

Prison Abolition Webinar Transcript

SPEAKERS

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick, Dean Bucalos, Dr. Jason Williams

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

Good Afternoon and Welcome! My name is Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick and I serve as the AVP of Organizational Development for the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). As we get started, I would like to inform you that this webinar is being recorded and will be available for future viewing on the NBA website at nbacares.org/prison-and-jail. This webinar is part of our 2020 NBA webinar series.

Today's topic is the prison abolition movement, eliminating the prison industrial complex coronavirus pandemic has certainly shed light upon the weaknesses and flaws of the correction system in the United States. It is time to explore alternatives to a system that has evolved into mass incarceration and disproportionately affecting people of color. The prison abolition movement has many fast passes worth exploring. Dr. Jason Williams, Assistant Professor of Justice Studies at Montclair State University will leave this important webinar and descend discussion as the church explores alternatives to our breaking correction system. This webinar can be used as a tool for discussion and call to action, and congregations regions and general church ministry. At the end of this presentation, there will be time for questions throughout the webinar. If you have a question that emerges. We welcome you to use the q&a feature by clicking on the icon at the bottom of your screen. To submit any questions, please include your email address so that if we are unable to get to your question, we can follow up with you directly after the webinar is over. To request technical assistance you may also use the q&a feature. And again this webinar is being recorded and will be made available for future viewing on the NBA website.

To begin, let me introduce our speakers. Dr. Jason Williams, as I mentioned, is the Assistant Professor of Justice Studies at Montclair State University. He's passionate, he's a passionate activist criminologist deeply concerned about racial disparity, and mistreatment within the criminal justice system. Dr. Williams is a new jersey native raised by his grandmother and a housing project, which ultimately led him to pursue a doctorate in the administration of justice from Texas Southern University. Aside from publishing in the academic arena his perspectives are also posted on several public outlets including the Hanson Institute and truth out is conducted ethnographic research in Baltimore, Maryland and Ferguson, Missouri. Following the police involved tragedy of Freddie Gray and Michael Brown. He's also engaged in research around returning citizens and how they navigate reentry in the prison. Dr. Williams is most, most concerned about the punitive effects of the criminal justice system imposes upon marginalized populations. He has been invited at Old Dominion University, Yale University and other institutions to lecture on some of the topics mentioned above. Dr. Williams is also deeply entrenched in community work as he serves on the board of two major organizations in New Jersey and actively works with others. For a change in the administration of justice. Thank you for being with us.

Dr. Jason Williams

Thanks for having me.

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

We also have Reverend Dean Bucalos as you know is the Mission Specialist for the NBA prison & jail ministries. He was ordained in the Christian church Disciples of Christ in a service a pastor of congregations in Kentucky Illinois and Indiana. He's the founder and former Pastor. Pastor of new life in Christ Christian church Disciples of Christ, a congregation he began inside a women's reentry facility in Louisville, Kentucky. With also the executive director of mission behind bars and beyond an ecumenical reentry program that trains small faith based groups to work with returning citizens upon their release from prison and be three, as we call it, is also an NBA incubator and connect partner. They will moderate some of the conversation. And so we're grateful to have you as well being. And at this time I'll turn it over to Dean to begin.

Dean Bucalos

Thank you, Monica. We are delighted to have Dr. Williams with us be a part of this webinar series. This is an important topic and I think one of the reasons we wanted to bring this before our congregations and congregation members was because the recent pandemic has really illustrated some of the deficiencies in our criminal justice system, particularly in the correction system. We know that there are not were individuals who are residents of prisons in jails who are confined and are subject to COVID-19 without much relief. And some of this is a result of a growing dysfunctional correction system that has been in place for a number of years. So this is a good time for us to begin examining. Not only that, and how it becomes dysfunctional, but also the evolution of that and what can become in the future, so that we can do things differently in a more just and humane way. The prison abolition movement has been one that is around for a number of years, but is beginning to gain more traction because we're understanding that change needs to be made in our correction system. And this may be the right time to visit that. So, we want our church members and followers of Jesus Christ to be able to better understand this topic so we can be equipped to be part of the solution. As we move forward in addressing this serious problem. So I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Williams. We're very privileged to have him join us. And we look forward to his presentation this afternoon.

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

Thank you. Thank you.

Dr. Jason Williams

If I can just have someone to share their screen if I'm not able to do it on the bring up the presentation. Thank you. So once again, thank you all so much for the invitation to come here today, and to present on this very very important topic. Like I said, it's just an honor and I'm very happy and overjoyed that as a collective, you guys are looking into this. Right. At least looking to learn a little bit about it and hence why I titled it prison abolition a brief introduction. So what I want to try and do here today is the most part. Bring before you a dearth of information and sort of its brief context as I can, I always try to stay brief but I always end up going in depth to at the same time. That's the professor at me, I guess, but sort of bring it to you. The case fabulous. So then going into, you know what that might look like in the importance of sustained activism community political engagement and whatever happy, followed by the

