# HELPING THE "INCORRIGIBLE"

Rev Dr Chiu Ming Li
Prison Chaplain
Prison Fellowship Singapore

# WHAT MAKES A CRIMINAL?

- ‘Anomie’ theory of crime
- Begins with Emile Durkheim (1893)
- Anomie – result of moral deregulation and diminishing capacity of key social institutions eg role of family in governing individuals’ conduct and their desires for material mass consumption
- Dissipation of social and moral control

# ANOMIE THEORY

- ‘Mechanical Solidarity’ – (kampong)
  - Social controls high
  - Cohesive society
  - Homogenous society

# ANOMIE THEORY

- Organic Solidarity (HDB dwelling)
  - Urbanization, industrialization, capitalism, technocratization, globalization
  - Heterogenous
  - Hit family hardest- family loses its capacity to govern individuals' conduct.
  - Created the dual income families
  - Net result is the absence of moral guidance
  - Mismatch between needs and ability to meet the needs
  - Individuals develop unlimited desires

# ANOMIE THEORY

- Disjunction between the internalization of material cultural goals and the availability of legitimate means of achieving them
- Experiencing of strain leads to criminal adaptations ie innovation, retreatism, ritualism and rebellion.
  - Innovation – devising illegitimate means of gain
  - Retreatism – opiates, inhalants, chronic recidivism
  - Ritualism – giving up on life but do not commit crime eg on welfare
  - Rebellion – expressive crimes – bizarre, attention-seeking, gang fights.

# UNIVERSITY OF CRIME

- Prisons termed ‘university of crime
  - Learning techniques of crime
  - Learning techniques of neutralization, rationalization, justification
- 5 techniques of neutralization:
  - Denial of responsibility
  - Denial of victim
  - Denial of injury
  - Condemnation of condemnation
  - Appeal to higher loyalty

# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Attachment: teachers, pastors, family, religion, counsellor
- Involvement: in conventional activities to be entrenched in society
- Commitment: on-going social project thereby creating “stakes”
- Belief: in the goodness of law