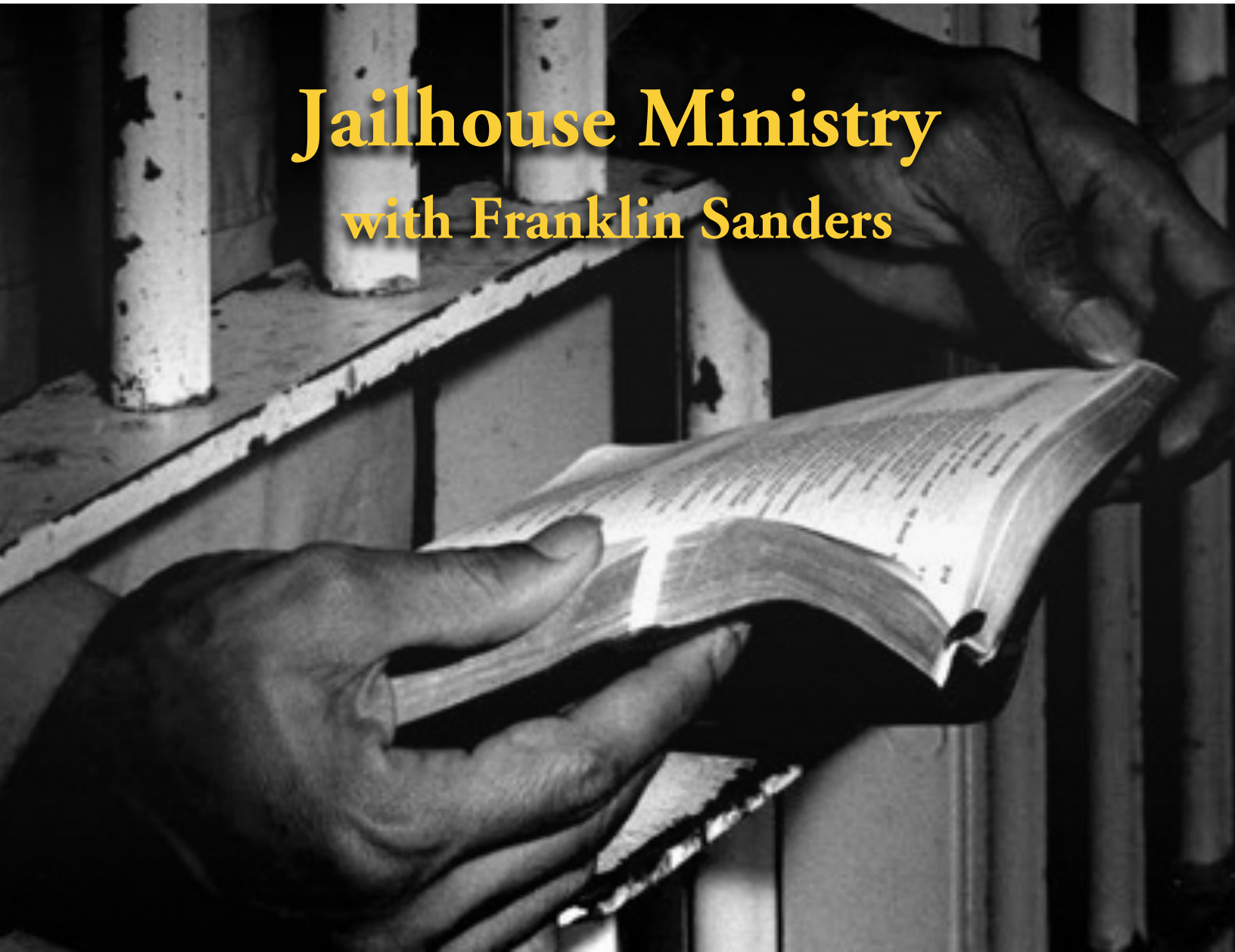

Jailhouse Ministry

with Franklin Sanders

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C. AUSTIN FITTS: Okay. It's my pleasure to welcome to The Solari Report a man who needs no introduction. Reverend Franklin Sanders is here in his capacity as the leader of Christ Our Hope Church, and we're going to talk about the Jailhouse Ministry that Franklin leads for the church and the congregation. So Franklin, welcome back to The Solari Report.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, thank you, Catherine. Glad to be here.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Every week I get a wonderful report in an e-mail about what the ministry has done each week in the local county jail. So I feel like I have watched the evolution of this, but maybe you could just start and talk about what inspired you to do this and what's happened, how it's evolved, where you are today.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, I was fortunate enough to get sent to jail back in the 1990s when I was fighting with the federal government and the state government because the federal government was after me for income tax. I started a gold and silver bank, and they said that was a scheme to evade taxes, which it never was, but anyway, they indicted a whole bunch of us.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: A tremendous effort was made to try and falsify and frame me into prison and there were many people who told, including myself, 'you're going to jail. There's nothing you can do, it's hopeless, it's been rigged, there's nothing you can do.' So it cost me $6 million and eleven years and more than many miracles to stay out. So if you're listening to Franklin talk about how he got railroaded into jail, I can tell you it happens all the time, and it's much easier than you think.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Oh, yes. I guarantee it is. One of the things that the feds do often is what I call double-teaming. That is they cook up some state charge against the people they've identified as their enemies and

then they go after them with that charge. What that means is that you just have too much to defend yourself against. If that sounds like an exaggeration, that's because your listeners have never tried to defend themselves against a criminal charge before.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: They might not have $6 million.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Right. It's just amazing how much money it runs through so quickly. So in any event, on this state charge that they brought against me, which was also preposterous, I got convicted. So I went to the penal farm in Memphis. Now, Memphis, you've got to remember, there are probably over a million people in the metropolitan area and they have this penal farm. Once upon a time, this is the way things were done. The county had what they called the penal farm, and it was a self-supporting unit. That is that the misdemeanors, the people who were in jail for a short time, less than a year (11 months, 29 days), would go there and they would have to work for a living. In other words, they had a farm there and they raised cash crops, they raised their own food, they raised their own meat, milk, all that sort of stuff. So it was really a profit center, so to speak. They didn't try to make money at it, but it supported itself.