q&a which I certainly look forward to. So the reasons for abolition so in this presentation, you'll notice that I spoke about three major reasons and I think that when you encapsulate much of the literature, whether the academic literature or activist literature or whatnot. around abolition, the explanations are pretty much grounded in what we see right here these three major reasons which is the prison as an epidemiological disaster right Dean mentioned, the coded outbreak. And I'm sure we've all watched the news stories about how COVID pretty much permeated all of our policies. The prison as a technology of racialized and class and gender, sexual control, and the horror that comes along with that and you'll see some reports later in the presentation, in which I contextualize this particular egregious harm, that is so heavily associated with the American prison. But then also the prison as an institution of capitalist neoliberal accommodation and profiteering. So here we're talking about the utter and literal commodification of human flesh and care as abolitionists we like to ask the question as to whether or not, Justice should play a role in the commodification of human flesh. So as we go throughout this presentation to the left of the slide you'll see books that I feel are pertinent to the discussion, feel free to screenshot those or to write down a table of the facts you can, because these books are I think foundational very, very important. I just didn't have enough time to really throw them into the presentation, but wanted nonetheless for you to see them. So moving into the first major reason the epidemiological context here Drucker in his wonderful book the plague of Christians has already articulated to us right the extent to which the prison is a major social determinant of poor health. It is an incubator of all kinds of diseases communicable diseases such as STDs, or other kinds of blood borne and transferable based diseases, but also audio immune diseases. So for instance, the fact that people are likely to develop for instance, heart disease, and diabetes and other such diseases within the person. And then also to mention the egregious levels of mental instability and mental disease that comes about as a result of one stay within the prison, and we're not only talking about long term stay within the prison, but perhaps even just a night or two within any American prison or jail right so and so even when you think about mental disease which often is a sort of silent abnormality. Right. These two are incubators these two are most egregious harms that are also associated with the prison. And the effects of prison based disease is exacerbated by its uneven impact so for instance you know people of color are biologically already sort of dealing with many of these health abnormalities, the fact that many of them already go into prison with mental health concerns or with audio immune disease and such. And yet when they get inside the prison. These issues are exacerbated. So we look here at some of the data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics this data comes from 2011 and 2012 This is the latest available data unfortunately from the National inmate survey. The prevalence here is bigger one of ever having a chronic condition or infectious disease among state and federal prisoners in jail, and they can we see that for both prisoners in jail inmates they go toe to toe, as far as chronic conditions and so what I'm thinking right now in this current moment in which we are living with the cobit crisis and how cool it is more likely to, you know, inflict those with chronic conditions, I'm wondering what is the current prison is the prison as we know it today as it is currently constructed. Is it something that is in fact necessary. Is it as something that is saving lives, that is keeping alive.

Perhaps not.

Dr. Jason Williams

In fact, it really is the prison perhaps the most suitable place for someone with chronic health abnormality. If we move over to figure three, the rate of ever having a chronic condition, makes it here at 22,002 in 2011 through 2012. Here you see major differences between the years and so I'm just going to read a bit from the data here, the 2011 to 2012 rate of jail inmates who reported whatever having diabetes was twice the 2002 rate, and this is again based on 361 per 10,000 inmates and the rate of high blood pressure in 2011 through 2012 was almost 1.5 times higher than the rates in 2002, the rate of asthma also rose between 2002 and 2011 2012 from 1500 to 10,000 inmates to a little over 2000, or 10,000, it made so, you know, we can all take guesses as to why you know those rates changed over time or whatever have you but as we will see later in the presentation, perhaps on the next slide, or to the prison, you know what it's poor ventilation systems and for construction and such in the literal warehousing of bodies on top of one another. Certainly, encouraging rapidly rising rates of some of these chronic diseases and if you look at table four here. You can see between state and federal prisoners in jail inmates here under chronic diseases and I'm here looking at hypertension and multiple chronic diseases, you see here, for instance with the multiple. They're pretty much on par with women. Right with multiple chronic conditions and again, what I'm thinking of is, no matter COVID in which we are living. Right. And there were many governors who decided to do the right thing right and let some of these individuals out and such. You know, so that they will not contract, covid, which, again, appears to be more attracted to individuals with chronic abnormality. If you look at infectious disease multiple infectious diseases here. Obviously, we can see that state and federal prisoners are up just a few points from the jail and then if you go down a little bit further. You see the rates for hepatitis B and C which are pretty high. I asked for the incarcerated population and, you know, according to much of the research, these individuals. Most of them will come home. And so now we have to contend with community spread of some of these diseases that were sort of metastasized if you will, within the prison itself. And so when we think about the prison as an epidemiological disaster. I think it is, it's crucial that you also implant within those discussions the prison as an incubator of disease, both visible disease but also invisible disease, as we mentioned earlier with regards to mental health disorders. From this same report both prisoners in jail inmates were more likely than the general population to report ever happened a chronic condition and why might that have been the case right I'm thinking into the qualitative frameworks here. Could it have been perhaps the architectural atmosphere of the prison. You know that forced them to come more into awareness as to what their conditions, perhaps, were about 66% of the prisoners and 40% of jail, inmates with chronic condition reported taking prescription medication, but if we pause really quickly and just speaking parenthetical terms here. There are many jurisdictions in which prisoners, believe it or not, have to pay for their medication. They have to pay for their medication. And so if you are an indigent prisoner.

How are you going to pay for your medication.

