

AS A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL MY JOB IN KWORKING IN DIRECT SERVICES IS TO TEACH , SUPPORT, AND COMFORT. WHEN WE ARRIVED IN SAN ANGELO I DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT BUT I DID EXPECT THAT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WOULD BE IN NEED OF OUR SERVICES AND WE CAME TO HELP IN THE WAY WE KNEW HOW.

WHAT I WAS BRIEFED TO EXPECT, WAS NOT WHAT I FOUND. I WAS TOLD THAT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WOULD NOT SPEAK WITH US AND THAT THE CHILDREN WOULD SAY THEY COULDN'T TALK TO US WITHOUT THEIR LAWYERS. THE PICTURE HAD BEEN PAINTED OF A LARGE GROUP OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN THAT HAD BEEN BRAIN WASHED AND ABUSED.

TO MY SURPRISE WHEN I ENTERED THE FORT CONCHO SHELTER THE MORNING OF APRIL 9TH 2008 I FOUND A GROUP OF HEALTHY , HAPPY CHILDREN AND LOVING CARING MOTHER'S . CERTIANLY NOT ANYTHING YOU EXPECT TO SEE IN AN ABUSIVE SITUATION. THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WEREN'T ANXIOUS TO TALK WITH ANYONE . THEY HAD BEEN FORCED FROM THEIR COMMUNITIES AS IF JUDGED AND FOUND GUILTY BEFORE EVEN BEING ARRESTED AND TREATED AS PERPITRATORS RATHER THAN VICTIMS AND NO ONE EVEN KNEW IF THEY WERE VICTIMS BUT CERTIANLY NOT PERPITRATORS.

I AM FROM A SMALL TEXAS TOWN WITH A POPULATION LESS THAN ALL THE PEOPLE THAT WERE FORCED FROM THEIR HOMES AND SEPERATED FROM FAMILY MEMBERS AND CONFINED TO SUBSTANDARD CONDITIONS. I KEPT THINKING TO MYSELF, THIS IS NO DIFFERENT THAN IF SOMEONE, WHICH IN MOST SMALL TOWNS THERE ARE, HAD GOTTEN PREGNANT AS A MINOR BY AN ADULT AND RATHER THAN INVESTIGATE AND DEAL WITH THAT SITUATION THEY ARRESTED THE ENTIRE TOWN AND TREATED THEM LIKE CRIMINALS. I WOULD THINK IS THIS AMERICA!

THE WOMEN WERE STRONG IN THEIR FAITH, STRONGER THAN I HAD EVER SEEN. I KNEW THAT IF I HAD EXPERIENCED WHAT THEY HAD, I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BE CONTAINED AND EVEN THOUGH I WAS LEANING ON MY FAITH AS A ON LOOKER I WAS CERTAIN THAT I WOULD HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME BELIEVING AND HAVING HOPE IF I WERE IN THEIR SHOES.

THE WOMEN WOULD SING SONGS TO COMFORT THEMSELVES AND THEIR CHILDREN , SOME I HAD HEARD AND HAD SUNG IN MY METHODIST UP BRINGING. THEN THEY WOULD GATHER AND PRAY AS WELL. MANY OF THE CPS WORKERS SAID THEY PRAYED IN CODE BUT I UNDERSTOOD WHAT THEY SAID AND IT WAS THE SAME CODE I USED TO PRAY.

OUR JOB TO SUPPORT, TEACH, AND COMFORT CHANGED . THE WOMEN WERE VERY STRONG AND SELF SUFFICIENT AND HAD THE A FAITH STRONGER THAN I HAD EVER SEEN. OUR JOBS BECAME ADVOCATES TRYING TO HELP THEM OBTAIN THINGS THEY NEEDED SUCH AS BABY FORMULA, INFORMATION ON WHERE OTHER CHILDREN WERE THEY HAD BEEN SEPERATED FROM, NEGOTIATING FOR CPS TO ALLOW A FRIEND TO ACOMPANY THEM TO THE HOSPITAL WITH THEIR SICK CHILD, MORE PROTEIN IN THEIR DIET SO THEY COULD BREAST FEED, A HIGH CHAIR SO

A CHILD COULD EAT PROPERLY, AIR MATTRESSES FOR PREGNANT WOMEN TO SLEEP ON, AND ON AND ON. THEN WE BECAME THEIR CONFIDENTS AND WE PROVIDED SUPPORT AND COMFORT AS THEY REALIZED THE HOPE OF KEEPING THEIR CHILDREN HAD GONE AND THEY PREPARED FOR THE SEPERATION .BY THID TIME THEY HAD DISTINGUISHED THAT THE STAFF FROM THE MHMR'S WERE THERE ADVOCATES AND THEY KNEW THERE WERE A FEW IN ALL THE MANY THAT GUARDED THEY LIKE CONVICTS THAT THEY COULD TURN TO AND TRUST.

THIS EXPERIENCE IS ONE WE ALL WERE PROUD TO BE A PART OF NOT FOR THE REASON THE PEOPLE BEHIND THIS ACTION WOULD HOPE BUT AS ADVOCATES FOR THE WONDERFUL LOVING WOMEN AND CHILDREN THAT ARE BEING TREATED LIKE CONVICTS IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP BY THE STATE OF TEXAS.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN AND A TEXAN BUT THIS INCIDENT IS NOT WHAT AMERICA OR TEXAS STANDS FOR AND SOMETHING MUST BE DONE TO UNDO THE HORRIBLE INJUSTICE THAT HAS BEEN DONE.