

Best Practices for Prison Ministry in a Post Covid-19 World

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Master's Thesis Project

August 2020



### Abstract

There is a need to rethink how prison ministry is done in this new season of the Covid-19 virus crisis in order to be more effective for the glory of God. Planting prison churches from the inside rather than ministry from the outside once a week, or monthly in some cases is a paradigm shift in prison ministry that this paper will explore in detail and share the best practices for prison ministry. Included will be the biblical basis for prison ministry and a hypothetical case study.

**Key Words:** Prison Ministry, Evangelism, Discipleship, Church Planting, Leadership.

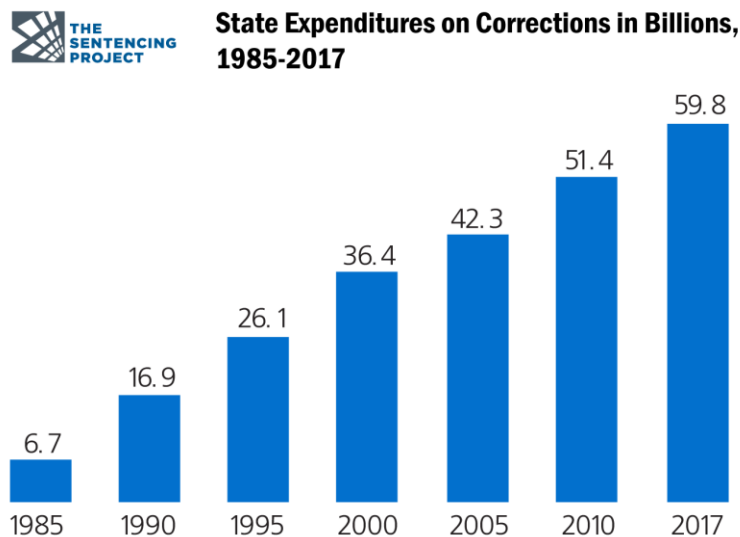
## Best Practices for Prison Ministry in a Post Covid-19 World

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## Chapter One: Introduction

First, there is a need to understand the current situation and the need for ministry in America's present prison system. There are 2.2 million men and women incarcerated in America, which is a 500% increase over the last 40 years (Criminal Justice Facts, 2019). Most of this increase is from changes in laws and policy, not necessarily higher crime rates. The "tough on crime" era and "war on drugs" which began in the 1980s caused an increase in incarceration rates (Mead, 2012). The number of people in prison for drug offenses in the U. S. grew from 40,900 in 1980 to 452,964 in 2017 (Criminal Justice Facts, 2019). The courts also increased prison time often without the chance of parole. Intentions are good but there is increasing evidence this strategy has not been an effective deterrent like once was hoped (Criminal Justice Facts, 2019). This massive increase in prison population has caused overcrowding in prisons, fiscal burdens on states with higher costs, and understaffing in the facilities. The average cost for one federal inmate per year in 2017, according to the Federal Bureau of Prison, was "\$36,299.25 per year or \$99.45 per day" (Annual Determination of Average Cost of Incarceration, 2018, April 30). For the state prison system, a chart is provided below to show the higher costs from 1985 to 2017 (Criminal Justice Facts, 2019).



This pandemic situation with all its problems and challenges brings with it a huge opportunity for ministry. Johnson (2011) presents the social science evidence that religious beliefs, communities, and programs help reduce crime and recidivism, while helping to rehabilitate inmates. Johnson (2011) states, “*More God, Less Crime* recognizes and documents how faith-based approaches are already making a difference in confronting difficult-to-solve social problems from delinquency, crime, offender reform, and prisoner reentry” (p. 216).

The church has the transforming power of the gospel to help transform America’s criminal justice system. Gillard (2018) points out, “We (the church) have the potential to be the key voice in shifting our system’s priorities to conflict resolution, prisoner transformation, and successfully integrating people into their communities upon their release” (p. 184). The church should be leading the way in advocating for a system to give opportunities for genuine rehabilitation, long-lasting transformation, and strong reintegration.