Dr. Jason Williams

You know there are reports of prisoners rationing their medication inside. Similarly to those on the outside right impoverished individuals on the outside, who cannot afford medication. So imagine how compounded right or exacerbated. These issues are for those inside the prison again in a moment. You know, most epidemiologists will tell us that moments such as now are likely to reoccur, you know, we just have to be better prepared for them. Um, wait while female prisoners in jail inmates were less

likely even males to be overweight they were also more likely to be obese or morbidly obese so we need to think a little bit about whether or not our prisons are even geared to be able to respond to some of these major health crises right that our prisons and if you look at most of the case law regarding in prison healthcare, you might find that they simply are not. Now there are some differences between public versus private right, but each institution has been seen quite, quite a lot of times you know due to poor health outcomes and their health care systems and TB is put on the slide here because there's just a lot more information known about it but according to the World Health Organization TB in prisons as almost 100 times more. Right, more likely than in the cell civilian population. And in fact prison cases of this disease right accounts for nearly 25% of all cases and this is due mostly to late diagnosis and adequate treatment and so forth and so on. And this of course to due to the fact that prisons are just grossly grossly underdeveloped in terms of their healthcare capabilities, and then overcrowding, and then also another factor here is the repeated transferring of inmates between different institutions, and then sort of broader to that is the fact that some research even indicate that look life expectancies right decreased life expectancy is also associated with that of incarceration. All of this goes to the epidemiological disaster arguments against prisons and although incarcerated individuals aren't like I mentioned earlier, likely to have some health abnormality upon reaching concentration. A lot of research has identified the extent to which you got to ration worsens many of the conditions that they're coming in with so even in my own research around returning citizens. I find that many of their for instance, mental health abnormality is worsened. As a result of their stay in prison or jail. And then of course coming back home and having to face all kinds of discriminations through law custom. So research has also identified that there are grave racial disparities and access to sex in mental health care treatment because of the lack of funding, in particular, geographies and particularly those geographies that are attached to people of color and other marginalized bodies. And so when you consider all of that facilities throughout our country have become places that subject. Many of our own citizens people with whom we live right our neighbors to immense violence and trauma and violence, not only in the physical sense, meaning that oh this person had a knife or a gun they you know they eat I can feel the physical pain, if you will, but like I mentioned, even the sort of silence diseases, such as like mental disorders that might develop by use of the indiscriminate use of solitary confinement. So moving into the prison as a technology of racialized class and gender control. This is very important to look at as well, because a prison plays a very peculiar functionality in terms of how the social order is you know is said to to be administered. And here's another big. I hope you will be able to the box to the left here, my life anyway. But according to scores of research of course race continues to be a major determining factor right when it comes to financial aid in our country and blacks, of course, the foremost targets of racist evil logics, the nature of this reality is also intersectional, meaning that we have to consider the differences, even within race categories, you know, class, gender, sexuality and so forth. A economically challenged whites are also increasingly finding themselves under lock down for precisely some of the same offenses that blacks were black and brown individuals were incarcerated for in the late 80s moving into the 90s. And so we're seeing this shift in the administration of justice and social control logics. And when we look here and again I think this data, too. But the latest available data from this source 2014 based on 20 \$14. Here we can see some economic disparities right the association between those who find themselves. And the President coming in contact with our systems of social control and their economic standing costs over here for the men. You see the digits for blacks. Right. So incarcerated blacks, you have here in your income at about 17,000 for Hispanics 19,000 for white males you have 21, and for all 19 for woman, black woman you have about 12,000 for Hispanic 11,000,

white, about 15 in all 13. And so you can see how our criminal justice system for the most part is also geared to pretty much target the horse amongst us and so from an abolitionist standpoint we would have to question or at least problematize the extent to which you know is that truly justice is justice targeting the horse amongst us. And when we look at some of the offenses that are accounted for within our social control or the prison industrialization complex frankly, you know, many of these offenses and I'm so sorry you guys can't see and I try to stretch this out as much as I can, as many of these offenses are associated with people who are on the lower economic ladder, right. So for instance, you know, having to go out and sell drugs because of the economically deprived or even some of the robbery offenses and different things of that sort, which I'm sure we'll get into in the q&a session. But anyhow much of people's pathways into criminality has much to do with their social and political positioning within our broader social structure, you know, but the way in which our administration of justice is sort of positioned now or at least the way in which it adjudicates justice. It is such that it takes, absolutely no attention to those other and very, very very important factors. Unless you are the kid out of Texas who was able to use the affluenza defense. Now, pre trial risk assessment tools are also a tremendous obstacle particularly against minorities individuals right, we had bail reform here in Jersey I know there were some other sub states that attempted this as well, but I want to read this quote here from the civil rights, or where they say quote algorithms, be applied nationwide, or widely varied and design complexity and inputs, including cutting edge techniques like machine learning, and machine learning is the process by which rules are blocked from observations of patterns and training data. And as a result biases in the data sets will not only be replicated in results. They may actually be exacerbated, for example, since police officers disproportionately arrest people of color. Criminal Justice data use for training the tools will perpetuate this correlation. Therefore, as I add here such control mechanisms, not only impact minoritized individuals on mass, but people, they set precedents for disadvantage for whites as well, because look if they see that it works on this population, and then soon wants to target you, then they're setting precedent for how. Eventually this system this new program of social control can impact us all. For the bulk of those who are on the lower classes you don't find themselves trapped into this system. Right. This increasingly carnivorous penal system, they appear frankly at the mercy of technocrats and economically well off justice overseers because from an abolitionist standpoint, certainly we feel the need to question the intentionality of both the entire system, but often to the workers within four people have no agency within the American legal system, as evidenced by the former slide implications around the right to counsel and are more symbolic and realized, I know we talked about Gideon versus Wainwright, you know, the landmark Supreme Court case that was said to grant people some right to counsel what happened to you. But let's be very clear here about the efficiency of public defender's offices and how they continue to be overburdened with cases, they lack financial support to fully, you know, investigate. On behalf of their clients, you know, and then of course, this goes into also being incapable of fully litigating their cases. And the disjointedness, frankly, with which public defender offices operate is also discouraging and it makes it harder for researchers from whatever strike you know whether you're a legal scholar criminology sociologist, or whatever. It makes it harder for people to fully understand what's going on here, you know, and I guess pedicle to the Gideon versus Wainwright thing did get a little bit more historical and historically, and intersectional, I guess what's really interesting about this is that well getting in was a white man right and so maybe within the larger context of the white supremacist nature of construction of American jurisprudence perhaps the feeling is that well, the right to an attorney was granted to white males.