Over the years, misguided philanthropy and government greed have destroyed that kind of system. You may think is cruel to be forced to work, but what the Constitution says is that when you're convicted of a crime, you're made a slave and you have to do whatever they say. That may sound cruel, but it can't even hold a candle to the cruelty of locking someone up in a cell where he can barely move and just holding him there and letting him out three times a day, fifteen minutes to get food and then maybe an hour of exercise. That's what the whole system has gone to. It's gone away from those institutions where you have work to do that makes the time pass quickly into these institutions where the only thing to do is to play cards or dominoes and watch TV. And you never get out.

Your listeners ought to look around themselves and they'll realize, hey,

we got a new jail in this county. And then you go to the next county and you see the same thing is going on, and the reason is because they're profit centers. It's been made into an industry. These new jails that are being built don't get any daylight at all, and you can just let your mind run crazy about what that does to you when you get a Vitamin D deficiency and the implications for depression.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: One thing I'll say is when you drive across Tennessee, what I've seen is huge criminal justice centers and huge jail facilities. Often, certainly in my county, it was terribly controversial because many of us felt we couldn't afford it. These things are very, very expensive and oftentimes paid with issuance of new bonds. The problem that the local sheriffs have is that they're so busy trying to staff these big facilities and process foreclosures that they don't have time to do the basic protecting of the citizenry. So there's a real tension.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: There is, but there's also this pool that, 'oh, the county's going to make money this way.' And not only that, all the people involved in the industry are going to make money. It's a jobs program because you're going to need guards on an ongoing basis, you've got to have them 24 hours a day, and somebody's going to make money for floating the bonds and somebody's going to make money for doing the construction. I came across a figure, $5.1 billion to $5.3 billion a year spent on prison construction. That sounds incredible, but it's true.

"It's a jobs program because you're going to need guards on an ongoing basis, you've got to have them 24 hours a day, and somebody's going to make money for floating the bonds and somebody's going to make money for doing the construction."

C. AUSTIN FITTS: In 1996, when we had started a data servicing business that was doing data servicing in low-income communities, one of the things we priced out was 'what was the benefit to the federal budget of having people have jobs that they could do locally?' You had a whole group of people, particularly women, who because of childcare and parent care

couldn't commute long distances but could do very sophisticated data servicing work if they had a place to work nearby. So our question was how much money could you save, and one of the things we priced out, 'what's the cost of various people going to prison?' One of the things we discovered was $10 per hour plus health care buys almost everybody off of dealing drugs.