This thesis project will present the biblical basis for prison ministry, share the best practices for prison ministry, and offer a case study for a paradigm shift for prison ministry for a Post Covid-19 world. Spearheaded by Prison Mission Association (PMA), that is becoming more necessary with the current Covid-19 virus crisis restrictions with prison ministry.

## **Chapter Two: The Biblical Basis for Prison Ministry**

God teaches some key principles in His Word, forming the biblical basis for prison ministry. They are the principles of redemption, service, deliverance, and transformation. Each one of these are powerful concepts, building a strong biblical foundation for the importance of this ministry to those incarcerated. These insights help increase understanding of the need for local churches to be involved in reaching their local jails and prisons. These four principles were first a PMA handout (Anderson, D. 2017. *A Biblical Basis for Prison Ministry*). This is an expansion of that handout.

The first principle is Redemption: all people are redeemable through the gospel of the Grace of God. It needs to be understood that crime is basically a moral problem. Crime is an outcome of man's sin against a Holy God. Crime is secondarily an economic and social problem. The answer to this problem is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. God redeems and works in hearts as it is through the power of Christ that will transform, sanctify, and restore individuals as well as the community.

Prison ministry needs is a proclamation of the Good News of the Gospel of the Grace of God. No person, no matter what they have done is beyond redemption through the power of Christ, including those in prison. It is important to fully understand that God never tells us to give up on people, no matter what. Christians are to go after the lost and continue to encourage those who need God the most. Christ came for the sinners. The Apostle Paul shares,

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. (Rom 3:23-25

New International Version)

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13-14). So, it is important to understand the first principle is Redemption. All people need to be redeemed even though we deserve hell, to put it bluntly, all humans are criminals. In fact, a Minnesota attorney, Emily Baxter, wrote a book called *We are All Criminals*. Baxter (2017) puts it this way, “One in four people has a criminal record; four in four have a criminal history” (p.1). All have sinned but God loves everyone and gave His son, Jesus, so all could be redeemed. Each person has an incredible intrinsic value to God, no matter what they have done! All people need to be redeemed and no matter what happens to them, they never lose their value to God. All sinners deserve hell but can be redeemed by the grace of God! A great example would be the thief on the cross next to Christ to whom Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). That is the first principle for prison ministry is that of Redemption.

The second principle for the biblical basis for prison ministry is the principle of Service. The Church, the body of Christ is called to reach out to those in need, in prison or oppressed. The Body of Christ is the God-ordained ambassadors to communicate God’s grace and ministry to the world. When the church, the Body of Christ moves out and serves others like prisoners, ex-felons, and their families, the church becomes the hands and feet of Jesus ministering that is a means of worship and spiritual growth. “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20). God needs an ambassador in your local jail and prison. Who will go? He chose us to be His ambassadors, His mouthpiece, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. The church is

an embassy for each neighborhood and if there is a jail or prison, God is calling the church to reach them. “Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering” (Heb 13:3). Another key verse which specifically mentions prison is Matthew 25:36 where Jesus says. . . “I was in prison, and you came to me.” Is Jesus waiting in your nearby jail for a visit? Who will visit Him this week? This is the principle of Service.

The third is the principle of Deliverance. It is only the power of God that can set people free who are enslaved by sin. Prison ministry contributes and improves the community by working with prisoners, their families, and ex-prisoners to avoid going back to their sinful life of crime and returning to prison. The message of the Gospel of the Grace of God is there is no temptation taken to anyone that God's grace cannot overcome. Jesus freely offers forgiveness of sin and deliverance from evil. The Apostle Paul shares,

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so, he condemned sin in the flesh... (Rom 8:1-3)

If Christians believe this truth of God's word, then it is important to bring deliverance to those who need to be delivered, right? If they are in prison, they cannot come to Christians, Christians have to come to them! Can you have a true church and not have a prison ministry if you have a jail or prison near your church? The church, the body of Christ needs to be reaching them with God's grace! This is the principle of Deliverance. (Anderson, D. 2017, *A Biblical Basis for Prison Ministry*).