Dean Bucalos

They should I'd like to go back to that point he made in a question, yes so you described the prison & jail system as really an incubation location for illness and disease that seems to be a place where poor health, disease, illness is is prevalent and almost rampant. And now, we know that a significant number of people who are incarcerated, are going to be returning to war to our communities, I've got in Kentucky I think it's 95% of the people who have been incarcerated will be returning at some point in time to our communities and now with the overpopulation of our jail pot of our jail facilities, a lot of those folks will be in this unhealthy environment, and coming back into our communities, what's the impact on on public health with respect to, to all these people returning to our cities,

Dr. Jason Williams

yeah yeah well you have the threat of potential community spread right and we've seen this so people are coming out with HIV or hepatitis and different other kinds of diseases, you have obviously committed to spread those diseases but these are the muscle visible diseases that we can kind of see and know about. I think the more silent ones would be if a person is coming out with a kind of mental disorder that then enables the person to come out and act out and aggressive ways in the family. Right. This is just as important to pay close attention to. and again, inextricably tied to the. Their say in prison right you cannot disconnect, to the will. So it's a grave concern and public health scholars and public health advocates have been talking about this for quite some time. That's a great, great question to bring to the table.

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

Yes.

Dr. Jason Williams

Um, as we continue on. You know there has been a lot of talk around recidivism right and a prison. Policy Initiative has a really good report around this and I know Jeremy Travis, and some of his work has long been questioning why is it that we, you know, utilize it this is within the community corrections arena, you know the technical violations, and so forth and so on. But even more broadly. How do we sort of quality qualitatively decompartmentalize recidivism if you will, you know, and as you see here and state level advocates and political leaders wants to know and they're seen as even trying to reduce recidivism. They suggest that you know one easy litmus test do they collect and publish basic data about the number and causes of people's interactions with the justice system on probation or after release from prison. And so in other words we don't even really know like the quality the reasons behind why people might reengage or whatever happy. We're just looking at whether or not they were really committed, or whether or not they were able to be consistent and then in terms of the technical violations. You know curfew 30 years and so forth and so on. But the main question here is again what what did we learn what, what are we actually getting from this is it making us safe. You know, or are we just continuing to warehouse right are we adding to the warehousing of citizens, so recidivism data we now support the belief that people who commit violent crimes ought to be locked away for decades. Right. And we want to think about how this, you know, forces us to put more taxpayer dollars also right into this system that sort of projects, if you will, people convicted of violent and sexual offenses are

actually the least likely to re event. Right. And a lot of this too has to do with the sort of aging out of time, phenomenon as well. But more broadly people who are less likely to be arrested in the years after

Dean Bucalos

what might be considered more lower level offenses,

Dr. Jason Williams

like property drug before. In,

Dean Bucalos

concluding that over a quarter of the population of our jails and prisons are from people who have had technical violations. As you mentioned, yes. And so they haven't committed a new crime. Yes, they just upset someone because they haven't followed a particular rule. Yes.

Dr. Jason Williams

Yeah, so the question I from the last slide, and a lot of the scholars who've been working around that is well what are we actually getting from that. Right, so, because when the criminal justice system steps in, it shouldn't be in the name of public safety so we should be doing something to ensure that the public is being protected but if this person is being read committed, because they perhaps missed curfew or come to see their probation officer parole officer I mean what exactly are we getting out of sending this person back to prison, and then let us not forget the epidemiological right implications here. The fact that you might be sending somebody into a place in which they are going to or seriously ill. Right. And so, again, and then also the correctional officers and the other workers within the prison let's not forget how they, too, right, or at severe risk of contracting all of those diseases, since they too have to be on those routes. So, moving into investigation, the investigation of the man in prison. This is our only experience in here in New Jersey, the DOJ found grave. Eight amendment violations at this person and I'm just going to briefly go through some of the findings here, and this I think really speaks quintessentially to

Dean Bucalos

gender, sexual control.

Dr. Jason Williams

Although there is much more even just beyond this here, this example, but over the course of their visit they interviewed nj.fm administrators staff security staff medical mental health staff, as well as business and what they found was that the prison fails to protect women prisoners from sexual abuse by staff in violation of the Eighth Amendment and expose women prisoners to substantial risk of serious harm from sexual abuse and violation of that amendment sexual abuse of women prisoners by that demand correctional officers and staff is certainly there, and it is prevalent throughout the prison, they state that quote a culture of acceptance of sexual abuse has persisted for many years, and continues to be president substantiated incidents of staff sexual abuse of prisoners and the men are varied and disturbing some staff abuse prisoners with unwanted sexual contact or sexual penetration. In other instances prisoners were forced to perform fellatio on on or touch the internet funny parts of that is some of the substantiated incidents of sexual abuse, and the man, one of the officers would take a

prisoner behind the cage to commit sexual abuse, while the other officer acted as a lookout. And so, again, one example. Right. But what we do now through various media reports and accounting, as well as narratives of those who've been there done that. Right. In other sources. This is a rampant problem within the American prison system. Right. Granted, while we do pay very close attention to many of our women's prisons we should we should note right that this is happening in male prisons as well, and sometimes even within you know the inmate population. And so this dude, this two plays a role and the sort of social controlling and view of gender and sexuality and such. You can feel free to look this report up, you can just Google, the name here screenshot that and you can look it up. There are all kinds of results in there that I think there's any and everyone looking at, but it certainly lays the groundwork for why prisons as they are constructed just simply don't need to be now moving into processes of re entry, because we tend to look at sometimes as sort of community based reactions. Coming home as the solution. Right. But as my good friend, Jennifer Ortiz who is associated with the group had limited one of her articles. We might need to problematize that as well because three entry complex is the abbreviation industrial complex is something that has to begin to sort of engage in the humanization of their quote unquote clients. Mothers of color face unique battles around parents, and a child welfare surveillance state, in particular, right as they navigate reentry processes because again the reentry processes have increasingly become punitive, and this is supposed to be a period in which you are re entering society,

