



Job Readiness For Ex-Offenders: Ministry Opportunities

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Depending on Human Agents

“As His representatives among men, God does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save”.

The Acts of the Apostles, page 134



Enabled by God

- “Not by [*our*] might, nor by [*our*] power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Zechariah 4:6

1. Job Readiness

Assessment of Need

- ❑ A Look at Prison Enrollment
- ❑ Current Trends & Implication
- ❑ Employment Hurdles
- ❑ Pre and Post Release –
Governmental Assistance

Facts

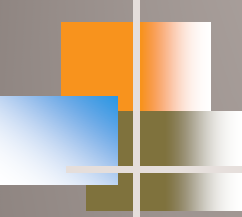
U.S. Department of Justice

- 2,299,116 prisoners were held in federal or state prisons or in local jails – an increase of 1.8% from yearend 2006; which is less than the average annual growth of 2.6% from 2000-2006.
- The number of women under the jurisdiction of state or federal prison authorities increased 2.5% from yearend 2006, reaching 115,308, and the number of men rose 1.5%, totaling 1,479,726.

Facts

U.S. Department of Justice

- At midyear 2007 there were **4,618** black male sentenced prisoners per 100,000 black males in the United States;
- compared to **1,747** Hispanic male sentenced prisoners per 100,000 Hispanic males;
- and **773** white male sentenced prisoners per 100,000 white males.



Each year more than 650,000 men and women are released from federal and state prisons, and return to their communities and families. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *two out of three* returning inmates will be re-arrested for new crimes within three years of their release from prison and more than half will be re-incarcerated.

U.S. Department of Labor

Center for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives

Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI)



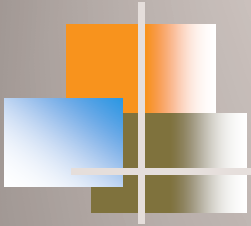
- President Bush announced his Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI) in his 2004 State of the Union Address. This program is designed to strengthen urban communities by competitively awarding grants to employment-centered organizations that provide mentoring, job training and other transitional services for ex-offenders. The PRI is a collaborative effort between the Departments of Labor (DOL) and Justice (DOJ) to serve urban centers and other areas with the greatest need.



Faith-based Connection of PRI

- The PRI (Prisoner Reentry Initiative) relies on faith-based and community organizations as primary partners for delivering social services to ex-prisoners. It is designed to draw on the organizations' unique strengths as they provide a direct link into the communities to which the ex-prisoners are returning.

Critical Issue



Department of Justice

- Learning was the most commonly reported impairment among state and federal inmates (23% and 13%, respectively).

Current Trends and Implication



- Lower rates of participation in prison programs designed to facilitate reentry, than in the past.
- Implication: To the extent that participation in education, vocation, and drug treatment programs improves post-prison outcomes, declining participation is a concern that must be addressed.


Current Trends and Implication




Lower rates of participation in treatment programs than in the past.

- Implication: Participation in treatment by federal offenders find lower-recidivism rates than comparable non-participating offenders


Current Trends and Implication

- 
- Increase geographic concentration
 - Implication: There is reason to believe that the increased geographic concentrations put the burden of reentry disproportionately on a relatively small number of urban areas that may already have limited resources.


Current Trends and Implication

- 
- Increase geographic concentration
 - Implication: Access to jobs and services in reentry neighborhoods may be limited.
 - Also the likelihood of stiff competition between returning prisoners and welfare leavers for jobs.

Current Trends and Implication

- 
- The size of the reentering population has increased
 - Implication: The chance of recidivism increases because funding for supervision has not kept pace with increased reentry of ex-offenders to society.

Current Trends and Implication


- 
- Longer sentencing
 - Implication: Ties to family and other legitimate relationships and groups (like faith community) are weakened.

Current Trends and Implication



- Social changes
 - Implication: Changes in the economy and welfare system will cause local communities to be less able to absorb their returning residents.

Current Trends and Implication

- 
- Increased requirement for skilled labor
 - Implication: Returning ex-offenders historically entered prison with limited skills (many are school dropouts) and return to find acquiring jobs to be even more competitive.

