
WITNESS STATEMENT OF [REDACTED]

I, [REDACTED] *WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:*

Introduction

1. I was a prisoner at HM Brixton Prison on [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] after being convicted of [REDACTED].

Christian courses

2. I was in a lonely place when I went into the prison in [REDACTED] and was on detox medication for heroin misuse. I met two evangelists whilst I was there, and they shared the gospel with me and offered to pray. I became a Christian, and the way in which I felt changed from that day.
3. I am grateful for all the Christian courses that used to run in Brixton. From the time of becoming a Christian, I signed up to as many of them as I could. They had some great Christian volunteers who came in to deliver the courses. The courses were just what I needed, and they helped me to grow strong in my faith and begin to turn my life around. They also gave me the confidence and desire to begin evangelising with the same people who shared the gospel with me.
4. When I came out of Brixton for the first time in [REDACTED], I fell back into my former way of life and ended up back in Brixton for another spell a few weeks later. Going back to Brixton was actually the best thing for me at the time, as it gave me more opportunities to go back on the Christian courses and receive prayer and support from the wonderful volunteers. This again helped me get back on track, and my outlook on life improved considerably.

5. One of the courses I attended whilst at Brixton was the Alpha course, which was run by Pastor Paul Song. Paul was a great all-rounder, and he did everything he could to help the prisoners. He led the discussion groups during which prisoners had the opportunity to ask questions and explore various topics from the Bible. He also led worship and prayed for people where they requested prayer. He was there for the prisoners to help with any issues we were going through, and his heart for us was faultless. Some of the prisoners were illiterate, and so Paul read Bible passages to them to ensure that they too could engage with the sessions.
6. I cannot speak highly enough of Pastor Song. He is a brilliant man of God with a loving and compassionate heart and I have never heard anyone say a bad word about him. Paul helped me a lot in my own Christian faith, and I know there are hundred of ex-prisoners who have the highest respect and admiration for Paul and would say that his actions changed their lives for the better.
7. The way in which Paul has been treated is evil and I am totally opposed to it. Everything Paul has done has been so good for the prison. The prisoners are devastated by his removal and they want him back. There is a great desire amongst the Brixton prisoners to hear the Christian message, and the full range of Christian courses must be allowed back into the prison. The courses lift our spirits and help us get through to the next week.
8. People who are currently in the prison have told me that there is no provision for the Christians in there now. While there is a lot of support for Muslims, the prison is doing very little to help the Christians. The Imam, who is the Senior Chaplain, is pushing all the Muslim agendas to the top and pushing away the Christian events. Many of the prisoners feel like their lifeline has been cut off.

The atmosphere at Brixton

9. The atmosphere in Brixton has changed over the years. When I first started going there in [REDACTED] there seemed to be a lot of love and tolerance in the prison, and there was considerable intermixing between different races and religions. More recently though, the prison seems to have a militant Muslim

feel to it. Brixton now has an awful atmosphere and is a very intimidating place to be.

10. There are many Muslims gangs at the prison who are very violent and are trying to spread their religion by force. Whilst there, I witnessed instances in which Muslims tried to convert other people within the prison under duress. They say to people, become a Muslim or else. The threat of violence if they do not comply is very heavily implied. This tends to affect the younger prisoners more, aged between 21 – 28. They are seen as the main targets for conversion and radicalisation. Pressure was put on me to become a Muslim whilst I was at the prison. Sadly, this sort of behaviour is happening in prisons all over the country, not just Brixton. Brixton prison knew of these events, though there were many Muslim-related incidents that were brushed under the carpet.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts contained in this witness statement are true.

Signed: [REDACTED]

Name: [REDACTED]

Date: [REDACTED]