Dean Bucalos

you were trying to get back to that which you learn

and get by law and custom. Many of these loners find themselves being completely excluded completely

Dr. Jason Williams

right. The outcome of these vicious programs corroborate already existence stereotypes. Right. Already just the stereotypes that have been further manufactured. It needs further manufactured barriers and inequalities about black woman. This is something that I know Janet Garcia Collette writes about in her latest piece about how when they come out while even while they trying to change themselves and get back to their families and such. It is these pervasive negative stereotypes that society uses to further exclude them, you know, and this is a sort of intersectional and necessary and intersectional look at how these how these barriers affect

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

the black woman in particular. Um,

Dr. Jason Williams

well favelas of color, on the other hand will tend to battle issues around masculinity, right and the insurmountable Child Support bills. And it's important that we sort of couch this masculinity crisis as well, because what it does is it creates all kinds of I mean dire mental health and abnormality Daya. And this is something that we must pay very close attention to here that has been Mohammed always argue, children are ultimately denied childhood, then I have the right to grow up being a child, right. Do

not hide their parental figures, while remaining resilient against having to matriculate like literally on your in so the prison as an institution of capitalist neoliberal accommodation and profit sharing. And here we have Ruby's book here. But as I mentioned earlier, the commodification of justice through the use of living flesh cannot be understated we have to conceptualize this right within abolitionists talks and certainly the historicity of this program of profiteering goes back to slavery. It goes back to slavery and even into the convict leasing system as the boy eloquently captured and much of his work. Yet today in the midst of mostly black and Latino bodies are feeling the economies of mostly white rural Christian towns right aided in what you know now interestingly Linda called the rural growth economy. Right. And this is sort of part of the project of racial capitalism right as well. In essence, you know, uplifting previously poor white sectors to the complete utter detriment of equally similar equally and similarly situated counterparts, if you will. This is how you keep them divided and separate. You know, on the other hand harkens back the increasing use of incarceration is directly connected to market driven aspirations of a workforce that actually knows its place you know he admits that not only is the prison, a holding cell for surplus population because increasingly now you know with certain industries shutting down and, you know, unemployment numbers jumping through the roof, right, we have surplus populations you know dispose bodies. It is now a school to prison in concert with private industry to guarantee compliant low class workers to guarantee compliant low class workers so it serves as the mechanism in which to pluck us back in order. And by the way, if you're unable to get back in order on the outside we put you to work on the inside and reduction seems to be in the welfare state. More than guarantees the manufacturing of this perfect marriage between the state's punishment regimes in private industry and private industry. Under the liberal justice citizens are punished based on a lack of self responsibility. This is part of the sort of

Dean Bucalos

neoliberal emergence if you will

Dr. Jason Williams

to a new liberal, conservative ideology and he that really helped to spark some of the get tough on you know on crime policies in the 80s going into the 90s as well. Then under these ideologies of course macro level factors, right, institutional level factors became completely irrelevant completely irrelevant. Look at this example for instance Amy Kaufman from Pro publica. The digital jail out electronic monitoring drives defendants in Tibet, you know this is part of the new eating concentration movement, if you will, which

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

again

Dr. Jason Williams

will have some to believe that more progressive because you're not concentrating people behind prison walls or jail walls or whatnot at least they're going back home away, but I would, I would caution us to think a little bit about how perhaps being concentrated in one's home is a bit more egregious you know to be sitting here and to be able to see outside my window and know that I can't go out there, right, is a bit more egregious. When you think about the mental context here but they want to like walk free on October 12 was oh he thought she thought he was 19 years old sitting in the St. Louis, medium security

institution he had no previous convictions, but the 1500 dollars that he needed for Boston was far beyond what he could afford he. It wasn't until his public defender made the argument to lower it to \$500 that a nonprofit stepped in and paid it for him, and this was a notoriously Britton jail she knows, Judge Nicole Kirby box Ray had ordered him to wear ankle monitor. So this is a new thing. You know, we're gonna put ankle monitors on everybody you know even the companies that are, you know, contracted with the county, you know, as you see here with you get \$10 a day from these from the, from the clients, because that's what they call them to sort of humanize them, even though that doesn't do the job but he would be required to pay \$10 a day to a private company, Eastern Missouri alternative sentencing services, just to get the monitor attached you would have to report to this company and pay \$300 up front, enough to cover the first 25 days, plus a \$50 installment fee. However, when he got home. She was so immersed in being able to see his family. It was being human. Human something that unfortunately the current system, you know, has no way in which to connect. He spent the next few days hanging out with his siblings and mother who had returned right she wants to see your son, but then also his girlfriend Demetrius who can be pregnant. So he was not able to make it to the mass, but however while being in stock on an unrelated issue, he found out he had a word, and guess as you can imagine the wife is failing to show up. And he was sent back when pressured to pay the \$300 for her son Thompson his mother felt that the court was forcing her to choose between him and the rest of her family. And so this is a crisis and frankly a violence a most egregious violence that mothers of color, particularly in ghettoized neighborhoods are forced to confront, day in, day out, do I care for my kids that I have at home, or do I let him sit in this building that I know is also likely to kill him. I fear for him on the streets. But then I care for him while he is in the hands of the state.