Finally, the fourth principle is Transformation. It is by faith that we live, serve our Lord and the inner transformation brings the greatest glory to God on earth. As each sinner is transformed God's glory can transform communities. What greater glory could illustrate the power of God than to transform the worst of all sinners in prison? Prison ministry is an amazing testimony to the world of the transforming power of the gospel of the grace of God. The community as a whole will observe this transformation as the Church reaches out to all those impacted by crime in any manner. It is through these actions the mercy and grace of Jesus is demonstrated. The Apostle Paul shares with us as he did with the Romans,

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

(Rom 12:1-2)

Again Paul shares with the Ephesians which helps us,

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:22-24)

As the Body of Christ, we are to show others the love God has for us. We are not defined by what we once did outside of our new self, but are now changed through the blood of Christ. That is the principle of Transformation.

The Bible uses many references, examples, and commandments about slavery, bondage, prisons, and prisoners. The Bible discusses these issues and uses the words: prisoners, prison, or imprisonment more than 130 times in the King James Version. God wants to work in

transforming these men and women for His glory! What better examples can be seen than the power of God used to change someone like Saul? Saul is found in the New Testament and was responsible for the persecution of many Christians. Christ met Saul on the road and he became a changed man. From this point on he was known as the apostle Paul, who shared the Gospel to the ends of the earth. In doing so, he planted churches, helped write much of the New Testament, and served time in prison himself for his faith in Christ. There are other examples written like Saul which show the transformational power of the gospel but it can only be spread if Christians reach out and share the good news with them!

The biblical principles of Redemption, Service, Deliverance, and Transformation build a strong basis for prison ministry as an extension of the local church. It is sad to say that it would seem that even though there are millions of Christian believers in our world, only a small number are involved in ministry to prisoners, even though jails and prisons are found in almost every community. The Bible verses given with these four biblical principles make the mandate very clear that there needs to be an outreach to each jail and prison. Many more believers could be involved in prison ministry in their community. It does not mean they have to actually go into a jail or prison. Not everyone feels called by God to go into a jail or prison. In a similar way as how everyone can be involved in worldwide missions even though not everyone is called to go overseas to bring the Good news of the Gospel. Just as in missions every Christian could be involved in prison ministry on different levels. There are many ways people can be involved in prison ministry. Here is a list of just some of the ways: Provide prayer support for prison ministries; Start a prison outreach to your jail or prison; Assist the inmates' families; inmates need help to transition back to society after their release; Serve as an instructor and correct PMA lessons; Provide Christian literature and Bibles inmates as well as prison libraries; Provide

financial support to a prison ministry; Your local church could mentor inmates to plant churches behind bars; or become a volunteer PMA representative for your area and share what God is doing behind bars.

**Chapter Three: The best practices for prison ministry and  
overview of the best existing literature currently on prison ministry.**

This chapter will look at the best practices for prison ministry but also will include the difference in jail and prison ministry. It will also cover the typical inmate profile, how prison ministry will help grow your church, best practices, and the best literature on prison ministry.

Jail ministry is different from prison in several ways. A jail is usually a local facility administered by the county or municipality. It is where inmates are held while they are awaiting trial or if they are serving a short-term sentence (one year or less). Generally, people in jail have nothing but time. Where prisons have work, study, recreational, and counseling programs, the jails generally do not have as much to offer. This can vary from jail to jail as well. Often inmates just sit in day rooms or in their cells with absolutely nothing to do. Because the jail is administered locally the religious programs are less structured and are less focused on “political correctness,” particularly in smaller communities. Ministry tends to be more short term, a year at most and generally quite a bit less. In jail, you are more likely to see repeat offenders which can be discouraging at times. The minister is most likely to see first offenders or people doing jail time for the first time. Jail inmates are shocked, scared, worried, depressed, contemplative, and ready for the gospel.