Current Trends and Implication



- Inmates reentering society now are more likely to be violent offenders and to have failed at parole previously.
- Implication: Violent offenders and others that have a history of failed supervision are most often excluded from the job market; often increasing the incidence of crime and the rate of recidivism.



EMPLOYMENT HURDLES

- Limited family support
- Transportation to work
- Childcare or reliable back-up childcare
- No high school diploma or GED
- No work history or limited work history
- Health Issues
- Lack of housing
- Substance Abuse Issues



Emotional Hurdles to Employment

- Negative feelings about going to work
- Lack of self-confidence
- Disabling feelings of guilt and unworthiness
- Inability to express oneself in a positive way
- Poor attitude about life, generally.

Pre-Release Assistance

Department of Corrections Rehabilitative Services

- Pre-release educational and job placement assessments
- Assistance during pre-release with applications for housing, social security cards, drivers' license, and alternative forms of identification
- Assistance with budgeting based on the intended location of residence



Post-Release Assistance One-Stop Career Centers

- Each state has a network of centers that offer a variety of free services that can help prepare ex-offenders for work and assist them in finding employment.



Post-Release Assistance

Services at *One-Stop Career Centers*

Include:

- **Career planning and counseling**
- **Workshops (Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills, and related topics.)**
- **Computers with internet access and word processing**
- **Daily access to thousands of job listings**
- **Job-related magazines and local newspapers**
- **Job postings and referrals**
- **Printers, fax machines, phones, and copiers for job search use**



2. Ministry Opportunities

A Collaborative Effort

- ❑ Your Local Church
- ❑ Social Service Providers in Your Community
- ❑ Support of Your Conference and Union
- ❑ Local, State and Federal Government
- ❑ Foundations and Corporations
- ❑ Public/Private Partnerships




Ministry Goal

- The ministry goal of assisting ex-offenders is transformational; to help each ex-offender leave the lifestyle of life-repeating problems (illegal drugs, out-of-wedlock births, limited education, alcoholism, unemployment, and entitlement behavior) and to help the ex-offender understand that they can have an improved quality of life for themselves and their families.
- This is the advantage of faith-based influence rather than governmental services.




Ministry Opportunity

- The trend of increased concentration of returning prisoners can be viewed as an opportunity for faith-based organizations, communities, foundations and corrections agencies to collaborate together in an effort to focus reentry efforts on selected areas.



“Our churches are to be a reflection of the coming kingdom, and we are to be doing the work of the kingdom, a work of **justice**, of **love**, of **healing**, of **hope** and **transformation**.”

Collaborative Effort

- 
- Pastor/Church Board
 - Adventist Community Services
 - Sabbath School
 - Youth Department
 - Health Department
 - Prison Ministries
 - Literature Evangelists
 - Women's Ministries
 - Family Life Ministries
 - Personal Ministries



Ministry Categories

- Education
- Service
- Community Building
- Volunteerism

Outreach Ministries

~ Education ~

- Adult Literacy Programs/GED
- Health, Safety and Fitness Classes
- Financial Management Series
- Support Groups (Parenting, Coping)
- Self-Worth Initiatives
- Computer Literacy
- Tutoring and Mentoring

Truth Tabernacle Seventh-day Adventist Church, York, PA.





Outreach Ministries

~ Service ~

- Letter Writing Pre-release
- Facilitate Ongoing Case Management
- Food Pantry
- Career Closet
- Emergency Clothing
- Vouchers for Transportation and Educational Services



Outreach Ministries

~ Service – Skill Building ~

- Job Training and Placement
- Family Life and Relationship Building
- Communication Skill Building
- Facilitate “On the Job” Training with Community Public/Private Partnerships
- Facilitate Temporary and Transitional Employment Services



Stabilizing Ministries

- Family Emotional Support
- Rest/Insight I.S.P. Program
- Extended Angel Tree Programs
- After Care Emphasis and Planning with Correctional Facility before Release
- Support Regeneration
- Collaborative Training Workshops



Outreach Ministries

~ Community Building ~

- Host Community Forums
- Support Advocacy for Ex-offenders
- Provide Meeting Space for training events
- Enhance Community Environment with Beautification Projects
- Develop Information & Referral Centers
- Build Community Support Systems
- Support Housing Initiatives