Dean Bucalos

Feel free to look at what I hear you're saying is that some of the folks who are proponents of releasing people from places of incarceration, are actually profiting from the use of these ankle bracelets where they're making money. So we need to be careful when we listen to the voices of people who are proposing prison release, because it's in this capitalistic system. They have found an angle, in which they can make money.

Dr. Jason Williams

Yes, and this was led spearheaded by Alec, right, a conservative think tank organization that came up with ways in which to propagandize these ways of, you know, hijacking New Wheel progressive movements, right, and procedures even. But yes, I've been you know as I mentioned in approaching that section, the commodification of human flesh in the name of so called justice is nothing short of evil people should not be able to profit off the commodification of justice that that should should have always been a no notice but it's not something that is particularly new right the boy had written about the combination system, and also slavery right as a technology of social control, in which, right, the state and the system profited off the commodification of human flesh so we should always be ever conscious and trying to move beyond our past, we should always be, you know, ever conscious about these processes of trying to exploit bodies you know and then when they're doing it in the name of justice,

Dean Bucalos

I just think

Dr. Jason Williams

you know that that is most egregious most egregious most egregious because again in the context of individuals who are cycling out of jails in particular, they have not been adjudicated yet. Right, so some of these people may very well be innocent. They may very well be innocence. And yet, the experience of having to navigate this in concentration as they call it is something that cannot be erased. It cannot be erased, and you know there's research around it so these individuals might not be able to get jobs, there's stigma that is associated with this. And again, if in the long run it pans out that you were in fact innocent. How do you get that back. You can't in many, many respects you just simply can't. So the impact of the three reasons are multi dimensional. And so far that each does tremendous damage in grotesquely comprehensive ways that makes it hard for us to truly quantify the reach of American punitive measures. Yes, we have numbers we can go to federal federal sources and state sources and such and look at the numbers but the grotesqueness at which the system operates. Right. The reach is so far deep down in. I mean, it goes into crevices that we have yet to even discover that it makes it so hard for us to quantify what really is happening here, and this is why, you know, it's very important to raise up qualitative research as well you know qualitative understandings and knowledge around what it must be like to navigate the landscape of American intuitiveness racial class and gender implications continue to be necessarily complicated by our ever expanded awareness of these categories right yes, the systems are not amenable to these analogies so I'm thinking about, you know, trans individuals right and the violence that they face behind bars, you know, we have to think about how the status quo functionality here within the current system feeds off binaries a collapsing illiteracy, around social categorization. In reality, for Batman, because this is what protects the status quo, in particular, right. So, it is not amenable to expanding its knowledge bank around these newly developing ways of knowing. Under the current system American putative Mrs. Carter, it's exploitative contours or reaching bounds beyond control, for instance, the private detention facilities that are harboring people who have been labeled undocumented. Right, or even the private probation officers or private police services and such. And while many may not see themselves as victims.

Dean Bucalos

The mere operation

Dr. Jason Williams

of such an illegitimate human destroying and justice broken system makes us on lesson as a collective, you know, for all the reasons I mentioned earlier, but it also does grave moral harm. As I've mentioned here, and physical harm to our society because these people will come home, they will come home and being your question earlier as to the health abnormality right, they will come home and whatever they've experienced inside the system will inevitably spread to the rest of us. So in their victims. So, aren't we, and therefore it must. It must go. So very quickly when we're unpacking abolition. What we're talking here because I know some people are limited to just the criminality of people, or what happened but we're talking about fundamental societal change it must be instituted in concert with abolishing racist classes sexist inhumane punishment regimes. We must admit that the use of the well as we must admit, we must admit by the use of well established fact that prisons and jails fail, and they've been designed by and large, do sell again with the profit aspirations now, I'd say overtly attached nowadays right, maybe a liberalist takeover of justice for instance. They almost certainly designed to fail so we're

not rehabilitate and individuals, and by extension, we're not keeping society safe. We're just simply not. And even if individuals are. When we think about the population of those who, as I mentioned on the slides, do commit some of the more violent crimes and how they're least likely to reoffend. Okay, yeah, they may not have some time recidivism rates but what about the mental health abnormalities that they have lingering. Is that not a threat to society. Or should we not not so much so that it's a threat but is that not something that we should also be dealing with, you know, we shouldn't be limiting our sort of traditional discourses around correctional control to just whether or not this person committed a crime. Right. And this is why I say that often, we tend to see these people as the full body right well. Well, you've been labeled a criminal. Once you get out we don't even have to care about you because Who are you anyway. Right, but no these individuals sit down, actually they sit there now with all of these sort of abnormalities building up within them. And they're our neighbors they're our friends, they're our families and such. We understand that there is a difference between its theoretical purpose the prison, and how it functions in practice. So, going back to the three reasons. Right, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation but we know that it's not doing that, unfortunately, and there is no logic and punishment regimes recidivism as we mentioned earlier in the presentation. For some smaller offenses remain high returning to the Center for not being rehabilitated, and the experience becomes cyclical right

so people just go in and

Dr. Jason Williams

out, in and out, or induced into states have nothing missing homelessness and I'm just not so certain that

that is justice, either.

