



Book Review: *Reclaiming Our Children,* by Robby Dixon

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A Visionary/Practical R/X for Imprisonment Prevention... and More

In his indispensable new book, *Reclaiming Our Children*, much-honored author/lecturer/social critic Robby Dixon asks crucial questions – and offers penetrating answers and prescriptions – few before him have even thought to ask, about imprisonment (and our prison systems) in America, socio-psychological-spiritual dynamics that have led so many of our youth to incarceration... and most importantly, how parents can proactively inoculate children against the forces that lead to imprisonment and contribute to the genesis of a national shift away from mass soul-and-actual confinement, to a new, spreading paradigm of material productivity and spiritual liberty.

From extensive research and personal experience counseling families and prison inmates and exploration of prison systems and environments, Dixon presents shocking evidence that for certain special interests prison serves as a sinister profit-generator that (wittingly or unwittingly) actually conditions inmates into “revolving doors” returning them to prisons again and again.

Where does imprisonment really begin? Dixon then asks. Long before the iron doors slam behind a person, Dixon avers. In fact, he says, incarceration's start is three-leveled – and begins in the mind and heart in ways that if not prevented virtually ensure that a child with an “imprisoned” mind and spirit will eventually end up behind bars. Such spiritual incarceration begins as a child's

moved by the power of images received from unsuspected sources. Dixon clearly identifies these and gives parents incisive guidance about how to deal with them and replace their harm by teaching children the vital significance of the most priceless image of all: the image of God in which human personhood is made. Only from such understanding, Dixon persuasively argues, will a child develop an accurate and spirit-mind-saving sense of true self-worth.

What can help parents practice prison-preventing parenthood? Dixon describes and analyzes a unique concept he calls a “conscious” home environment, as a valuable contribution to planning and strategy for day-to-day parenting. Practical applications he draws will enable countless parents, to ensure freedom, delight and mental and spiritual health for their children.

What – if anything – can be done to heal our broken prison and cultural ethos? I believe ***Reclaiming Our Children*** possesses potential impact far beyond its essential uses as a parental “tool kit” for raising un-jailed children. Educators and criminal justice authorities will find much in this book that rebukes the systems that have increasingly shackled America’s children and young adults – but also down-to-earth visionary suggestions Dixon gives for reform, restructuring and re-founding harmful societal systems that have not just lost their effectiveness, but also their very functions to protect society and prepare future generations to nourish it.

Dixon writes unabashedly from a Judeo-Christian perspective (while not denigrating the value of other spiritual “ways”), reasoning that if knowledge of the importance of one’s being made in the image of God is central to spiritual and personal growth, it makes little sense to excise all reference to and reliance on God from America’s social fabric. He concludes this landmark work by laying out a powerful, comprehensive, God-based vision for replacement of outworn cultural and sociological expressions, institutions and practices with humankind-nourishing mass and individual thought and action that will amount to nothing less than national “repentance” and renewal.

Controversial I can certainly predict Dixon's work will be; he writes boldly, with a frankness, sureness and authority of manner some readers may resent. Yet open minds will, I believe, see past any initial "bristling" ***Reclaiming Our Children*** may provoke, to learn from a hard-forged wisdom that can, if heeded, change the way Americans live, love, parent, create, discipline, find joy and build our future.