

# Resentencing Journal

## Charles Meas

### A letter About Unity In Prison

When I first got locked up, I was taught by the older guys on how a convict should do time. It consisted of many lessons that took several months for those lessons to become a part of my daily life and how I viewed life while I'm incarcerated. One of those lessons that is still embedded within me after serving thirteen consecutive years and still going, is the belief that it is suppose to be us the convicts versus them the C.O.'s, the Correctional officers. This belief is about unity among the prison population that holds amazing potential that can benefit not just the prison population but also C.O.'s and possibly still have enough potential to reach out into the outside community. I have seen this in action on many occasions, but what I have seen more is the opposite, where its convicts fighting amongst each other. I have to admit that I am also guilty of this on many occasions. It was incidents like the ones I was guilty of that added to the division of the

Prison Population, going against what convicts are taught when we first come into prison. It is this division that I have seen and still continue to see today that is holding convicts from finding personal growth, because the majority of this division are connected to violence and in prison, you always answer violence with more violence. Another lesson we are all taught, but that one I learned out the streets that fits perfectly in prison. People, including convicts and C.O.'s have failed to realize that with a unified prison population, we will have the potential to have a safer environment for convicts to better themselves and possibly even solve disputes peacefully among convicts, even if its with C.O.'s. This will of course equal a safer work environment for C.O.'s, making their jobs easier and increase their chances to have a positive impact on the prison population, instead of just trying to keep people in line.

The problem isn't on why we should tap into the potential of unity, but how we can even reach it. How do you get a population of people who are prone to violence and now live in an

environment that encourages violence and tribalism to let go of their rivalries and get along with each other?

I believe that we need the outside community to become involved with the prison population to get convicts to see why we should change our ways. This will show us how our criminal habits are affecting the people in our community. It will also afford the prison population an opportunity to become unified with the outside community, which has even more potential than a unified prison population.

#### About the Author

I'm the youngest child of Khmer who survived the murderous regime of Pol Pot. Currently I'm working towards an Associate's Degree and hopefully a Bachelor's Degree after that and maybe even more. I'm serving a life sentence with the possibility of parole. Hopefully that possibility becomes my reality and a second chance at living a fuller life than life in prison.