Dr. Jason Williams

So we need to think about these multi, multi dimensional effects on this you know the breakdown between how these effects last versus, you know, Maxine next versus Native American versus white so forth and so on. And then also sexuality identity and all of that prison populations are reflected racist targeting in the criminal law is one of the sources. Earlier, but also in concurrency as Alex right Sally reminds us, which is sort of first step before we get to the prison Moreover, the same is true in prosecutorial decision making processes, right, we need to begin to think about ways in which to abolish that as well. Right. And judging jury decision making processes and more importantly, even at the juvenile levels, you know, when you look at the numbers for juvie justice. Unfortunately they mirror that of the system. They mirror that of the adult system racist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic Bible transphobic violence inside prisons cannot be tolerated. Right. They are also incubators for unmentionable kinds of violence against marginalized individuals particularly sexually marginalized individuals, neither should solitary confinement or sexual violence be a term, these acts are immoral they're against Eighth Amendment protections and broader human rights treaties and conventions and customs and yet us prisons reproduce these, these harms day in, day out, there are reporting. I read the one reports, and there are additional reports that substantiate these as well. And just to speak up,

you know, healthy communities will have far less crime. Physical tension. If we propose full scale investments by way of community based programs right the community knows what it needs for itself, social services, health care, housing, food education and abolition costs for the structure and the restructuring of ideology around hearings, we seek to build innovative restorative justice models that will return power back to the hands of the community to educate sanction.

Dean Bucalos

There

Dr. Jason Williams

are groups in place and systems in place now that have shown to be and I hate to use the term evidence base right but they have shown to work the community knows itself better than parasitic paternalistic overseers and institutions that have shown to not have its best interest. I think most important is how this will bring about true democratic inclusion, particularly for communities that have never felt included to begin with, that have always have to live under the sort of paternalistic framework

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

specifically. Right.

Dr. Jason Williams

And so, democratic engagement comes from the genuine inclusion of all voices. We all have a right to say, how we want to be governed and this includes processes of justice, right, we have a right as a community to say that no we want to be adjudicated this way, but we want to have restorative justice models, as opposed to this traditional punitive model that really doesn't see the humanity of the members of our community, irrespective to whether or not they hurt us. So just as before grounded in intersectional frameworks that understand the personhood of all human beings, it must be colorblind our current system is colorblind, it is gender blind. And it must

Dean Bucalos

lead the way that clean be the true right,

Dr. Jason Williams

a justice system that is value neutral, that doesn't see people or humans is one that is completely illegitimate completely illegitimate true justice is accommodating to all realities that exist, and it does not shell out hypocrisy of safeguarding humanity, while also ignoring it. Right, so you can't say that you're here to the Judah Kate justice for humans while not seeing humans. And lastly, we believe that the economic systems must be based on just the moral ideals that represent equal distribution of wages and benefits, such that each person has a right to self determination and actualization. This we would say, is how you ensure healthy communities. And basically, completion of crime so I would just say that you know to keep this going we need sustained political pressure, we've been seeing this outside already do this community activism and organizing around the voices of the effective sharing of knowledge around abolition of the literary literature is critical resistance has been my goal to play since, ever. Angela Davidson's book I had in here already, I had Ruthie Gilmore, looking at already. And I

have a list of other sources here that people can look at this is by no means exhaustive So, but these are just some places that we could look to for information around

Dean Bucalos

this and I want to go back to something you've alluded to in your presentation is the economic impact of all of this. So, I know that example our jurisdiction in Kentucky costs between 20 to \$25,000 a year to keep one person in prison. And, and I think that is more than two times the amount that's been spent to educate one child in public school system. And so, have you discovered that the economic disparities are prevalent throughout correctional system in our jurisdictions across the country.

Dr. Jason Williams

Yes, yes. I mean, the one slide, which I posted up the economic disparities by race and gender. I think more than substantiates where you're going with this question here. Right. And it kind of goes to the second part in laying the case right because I felt like I was like prosecuting the case for you all. But Atlanta case that the prison industrialization complex serves a very peculiar function in keeping the status quo and by back and ending foregrounding your question in terms of like sort of racialized social control here right so almost ensuring that these individuals here will not have a chance to participate in our broader people in our democracy writ large and by and by the way we're willing to pay to ensure that so instead of investing in educational systems community based systems within these communities we will intentionally. You know, and this is

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

the abolition. We

Dr. Jason Williams

say that it is an intentional investment in prisons over schools, as opposed to the more moderate or faraway conservative explanation of well this was just an unforeseen consequence right of bad policy that we now admit we shouldn't

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

have done

Dr. Jason Williams

right, but when you triangulate this against historical policy historical procedure and just historical lived reality and experience of African Americans. This has always been the sort of, you know, this has always been the program. This has always been the regime, right. This is why we had to have the Brown versus Board of Education case. Right. This has always been the regime, if you will, on to certain populations in our country. And I think a way to get people to kind of see this more deep would be through the possible, as you just said right that the economic fallout. In other words, the state is wasting all of our money. All of our money in the money is going towards really just holding people in these prison cells that is likely making them and the rest of us badly badly sick and let's not forget the CEOs, right, who often have to work within those confines with those.

Thank you

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

for taking a deep breath. Wow, Dr. Williams thank you thank you so much you covered so much, not just for us to chew on right but to inspire us also to ask the critical questions at every, every single level from, from the policing system into the jail into the system into the reentry system into back into reentering society, our parole and probation. All of those pieces of being critical thinkers

Dean Bucalos

around

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

the issues that are at hand, and the why. Why do we have systems set up the way that we do and we didn't. We're working on grabbing some questions from the q&a, but as I'm pulling those what I want to ask then is, and we only have a few minutes. Now that we have been educated, what suggestions do you have for members of congregations or faith communities, in terms of getting involved in the process. What advocacy or action efforts might be engaged.