Prison ministry is more long term and has some different points which need to be understood in contrast to jail ministry. Prisons are state and federal institutions designed for the long care incarceration of inmates. The inmates recognize by this point that they are going to be spending significant time in prison and emotions are somewhat less intense. Ministry work needs to be focused more on long term discipleship. The facilities have many more opportunities for the inmates to productively spend their time thus they may have other distractions. On the other

hand, the facilities may be more brutal and there is a great amount of fear among inmates.

Prisons are far more restrictive to enter; they have a high degree of political correctness and they have to minister to the needs of all religions. Jails have less security. Prisons have different levels of security in starting with minimum security, then low security, medium security, high security, and then supermax security prison. The higher the level the harder it is to get inside to visit and bring things with you. (Zoukis, 2020). All these factors make it harder to minister in the prisons. Ministering to federal prisoners is different from state prisoners. You will have very few murderers, rapists, etc for example in the federal prisons; most inmates will be larger-scale drug dealers, white-collar criminals, mail fraud offenders. They will probably be somewhat better educated, perhaps more articulate. (Difference between Federal and State Prison, 2017).

To do prison ministry it is important to understand the profile of a typical inmate. Most inmates come from a highly dysfunctional family background, usually for multiple generations, often involving physical abuse. Most inmates did poorly in school and were told they could never amount to anything. Often, they have low self-esteem. It is also typical they began using drugs at an early age; resulting in behavior related to drug abuse (James, 2004, p.10). It leads to being in and out of jail for repeated petty crimes time and again. Many times, inmates grow up without a father in their home. It is estimated according to Harper and McLanahan (2004), “a child growing up in a mother-only household was almost twice as likely as a child growing up in a mother-father household to end up incarcerated” (p. 370). Finally, the judicial system runs out of grace, or this inmate commits a crime serious enough for long-term incarceration. This is a typical profile but there are always exceptions of those who grew up in a very good home but made wrong choices.

This chapter will give a brief overview of how to get started and best practices for

effective prison ministry. First and foremost, prayer needs to be the foundation for your prison ministry (1 Timothy 2: 1-8). Prayer alone with God and praying with others who also have a burden to do prison ministry. In the Twin Cities, there is a Justice-Prayer Initiative that prays on the second Thursday of every month at 7 pm the Colonial Church in Edina, MN but because of Covid-19 they meet on Zoom. The Justice-Mercy Prayer Initiative is a city-wide monthly prayer gathering of people interceding together, in unity, for the immense needs surrounding our Minnesota correctional system. It is a powerful time of prayer for all those serving in prison ministries, correctional officers, judges, inmates, and their families. The founder, Ann Monikowski, has the vision to start these all across the country as the Lord leads and guides.

PMA (<http://prisonmission.org>) has developed many resources for prayer in prison ministry. These handouts are available to download from their website at [www.prisonmission.org/resources](http://www.prisonmission.org/resources). There is also a handout available on the website, which is very helpful called, "How to Pray for Inmates." As God puts a burden in hearts for those incarcerated, using these resources will help grow as a prayer warrior and encourage others to pray for those incarcerated. When prayer is activated, God moves and changes hearts through the power of the gospel!

As you begin a prison ministry, it is important to learn the mechanics of going into a prison or jail. Most prisons have a volunteer orientation. The principles apply to all types of institutions. The orientation covers things such as: Be very sensitive to trafficking rules and not being an avenue of communication for inmates; Understand the profile and nature of the inmates; Realize the inmates can be master manipulators, so you need to be wise in dealing with them; Recognize addictions is awfully hard to overcome and often they will see repeated failure as part of their recovery. Obey the rules but do not be afraid as prisons are generally safer than

the streets you walk on a daily basis. Palmer, (2013), explains using the national homicide rates on the streets compared to prison and found, “local jails and prison are safer than the average American town” (p.1). Do not doubt the sincerity of the inmates expressed faith. Many have come through the fire and fully surrendered to Christ. There may be some who are faking but it is an opportunity for them to be exposed to the gospel and need to leave the results up to God.