An analysis came out from the General Accounting Office at the time that, if you looked at 100 percent of the cost of running the system of the prisons (that included all the servicing and probation and everything else), they were spending $154,000 per prisoner, federal, state and local combined. So each prisoner cost $154,000 per year. Now, I'm assuming that includes the construction costs as well, from looking at the GAO study. But it's much more expensive per person than everybody thinks, and of course, that's a very rich job program and it's a very rich construction and professional fee flow.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Right. There are going to be some counties where money's going to pass under the table to get the contracts. So there are ample opportunities for graft. Let me hasten to add, I'm not complaining about the local jail that we work with. The personnel are just amazing.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. There are wonderful people in the system. That's what always amazes me. A lot of my neighbors here in Tennessee work in the local institutions. We have three privatized prisons, and they're wonderful people.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Yes. The system takes people who are the least able in society to protect themselves, and I'm not saying they're all good people. Don't misunderstand me. A lot of them are really mean people and really they're the dregs of society for a reason. They make themselves the dregs of society, but you've created a system where you've made an industry out of putting human beings into one end of a meat grinder and grinding them up. Out the other end of the meat grinder comes money for a whole lot of people except them, and ground up human

being. There are people who are so institutionalized that it's almost impossible to imagine how they would ever function outside of society, but let me go back and pick up my history again.

So when I was in jail, I met people. Now, you have to imagine in Memphis, the penal farm was built in the 1920s for about 1,200 people, and there were about 2,400 people there. I was like the great white defendant because this is about 50 percent black, and the incarceration rates in the United States are very much overbalanced with black and Hispanics. In other words, you're very likely to go to jail between the time you're 20 and 30 if you're black as opposed to being white. In any event, I met a lot of people in the jail who'd been in there three years, sitting there, nothing to do, reading their Bible. People who had memorized large passages, large swaths of the Scripture. Then they'd get out and two weeks later they'd be right back in there. They'd be right back doing what they'd done before.

I'd go to these jail services, and these churches would come in and they were doing their "ministry" for the week, and they didn't ever mingle with the prisoners or anything. They're up on the stage, they come in, sing for a while and get everybody all excited and then the preacher gets up and tells everybody to do better so you won't ever have to come back here again. I'm thinking to myself, well, hey, if they can do better, would they have landed in here in the first place? What are you thinking about? I don't know, Catherine, it just breaks your heart when you see these people on this treadmill, this squirrel cage, and they can't get off.

But I did see some people who got out, just like there's some people who get out of drug addiction and some people who get out of alcoholism. The estimated rates from AA are that about one in four alcoholics who go to AA actually gets out from under alcohol, and I don't know what it's like with narcotics, but I'm sure it's about the same. So the numbers are not encouraging, and the conclusion I came to was that only God can get people out of that. Whether your listeners understand and believe that or not, I can't help it. I think there are very, very few human beings, if any, who have the resolve that they can tighten up the belt of

their will and get out of that themselves.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, I would say it this way. It's the only place you can go to get more power than what you're up against.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Absolutely. Yes, that's a very good way to put it. I moved over here, and all that was behind me, although I went back into the jail in Memphis. In Easter of 2010, one of the men in our parish was in jail. He was going to be there over the Easter weekend, and so I just couldn't stand the thought of him being in there without being able to celebrate communion over Easter. So I went to the jail administrator and thinking every Sunday night would of course be taken, I said, "Can I come in and do a worship service?" She said, "Well, yes, sure." I said, "Do you have any Sunday nights open?" She said, "Yes, all of them." I said, "I'll take them."

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Now that sounds like the Franklin Sanders I know. Of course, you hadn't talked to anybody at the church.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: No, no. I hadn't talked to anybody, and I hadn't really thought about what I was doing and how I was going to do this. In any event, now I was on the hook for every Sunday of the month. So, we go in and we use a book of common prayer service, the liturgy or Eucharist. It's a 500-year-old service, and people would tell me, oh, you can't do that in jail. They'll never get that. It's really not even as stilted as King James English. It's quite understandable, really, but here's the point. We went in there and all of these inmates participate more enthusiastically and just as well as the people in my parish do. I mean, they're right there. It took them a few weeks to catch on, but they've caught on, and they understand the message of hope and the love of God that comes through the liturgy. They hear it and it affects them and I think it changes them.

But the problem is we don't have a lot of time to work with them individually. I go in about 6:00, and it takes about 45 minutes to do a service, and we've done as many as six services in a night. Sometimes get

out of there at 11:00. I'm glad to do those services, and we'll do services for about 50 men a night, but it's in groups, they're broken up. Not more than 20 in a night. And the circumstances are not great. It's a classroom that they've got. Sometimes we have to use what they call the recreation room, which is a two-story-tall room about the size of a basketball court, and the echoes are just phenomenal.

"We confront these people with their own lifestyle and their lives and how they got there. The service confronts us all with our sin, but there's always a sermon there, and you can't play games with people like this."