Dr. Jason Williams

Yes, yes. So I think first and foremost I will go back on this slide here, or when the slides go up you can definitely go back through, but I think first digesting additional materials and knowledge is around what is going on right the racial disparities and so on. I did state on that one slide like the various different organizations that work around some of these issues you can give props to those organizations, you know, I think that's the first thing we can do is get involved in our community with organizations that are doing work around these issues, put yourself out there, you know you can also donate, there are some individuals that might not be able to involve themselves, they're differently abled, so they can't get out there and you know do the be hands on work, donate a lot of these organizations that are actually going to work in the community with returning citizens. They're not funded well. Right. And so you can look at that list I provided and you can donate to even to some of them, or you can do some research about those organizations that might exist at the local level, right where you live, and donate to them, keep the conversation going on. I think for a lot of us sometimes you know we'll come to the top thread or we'll engage with one another,

but we don't keep them going

Dr. Jason Williams

for informational sessions in your own communities or in your own families, right now we have zoom in, if you don't have access to zoom, you have Google Hangout. Right, so you can be holding these little informational sessions on your own as well, where you're constantly sort of pushing out this information.

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

One more question and then I'll share a comment that came in as well. And the question is, I teach restorative justice and corrections. How can we advocate penal abolition and making the criminal justice system more restorative to people who are the most impacted in teaching it.

Dr. Jason Williams

Yeah, I would say through the narratives of those who've been there and done that, you know, I'm, I'm a part of the American Society of criminology and I'm happy to see that there's a valid division right that represents people who've been there and done that. But through the narratives, I think, you know, being someone who does research around returning citizens I will say in my own classes. When I'm able to use narratives from people who've been there done that I can see a paradigmatic shift in my classes. Around people to understand. Okay, again, on the one hand, yes, the quantitative effect right the numbers are important to show a certain level of institutionalization and such so we definitely need that context, but what's missing, and much of this again by the heartfelt human Deep Impact, like I mentioned in the crevices that we have not even discovered yet, right, what's missing are those knowledges. And if we can somehow find that right and humanize that and get people to see that, I think, I think you'll be on your way in that particular class and I don't know if you're already using that in class right. But for me I found that to be most effective in my classes, and you can contact me afterwards and we can talk more about.

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

One last comment and then there's a question, and then that I'm going to pitch over to you via email. And that question is do you know of any small group study material video and workbooks that incorporate biblical principles with this material to use in our church setting. So we can create a resource list for our attendees, when we post this on our website we can include some it will certainly include all of the resources that Dr. Williams has listed you've seen them come up in the chat but any additional resources that Dr. Williams has and Calif has for us we can upload those as well to our website linked with this webinar. So, I want you to know that I see your question and we will make sure that we provide some materials that final comment and then I'm Dr. Williams muted final, final, final word whatever, however you want to close that portion out. Our attendee said I take some issues with your use of the re words, for instance reintegration or rehabilitation for those. So many of the incarcerated and especially those who are non white and non heterosexual males have never been integrated or habilitated within majority culture in the first place, though, I'll let you comment and and close us out with your, your final comment,

Dr. Jason Williams

no I agree with that. I'm using terminology that's within the context of the sources that I shared, but I agree with that, in fact, this is something that some of the articles that I that I collected in my special issue arguments right I did it I recently did a special issue around prisoner re entry or whatnot. And so I agree with that. Right. And that's essentially part part and parcel of my second point right of the racialized social control mechanism at the prison place as well, which further exacerbates some of those racial issues right so when you're telling me, for instance, I'm thinking of something that I'm Garcia Hilux article mentioned with the with the black woman in particular coming home right and being told that they have to reintegrate but how do you reintegrate into society that wasn't built for you, the society that didn't, right, so that's part of our conception of understanding right of this very issue. And,

which is also why it needs to be abolished because it doesn't account for those differences as I mentioned in my closing out pieces here.

Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

Wonderful. First of all let me thank you to our participants for for engaging Us Today we are at our time. And I do see your questions still coming in again we'll capture those, and we'll share those factors after I'm done working be callous for response via email. If you are able and willing to put your email in the chat and the q&a please do. If not, we'll be able to pull that from the registration list and be able to share those responses back to you. I want to thank you Dr. Williams, for just a. You gave us a piece of information. And, and an encouragement for how we might move forward together on these particular issues and why we need to be reflecting so critically on these particular issues. My friends that does in our webinar today. We want to thank you for your time. We want you to consider the ways in which you the congregation your communities might get involved or further through your ministries and work and addressing prison & jail related issues. Today's webinar recording as I mentioned earlier will be available on the NBA website. For your convenience. So please share this resource with others. MBA course regular webinars with topics related to prison & jail ministry mental health and wellness social entrepreneurship and leadership and organizational development for health and social service ministry throughout the year, so please check the NBA website for more information on upcoming educational opportunities, and for registration information to get connected to the NBA prison & jail ministries, work, please feel free to email being at prison ministries at NBAcares.org, or you can visit our website as mentioned earlier, NBAcares.org. Remember also to like NBA or Facebook Follow us on Twitter and Instagram and visit our NBA web page for more information related to disciples health and social services and disciples justice ministries and a host of resources. Thank you so very much and we hope that you have a wonderful afternoon.

Dean Bucalos

And we hope that you have a wonderful afternoon. Thank you Dr. Williams.