Be empathetic to their struggles and be faithful in your ministry as you will build trust with the inmates. They put a lot of stock in being consistent. If you go in doing a Bible study ministry do not be surprised at lower turnouts. Focus your attention on those who show interest. Encourage them to become leaders in the facility. Encourage long term commitment. Help the inmates connect to a church. Keep in mind these people have a lot of basic life skills they need to master.

One of the very best practices is to help them grow strong by studying God’s word and transforming the way they are thinking. Many churches offer Bible studies and church services in jails and prisons which point them in the correct direction. It is also important to help the inmates maximize their time inside studying God’s word. They need tools and help to study God’s word on their own. Bible Correspondence courses are invaluable as they have so much time to study but lack the skills or resources to make use of the time. Prison Mission Association (PMA) has been providing free life-changing Bible correspondence courses in both English and Spanish to inmates since 1955. Certificates of completion are earned for each course (1 to 8 lessons); they build spiritual strength, character, and upon completing all 35 self-paced Bible lessons, the student may earn 6 credit hours at the Berean Bible Institute (BBI) in Slinger, Wisconsin, ([www.bereanbibleinstitute.org](http://www.bereanbibleinstitute.org)). All the lessons can be downloaded for free on the PMA website ([www.prisonmission.org](http://www.prisonmission.org)). Inmates do not have access to the internet but family,

friends, and anyone else can download and help mail them to people they know in prison or even those not in prison. PMA approached BBI back in 2013 to partner by offering college credits to those who complete all the PMA lessons and they agreed. This offer of college credits is not only for inmates but for anyone who completes all the lessons. We have spouses and others not in prison doing PMA lessons. The offer of college credit has helped PMA to see an increase in more students completing all 35 lessons as they must complete all the lessons to be able to qualify for the 6 credits.

One of the best ways to reach out to invite inmates to do the Bible correspondence is to attend the Transition Fairs at state prisons and resource fairs at federal prisons. The transition and resource fairs are designed for those inmates who will be released in the next 18 months or less. The prison invites all those who can offer training, jobs, housing, etc. that inmates will need when they are released. Each organization is given an 8-foot table. The inmates start to come into the transition/resource fair usually about 8.30 am in groups between 50-100 for 45-60 minutes depending on how each prison has arranged it. Usually, it goes until 2 or 3 pm which gives the opportunity to talk to 300-500 inmates on that day. As inmates approach the table, PMA volunteers ask, “would you be interested in doing a free Bible correspondence course?” PMA has a very high percentage that do take the short introductory Bible study and ask if they need a Bible and provide them with a Bible. Both English and Spanish lessons are offered. This is also when the children’s Bible Correspondence courses from the Mailbox Club are offered so they can enroll their children. With volunteers helping, PMA has had anywhere from 56-255 inmates sign up at each transition fair. Example information of the MN transition fairs can be found at <https://mn.gov/doc/community-supervision/reentry-resources/transition-fairs/>.



Other ministries that offer Bible correspondence courses include Crossroads Prison Ministry (<https://cpministries.org>) and the Emmaus Correspondence School (<https://emmausworldwide.org>). Often inmates will do several different ones as it takes time to get their next lessons back and they want to keep studying and not have to wait too long to get their next lesson.

It is also good to offer Bible correspondence courses for the inmates' spouses and children. The Mailbox Club ([www.mailboxclub.org](http://www.mailboxclub.org)) offers free full-color Bible correspondence courses for children ages 4-18. "Recent estimates show that 2.7 million US children have a parent who is incarcerated, and more than 5 million children—7 percent of all US children—have had a parent in prison or jail at some point" (Cramer, Goff, Peterson, & Sandstrom, 2017, p.1). This is huge as often the children of inmates are impacted in many ways and studies show an estimate of how likely they too may end up incarcerated. According to a study conducted by Central Connecticut State University, children of the incarcerated are about three times as likely as other children to be justice-involved (Conway & Jones, 2015). It is important that a prison ministry work to help the whole family as it is not just those incarcerated that suffer. The families are also suffering during this time. A very helpful book to give a spouse or family member when their loved one is in jail is written by Lennie Spitale, (2007). *Help! My loved one is in jail. What do I do now?* It provides great advice on whether to post bail or not bail, the legal process, hiring an attorney, communicating with your loved one, and God's plan for you.