But the thing is that these men are hungry to hear what we've got to say, and the women are too. We don't get to go into the women's side, which we've been trying to do. We've only been in a few times, but the response is just enormous. I don't want you to think that this is some kind of watered-down thing that we do. We confront these people with their own lifestyle and their lives and how they got there. The service confronts us all with our sin, but there's always a sermon there, and you can't play games with people like this. Look, we're in jail, okay. I mean, there's a sense there they're easier to deal with than other people.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Yes, they speak English. They don't talk pretzel talk.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Yes, they're not pretending they're okay. Come on. I'm sitting here in jail. No, my life is not okay. My life is in rags.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Let me ask you a couple things about the prisoners you're dealing with. How many of them are Caucasian?

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Almost all of them.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. So you're not dealing with the African American and Hispanic crowd. This is a very different picture. Most people picture, that this is a very racial phenomena. They don't begin to see how the model is eating its way through the poor Caucasian population.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Oh, yes. They are all the same problems here that there were in Memphis. It's just that they're white when they go to jail rather than being black.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Now, how many of them are in jail for drug-related offenses, whether dealing drugs or taking drugs?

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Catherine, there wouldn't be any jails if it weren't for the war on drugs. You wouldn't need them. I mean, you could have one jail in the country. At least 75, maybe 85 percent of the people are there for either one of either alcohol- or drug-related offenses. When I say alcohol- or drug-related, I mean they were doing drugs or drunk when they committed a crime or they're there for selling, dealing in drugs. Most of them who do drugs, deal in drugs as well.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Now, in my experience, most of the people dealing drugs don't have an economic alternative. In other words, they go into it because it makes money. It's a business. It's a job.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Yes, and maybe it supports their habit. There is a level of drug dealers who know not to use drugs, but these are not those people. These are the ones who are hooked and looking for a way to do it. They're not really all hooked either. They just don't want to do anything else. See, in the black population, I was jailed with people who had not had a man in the family or what we would think of as a regular family with a husband and wife, mother and father and siblings, in maybe four generations. Now, these over here, some of them are probably in their second generation without a parent or parents. They come from a broken home. By broken, I mean they never live together with their mother and father until they grew up.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: What I've found in all these circumstances is a person can't get out of this without developing good habits. The whole experience they've been in their entire lives or certainly once they got in the machinery, it breaks a person down. What it does is it destroys their habits. Getting them to the point where they can form good habits that

will make them productive in life is the biggest challenge in the world, and I would say it's not possible. It's hopeless except one of my favorite sermons, the preacher says, "You know, how can you not have — my God can do anything." I have seen people, literally, who I would have bet you any amount of money, were completely hopeless, get into church and get into a process and a year later, they're wearing a three-piece suit and holding down a job. I can't believe it's the same person. But it's absolutely possible.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, yes, you're kind of jumping ahead to something I was going to say later, but I'll go on and talk to it now. I stand there and tell them, "Look, here are Franklin's four rules for never coming back to jail, and there's probably not one of you in here who can follow these four rules. The four rules are easy. Number one, don't go around your old friends. Number two, don't do drugs or alcohol. Number three, obey all the laws. And number four, get into a church and go every time the doors are open." The reason for that last one is to change those habits. See, they go back around their old friends and immediately they fall back into those old habits of hanging out, doing a little dope, drinking beer and then basically they have nothing to do, so they get into trouble.

One of the things that's really been impressed on my mind is what these people need is an atmosphere, a place where they can go for about a year and learn to govern themselves. This is one of the things we tell them over and over and encourage them to help each other. They have to learn to govern themselves. They have to learn they can make their own choices and rule their own lives and their own emotions. I think the best setting for doing that, is to have a farm where they can work, where they can see that their own hands can do something, that they're capable of working and where they're put under a discipline of working. And I think there ought to be a religious discipline in that too.

By the way, I have to tell you, I read about the Texas prison system. The Texas prison system is the largest in the country and it's huge and they raise all of their own fiber —