Door of Hope Atkinson Transitional Housing



Outreach Ministries

~ Volunteerism ~

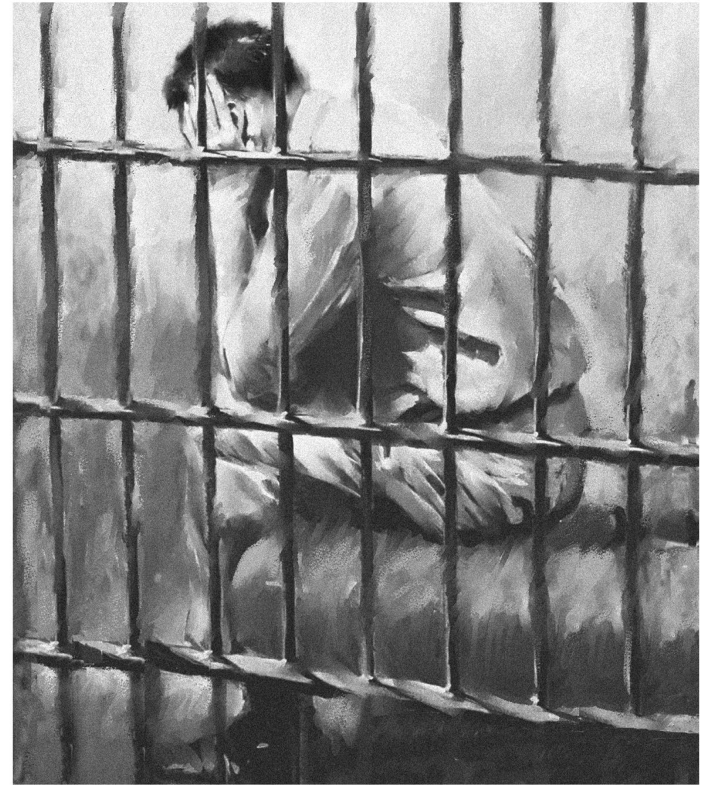
- Transportation for Visitation
- Visit Schools on Parent Night
- Surprise Meals on Wheels
- AMACHE – Youth Mentoring
- Dream Academy – Children of Incarcerated Parents
- Assist with Home Repairs
- Provide Volunteer Opportunities for Ex-offenders to Build Self-worth

Gutting Completed by Volunteers



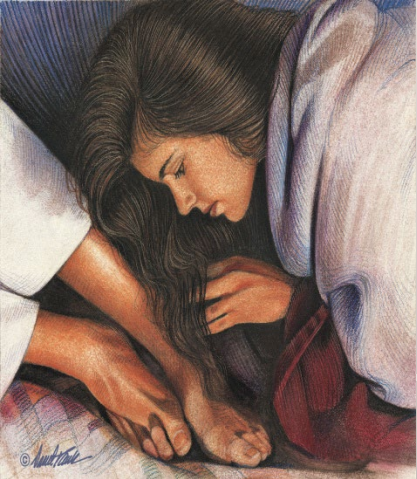
“Everyone of us is a *catalyst* through which God changes our world for the better. Where there is sadness, we spread *joy*, where there is despair,

we spread *hope*,



“and where there is hatred and alienation, we represent God’s *love* and *reconciliation*.”

Christ’s Way of Reaching People, Philip G. Samaan



“Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit.”

Ellen G. White, Ministry of Healing, page 143, 144

“We plow the fields and
scatter the good seed on
the land, but it is fed and
watered by God’s almighty
hand.”

Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal, 561



Transformation

New Birth





Resources

- ***After Prison: Roadblocks to Reentry.* (2004). A Report by The Legal Action Center.**
<http://www.lac.org/lac/>
- **Hicks, Jodina. (2004). "Employment Upon Reentry: Prison-Based Preparedness Leads to Community-Based Success." *Corrections Today*, 66(6): 104-8.**
- **Vacca, James S. (December 2004). *Educated Prisoners Are Less Likely to Return to Prison.* *Journal of Correctional Education.***



Resources

- Prisoner Reentry In Perspective, William J. Sabol, Director for Community Analysis, Western Reserve University and James P. Lynch, Prof. DOJ, Law and Society American University
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Department of Labor, Prisoner Reentry Initiative