A question people sometimes ask is, "how effective is the impact of the Bible correspondence courses?" The national average rate for recidivism is 67% - within three years, two out of three will re-offend and end up back in prison (Jackson, 2017, p. 41). In 2016, PMA had an intern, from Grace Christian University, research the recent 262 graduates who have

completed all 35 PMA lessons to see what the results were for them. From her research, Shannon Hupp, (all inmate information is public knowledge), found the recidivism rate was only 16.47% for the 85 students she was able to track down (Hupp, S., 2016, p.1). While some may say that the people who would be inclined to do Bible lessons are possibly also those who maybe would have been less likely to re-offend but even with that possibility it does show a very positive impact. This is a huge difference and shows the effectiveness of educating people in godly principles to make the right choices when they get out of jail and prison. PMA likes to call it the “greenhouse effect”. The inmates are able to spend quiet times with God reading, growing, praying, and allowing Him to transform them while in prison.

The traditional prison ministry arranges to visit the prisons for leading group Bible studies often weekly or monthly. Local churches also take turns hosting services in local prisons. There sometimes may be a group of protestant and catholic churches that rotate conducting a protestant service and also a catholic service each Sunday. Other religions also may offer services including Muslims depending on the community. Prison Fellowship is probably the largest prison ministry in the USA and offers group bible studies as well as Prison Fellowship Academy(PFA). PFA is an intense, biblically-based program that takes incarcerated men and women through a holistic life transformation process” (Prison Fellowship Academy, 2020).

One other area in prison ministry, besides reaching the inmate and their family, is the Correctional Officers and staff. There are biblical examples of ministry for Correctional Officers. An example is in Acts 16, when the Philippian jailor, who was about to kill himself, thought the inmates were going to escape. Talk about pressure on the job; taking his own life would be better than facing the consequences of a prison break. The Apostle Paul tells him,

“Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!” The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell

trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.” (Acts 16:28-34 NIV)

God shows up to meet the needs of this Correctional Officer (CO) and his whole family! He can do the same for Correctional Officers today if more people listen to what He is calling for them to do.

Another scripture passage that brings out this aspect is where the Apostle Paul shares, Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually, served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear. (Phil 1:12-14 NIV)

While in prison, the Apostle Paul shared the gospel not just with inmates but the whole palace guard. If we follow Paul’s example, the prison ministry should not be just about the inmates, it needs to include the Correctional Officers and staff.

A Correctional Officer (CO) experiences extreme trauma in their job. Bedore (2012) shares that, “A CO's 58th birthday, on average, is their last. A CO will be seriously assaulted at least twice in a 20-year career” (p.1). On average a CO will live only 18 months after retirement (Childress, 1999). Extreme stress, substance abuse, depression, workplace injuries, and suicidal