C. AUSTIN FITTS: It can't be bigger than California. You must mean bigger on a per capita. It can't be bigger than the California system.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, maybe it's not, but anyway, it's huge and it's self-supporting. Everybody there has to work. Everybody there has to do something, which as I said before, is not as cruel as locking them in a room and leaving them there.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, the other thing is they learn skills.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: That's exactly right. So they started something that nobody else in the country does, and that is they have what they call Christian dorms. In order to get in there, the inmate doesn't have to be a Christian, but he has to agree to follow their rules. They're sort of self-governing in the sense that, if somebody breaks those rules, they can vote him out, and he's out.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Wow, that's great.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Oh, well here's what's interesting about it. The recidivism rate is three out of four in the general population. Coming out of these dorms, the recidivism rate is one out of four. It's just exactly flipped. So that underscores what I'm saying about what we need is farms where these people can go and work for a year until they learn to govern themselves. If they don't learn to govern themselves, then as soon as they go out, they're going to get right back into the same old routines.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Okay, so let me just bring up a tough point here, and that is they have to learn to govern themselves, but we have an entire country of people, many of whom have never learned how to govern themselves in a world of real trouble, and that's what they're grappling with. I will tell you the hardest thing to do is to keep up good habits when you're grappling with the enforcement buzz saw coming towards you in the middle of the kind of trouble we're in. So, the question of how the prisoners that you're working with develop good habits is not unrelated

to how the rest of us keep them going.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, I never try to raise false hopes in these folks, and the primary direction that we're trying to send them into is toward a life with God and toward depending on God instead of themselves. That dependence has to be daily because, in the situation you just lined out, they're going to be trapped into some kind of false move immediately because they just don't have the strength of will and character and soul to meet all of these challenges.

"I never try to raise false hopes in these folks, and the primary direction that we're trying to send them into is toward a life with God and toward depending on God instead of themselves."

C. AUSTIN FITTS: One of my favorite gospel songs, one of the lines is, "He is my portion." In other words, my relationship with God is what I get. That's my reward. I would be in all these situations where money was being taken away, possessions were being stolen, and I had to just keep singing that to myself again and again. I have God, so I get my reward. That's what I get. Apparently this chair was never mine to begin with.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, part of what we try to start doing with them is with Johnny Bayne, who's the deacon in our church, and he goes in alternative weeks. The weeks I don't go in, he goes in.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: The way he does this and the way he reports about it and the way he speaks about it is so inspiring.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, anyway, he said, "You know, the problem is we're treating these people like baby birds. All their lives, they've been treated like baby birds." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, when the mother bird lands on the nest, all the little baby birds know to open their mouths and squeak to be fed." That's what these fellas have been trained to do through their whole lives is to be passive, is to wait to be fed, wait to be told what to do. They're told by the justice system, they're told by this person or that person what to do, and when they're not being told what to do, they just run wild because they've never run

any part of their own lives themselves.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. They don't know how to govern themselves. They don't know how to invent their world.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Right. So part of what we do is we say, okay, while you're in here, you're going to start figuring out how to run your own life. While you're in here, you're going to start praying morning and evening and reading the Scriptures. Just morning and evening. It's not like you've got a lot else to do anyway, but you start governing your life that way and look around for the people that you can help in here because there's somebody else you can help. It's an amazing thing, Catherine. Nothing helps us like helping somebody else.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Oh, that's the truth.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: It's just unbelievable, and it's amazing what it draws out of these folks when they start doing that. I've been amazed at the effort that I've seen out of some of them. The changed countenance, that's a way I think. You can perceive from just looking at them that there's a lot of trouble or a lot of illness. There's something about their countenance that just is not right. You can talk about vibes or auras or things like that. I'm not really talking about that. I'm just talking about the way they look, and you look at the person and you say that poor person is sick. I've seen a lot of them in jail whose countenances have changed, and I think the reason their countenance changed is because they have hope.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: It's not just abstract hope. They can see a process which can take them from here to there.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: That's right. That's exactly right. They have a hope that they don't have to spend the rest of their lives this way. Anyway, we've seen that happen. There are a lot of disappointments too, I mean, we've actually baptized a whole bunch of people in there and some of them have gotten out and some of them have not. Let me give you some

examples, okay.

A fellow came up to me and he said, "I'm 34 years old, and I've been in prison, in some kind of custody, since I was 14." He'd been in and out of custody since he was 14, and he's 34 years old. More than half of his life, he's been on that squirrel cage going round and round. Well, he got really serious and he was working real hard while he was in there and then he got out. Last night he showed up again after seven months out, and another fellow showed back up too who was actually even more promising.

Part of what you have to do working with these people is realize they're going to fall down two or three times, and you can't give up on them. You can't say, well, that's it. You've had your chance. I'm going to move onto somebody else, because maybe they will move up. Maybe they will get out of it. Some of them have problems that are so severe as far as drug addictions and so forth that they just need way more help than I can give them seeing them once a week.

I heard about a fellow at another jail in another county who was one of these in-and-outers, in the squirrel cage. He was in jail 75 days and 69 of those days he was taking dope. So how does the dope get into the jail? How does the contraband get in there? How does that go on? Well, I mean, it's crazy. You don't know exactly how that happens, but it does happen.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I don't know exactly, but I know conceptually exactly how.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Oh, yes, well money changes hands someplace. They did that in Memphis, actually when I was over there. They banned smoking. Well, all these people didn't have anything to do but smoke, so what that meant was the guards could now take a $3.00 package of cigarettes and sell each of the 20 cigarettes for $4.00 apiece or $5.00 apiece. So did they have an incentive to smuggle? You bet they did. All that is a problem too.

Now, where I am, violence is not a big problem. In some places it is. There are some places that I would really think twice about going into. I mean, there's some places you'd get killed.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: But most of these people are not like that.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Most of the war on drugs folks are not violent. Most of these are non-violent crimes.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Right. I mean, a majority are. Let me kind of explain for your listeners: when I talk about the squirrel cage, here's what I mean. They go in and they're convicted of some crime, whatever it is, and then they release them. They spend some time and then they release them on probation and the probation has all these conditions. You've got to go to these meetings. You've got to go to meetings with your probation officer. You've got to get a job. You've got to take drug tests. Impromptu unannounced drug tests. The officer can come out and search your house where you live, and so forth. If you breach any of those contracts, if you fail to breach any of those requirements, if you fail to come to a meeting, if you fail a drug test, if you don't get a job, then you can be revoked. Your probation is revoked and they send you back to jail. You go back to jail and sit there a while longer and then they let you out again. There are all kinds of catch-22s in this because, for instance, most people can't work in the United States unless you have a car. But a lot of these people get out of jail and they can't drive because they don't have a driver's license. So what are they going to do? Or they've put them in jail for not paying child support.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: You're running through a day-to-day gauntlet. I call it the 26-step process, and it's almost impossible to make it through the gauntlet and be as perfect as you're required to be. So you give up.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: They get revoked and then they don't want to keep them forever, so they send them back out and they get revoked again,

and it just never stops. One fellow who comes to our service regularly came up to me the other night, he said, listen, "My 43rd birthday is coming up in two weeks, and since I was 19, I have spent all but five years in jail." So this is what you're dealing with, and see, here's why I say the rehabilitation does not work. The incarceration does not work.

"All of the programs that they've got, supposedly, that millions of dollars are spent on do not work to change these people."

All of the programs that they've got, supposedly, that millions of dollars are spent on do not work to change these people. Have not changed them yet. What we're doing is we've got this great big industry that creates jobs for guards, for probation people, for private prisons, for the courts, it makes money for the bailiffs, it keeps the judge in business, and lawyers, but it doesn't do anything for the people. Those people who are being processed through this system are not improved and they're punished more, and this crazy idea that so many conservatives have, and maybe a lot of liberals too, that 'we can just raise the stiffness of this jail sentence and that'll teach them a lesson,' it doesn't teach anybody a lesson. It just makes them sit in jail longer waiting to get out so they can go back to doing the same thing.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, and there's something else. For every person who's in prison, there are ten taxpayers who are working their whole life to pay for the cost of that $154,000 per year. So you're talking about something that, from a taxpayer standpoint, is insane.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Oh, absolutely. They think that somehow these counties think they're going to make money holding state prisoners because the state pays them so much per diem. I just don't see how they can amortize their costs.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, I want to just bring up one story because I want to get into local economies and what this means to local economies. As you know, I have a habit of getting speeding tickets, and luckily they don't

put you in prison yet for that. I ended up getting a speeding ticket in the county near the one you're in, but not the one you're ministering in. The one thing about this county was you had a courthouse in the middle of town, as you do in many small towns, and there was still a respectable number of cute little restaurants and other businesses around the jailhouse because there was the flow of people coming to court to take their speeding ticket course. So you had a fair amount of flow.

I came over to go to the courthouse on the last trip, and I walked in and they said, "Oh, you don't come here anymore. You go to the Criminal Justice Center outside of town." So, Franklin, I walk out of the courthouse and I realize all the restaurants have gone out of business, and half of the little stores have shut down. I realize, wait a minute. They moved this and they have shut down half of the remaining jobs on this square. I couldn't believe it. I was like, if you're trying to ruin the local economy of a place, I can't think of a better thing to do.