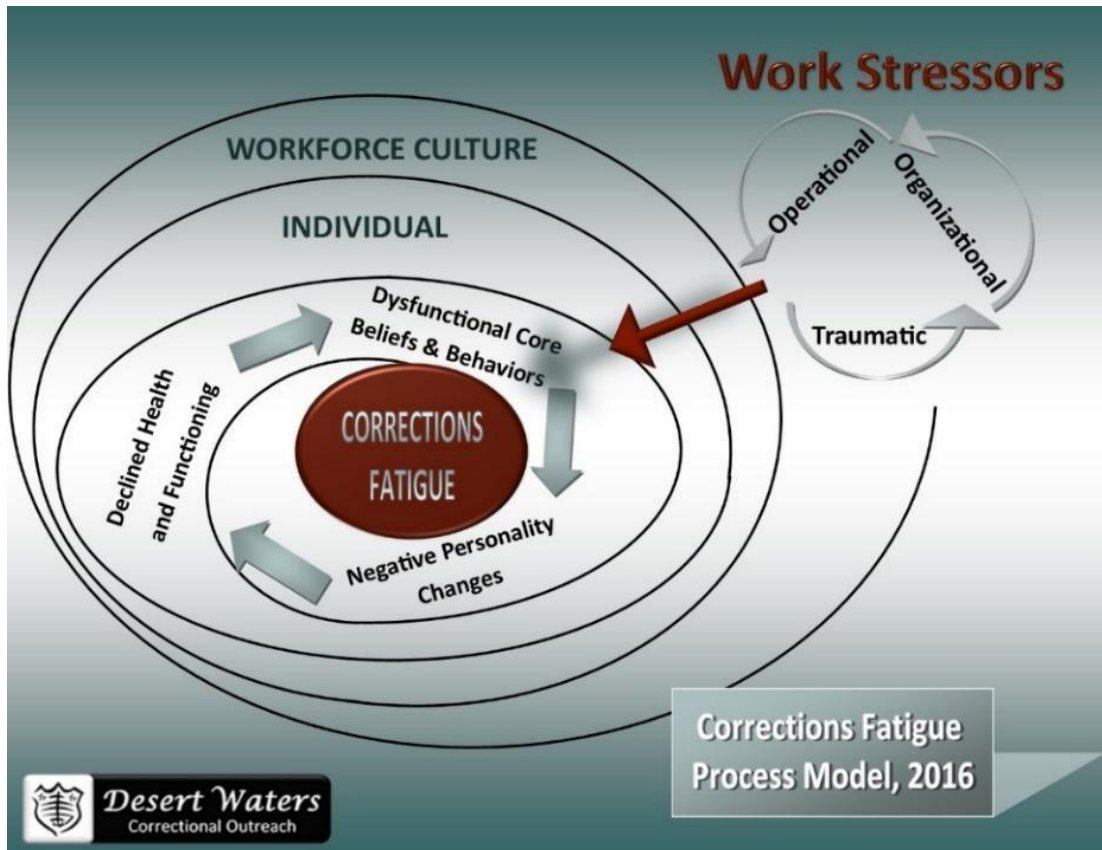
thoughts, are just a few of the daily struggles for every CO. Picincu, (2019), gives us some startling facts, “Many officers suffer in silence, telling themselves that they need to be strong, so the actual numbers are significantly higher. Even those who do not develop PTSD experience high-stress levels and burnout. Researchers believe traumatic events, such as being injured on the job, receiving threats, and witnessing inmates attempting suicide, play a major role in the onset of this disorder” (Denhof, 2013, p.1). Williams (2019) gives stats from a recent study:

In short, correctional officers have a 39 percent higher suicide rate, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) rates 10 times higher than the general population, a divorce rate that's 20 percent higher than the national average, and heart disease affects us at a rate that is 50 percent higher than any other occupation. (p. 8)

In researching different options to help address these problems with Correctional Officers, there is one program available that has been developed at Desert Waters Correctional Outreach (DWCO). They have coined the term, “Corrections Fatigue” by its founder, Caterina Spinaris, Ph.D. They provide an excellent monthly ezine called *Correctional Oasis* that is full of helpful information, education, and inspiration for correctional staff. Staff can subscribe to this resource by email or download from their website for free at <https://desertwaters.com>.

They developed an educational program and a Corrections Fatigue assessment to help correctional employees measure where they are at mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The Corrections Fatigue Assessment is for correctional employees working in adult institutions developed by DWCO. To view the measurement tool go to: [http://desertwaters.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CFA\\_Institutions\\_2018.pdf](http://desertwaters.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CFA_Institutions_2018.pdf) . The Corrections Fatigue Assessment (CFA) is designed to be administered to groups of correctional employees, not to individuals, in order to examine the levels and areas of Corrections Fatigue in the workforce of correctional

agencies. Desert Waters' course "From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment" also teaches the basics of self-care for COs. Here is the Corrections Fatigue Process Model below (Spinaris, 2017):



Another excellent resource is a book called, *Staying Well: Strategies for Corrections Staff* by Caterina Spinaris (2008). It is highly recommended to be given and read by all corrections staff and those who are concerned about their well-being. Here are the chapter headings that the book includes: the stress of the job, corrections fatigue, taking your life back, professional boundaries with offenders, families in corrections, psychological trauma, substance abuse, correctional staff suicide, and a spiritual solution (Spinaris, 2008).