Well, I drive out, I finally find the Criminal Justice Center. It's outside of town, and the whole town was like a ghost town. There was no people there, it was just empty. I get out to the Criminal Justice Center, and there are hundreds of cars. The whole town was out at the Criminal Justice Center. I walk in, there are over 100 people waiting to deal with their speeding or other moving violation ticket, and I realized I had passed a new jail as I went. I realized all the poor people are in jail and going through this process as to whether or not they're going to go to jail. All the middle-class people are out here dealing with speeding tickets and do they have their insurance card tickets. It's not going to take but 20 years until we're all in the jail line. It was amazing because I saw this 100 people, most of them sitting there for more than an hour, some of them sitting there for more. I think I was there for two, two and a half hours, and I realized, this is like the Salem Witch Trials. Everybody's at the courthouse; nobody's out plowing the field.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: When you start calculating what the incredible loss of productivity that's spent in all that, it's just astounding.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: It was mind-boggling. You literally had an entire economy focused on the Criminal Justice Center, the prison and the enforcement process. I thought all of this can only work so long as the Fed can print money and the Treasury can continue, with the help of the U.S. military, to get everybody worldwide to keep buying more and more bonds. This all depends on the long-term bull bond market. I don't know how much longer the long-term bull bond market is going to last, but it looks to me like it can't last that much longer.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, I don't think about it so much in those terms as I think about it in the sort of nightmarish terms that the slavery that oozes out of those jails and prisons is sort of infectious. It tends to infect the community around it and it tends to grow and grow and grow and pull more and more lives into itself. This is what a police state looks like. The bad thing is that in the United States, we don't have the Nazi-type police state. We don't have the Soviet-type police state. We have a police state that makes money for somebody.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I remember when I first tried to warn people about what was happening, there was an article in the *Wall Street Journal* about how people on Park Avenue were getting their kitchens redone using prison equipment because it was the new fashion. And *GQ* had a layout on businessmen standing in front of bars with prisoners behind it like lawyers wearing their new suit. There was this whole effort to make prison fashionable. What you're looking at is basically the Nazi model. It's very clever the way it's done. Free-range is the only way I can describe it where you are entrapping, or putting people in a process where they're bound to fail. You're running an enforcement model where things are more and more complicated, and it gets much easier to sort of entrap people.

Now, that model is moving up through the socioeconomic range. It was developed in the poorest urban neighborhoods, the most minorities, moving into the rural white populations. We're not going to watch it be applied to everybody who's got a tax haven account that they haven't been impeccable with their paperwork, et cetera. In 2015, once you

launch surveillance drones all over the country, you can imagine how many infractions we can all be found guilty of if that's what it takes to finance the local budgets. So it's a friendly fascism model, all designed to prove that you made a mistake or you were in the wrong before we throw you into the slave labor camp.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, yes, to give you an idea of the volume that we're talking about, and the United States has the second-highest incarceration rate in the world; 716, maybe more than that, people per 100,000 inhabitants. The only place with a higher incarceration rate is North Korea with 800. We rank just ahead of Cuba with 510 and ahead of Rwanda, and then it very quickly drops down to below 250 per 100,000. So this is a huge industry. Billions and billions of dollars a year, and I don't think it's crazy for you or me to say that it's expanding because it is expanding.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: It is expanding.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: It's a huge growth industry.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: If you look at the marketing of these things, it's making the premise that this is all acceptable, and it is acceptable to believe that people are expendable. In other words, if the enforcement model hasn't eaten into your socioeconomic group, you just get everybody above that line to say, oh, well those people are bad or those people aren't hard-working or those people are whatever. You create a mental picture of them as being expendable, because that's what we're saying. We're saying they're expendable.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Dehumanizing. They become inhuman. They are non-persons. So it doesn't really matter much what you do with them because they're not worth anything anyway, and the best antidote for that is to go and see them. Go and talk to them. Find out if they're still human or not.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Because they are. There are a lot of things that your listeners can do to work with these folks or help with them. A lot of them get out and there are programs that you can work with to help get out. We all have a bad tendency to be inward-looking and to look to our own needs, and there's nothing like just going to the jail and offering to help. Offering to mentor people because those folks that sit in jail have nothing to do, and a lot of them have zero job skills and zero knowledge. They can work on GEDs while they're there. That helps some. All those things are sort of collateral to the help that they really need, and the help that they really need is to get their souls straight and to get their souls back because they're in a place they can't get out of.

"All those things are sort of collateral to the help that they really need, and the help that they really need is to get their souls straight and to get their souls back because they're in a place they can't get out of."

C. AUSTIN FITTS: So if I'm sitting somewhere, and I'm listening to this, where do I go to find a mechanism to help? I can go to my local churches and find which ones have ministry.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Right. You can do that and there's a group called Prison Fellowship, and I don't work with them but I've heard that they were very good. Another thing you can do is, if you've got local folks, there's always somebody local, kind of like the Salvation Army, but not the Salvation Army. They help these fellows when they get out of jail. For instance, here they turn them out at midnight and where are they going to go? I've got no money, I don't have a reservation at the hotel, what am I going to do? You just have to look for local programs like that. There's one here called God's Storehouse, and they help folks like that. The Salvation Army may have something to help them with. Your local church may have something to help them with, or you can just go to the jail and say, "Look, I'd like to volunteer to see if I can do something for these fellows. Do they have GED classes I could teach or is there something else I can do?" All those things feed into helping them get out.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. The other thing is, in our personal networks, we all have family, friends or whatever, people who've gotten into trouble or we know somebody. So, one thing you can do is always turn around and help somebody in your personal world that has gotten into trouble and see if you can help in whatever way is feasible for you.

Now, I've got to put you on the spot because you know this has always been a dream of mine. My God's a big God, Franklin. He can do anything. Just remember that. So what would it cost to put together a farm operation near the church in Tennessee that could start to help people screened out of your ministry to be farming?

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, if you had a place that could put up maybe 40 fellows, you'd need, say 200 acres, and maybe you could do that for a quarter of a million dollars and then you'd need a probably $100,000 operating budget. So you could probably do the whole thing for less than half a million dollars, which is a lot less cost to keep them in jail.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: So let's say you had a half a million dollars. How much would it cost per prisoner? Let's say somebody or a group of people donated a half a million. How much would it then cost for one person to underwrite one person for a year coming to learn how to be a farmer? Just a guess. We won't hold you to it.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: I don't believe it'd cost more than $20,000 because they're going to be growing their own food. There's a certain economy of scale, and so that part of the operating costs, once you get it up and running is not going to be so great. But you're going to have to have some skilled people there who have experience working with folks that are ex-alcoholics, drug addicts coming out of jail and so forth. You could start out doing it for around half a million dollars and then maybe you'd cost $20,000 an inmate. But when you compare that to going to rehab, drug rehab for four months, I mean, I think it could be done really cheaply.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. Right. I do too. Well, I think the time is coming

on we ought to consider crowd funding. Anyway, before we close, any other things you wanted to communicate about the ministry or is there a way that people listening can contribute to the ministry now just by sending a check to Christ Our Hope Church? The link's up on the blog.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Oh, they could, yes. You know what we do, Catherine? We give these fellows really good Bibles. We buy Bibles from Ligonier Ministries, and they cost about $22.00 apiece, but I have to tell you, I had one of them come up to me and literally look me in the eye and say, "I want you to know that Bible has changed my life." And they're serious. Some of these fellows, nobody has ever seriously given them a gift in their whole lives. I know that sounds preposterous.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: So if we all send a check for $25 to Christ Our Hope, we can buy one Bible.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Oh, yes. That'd be great. That'd be wonderful.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, ladies and gentlemen, the link's on the blog and you can link right to the church, get the address. Just as a matter of disclosure, obviously Franklin is the Reverend and I'm a member of the congregation, so we have a conflict of interest because we think what we're doing is great.

Since I'm not doing it with you, I can say, honestly, I think it's terrific. It's so funny to watch Johnny Bayne and all the folks who go over to the Jailhouse Ministry because they're so excited when they come back. They're always so revved up about the experience.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, let me suggest one last thing, and that is to everybody who's listening to us: if you know somebody in jail, write them a letter.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: You have no idea what it means just to get a letter from

outside and just to know that somebody's thinking about you and that you're not dead. Maybe they're in jail because they did something bad. It doesn't mean when you try to relieve their suffering or that you agree with what they did. It just means that you recognize they're still a human being and you still care for them.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. That connection means a huge amount. A huge amount. Okay, well, Franklin, as always, it's a pleasure to have you on The Solari Report. I probably shouldn't mix up the issues. Anything you want to say about the market because you and I are multi-track minds, but we do tend to think about the market.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Well, I think you've seen silver and gold. They're wheeling around and they've done really well at the beginning of this year. We probably saw a double bottom in December, but you've got to have proof. You've got to have gains.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I hope you're right, but I've got to see proof.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Yes, well I'm the same way.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Okay, well, again, thank you very much. You have a wonderful day.

FRANKLIN SANDERS: Okay, and thank you for the opportunity. Appreciate it. Bye-bye.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Ladies and gentlemen, that's it for Jailhouse Ministry. Again, you have a wonderful day too. Bye.