One way PMA is working to help correctional staff is by providing a workshop to help

them cope through building support and stronger relationships in their lives. This workshop, entitled *12 Skills for a Better Life!*, was presented at a recent CMCA Correctional Ministries Summit at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College. The workshop helps people discover 12 life-changing principles to transform their character, relationships, and life for each of them! Each person who registers will get a copy of the *12 Seeds for Successful Relationships* book by Andersen (2004) along with the personal journal workbook.

These 12 biblically-based principles are for relationships. The “12 Seeds” are Respect, Encouragement, Listening, Appreciation, Trust, Integrity, Order, Nurture, Synergy, Hope, Ideals, and Pardon. The workshop also covers the 12 human needs each of the 12 Seeds help fill: significance, the courage to press on, attention, to be valued, security, authenticity, structure, to be loved, to work together, motivation to go on, to focus on higher things and forgiveness. Andersen (2004) states, “the quality of a person’s relationships reflects the quality of a person’s life. Better relationships mean a higher quality of life for all” (p. 6). This gives them excellent tools for improving and dealing with all the negative realities of correctional fatigue. One of the discussions is on overcoming nine weeds which harm relationships; benefiting the Correctional Officers at work and also with their family and other relationships.

A very helpful list of all available resources for COs and staff has been developed by PMA. It is available online to distribute to COs and staff by going to their website or at this hyperlink:<http://prisonmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Resources-for-Correctional-Staff-handout-Nov-2019.pdf>. PMA has also developed a handout called “How to pray for Correctional Staff,” which can be downloaded at <http://prisonmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/How-to-Pray-for-Correctional-Staff.pdf>.

Pastors can be terribly busy with their ministry and might not think a prison ministry or

outreach to Correctional Officers will help to build their church but this is untrue. Nine out of ten churches in our nation are in decline or not keeping up with growth in their communities (Rainer, 2016, p. 49). PMA is working to help pastors and churches to realize this important opportunity which will benefit them and is in the best interest for the glory of God! Prison and jail ministry can bring some great evangelistic and outreach results for local church ministry. Some pastors and church members may not have seen any new converts in some time. In prison ministry, by contrast, spiritually hungry inmates come to Christ in great numbers as “prison ministry is the most fruitful mission field in our country” (Spitale, 2002, p. 190). There will be a great harvest of souls for Christ behind bars and a great need to reach the correctional officers! Spitale (2002) provides a thorough inside out view of prison life as he served a prison sentence for armed robbery. Two years after his conversion to Christianity, he began conducting a weekly Bible study in a local jail and has been involved in prison ministry for more than two decades. For most people, prison culture is like visiting a foreign land, so this book will help to understand it from the vantage point of one who has lived inside prison. Spitale (2002) covers the feelings and perspectives. So pastors and church members need to go down to their local jail and prison to see how God is working in transforming lives by the power of the gospel.

The greatest fruit for local churches would be to partner and plant a church campus behind bars. As God raises up godly men and women who feel called by God to be ministers behind bars, the local church can plant an extension campus like a multi-site church in prison. Another campus of the local church would bring great blessing to the local church! A prison church is more like a house church and not like a traditional church. Above all else, prison ministry is a shower of blessings for all those involved. It is an opportunity to experience the wonder and joy of leading people to Christ and seeing them start their lives over in ways

productive to society and pleasing to God. It is a place to see prayers answered in timely and miraculous ways, strengthening your personal prayer life. It is a chance to experience complete dependence on God for ministry success after realizing nothing lasting happens in prison through purely human effort and striving. It is a time to come to understand deep down inside the awful nature and consequences of sin and the unique role of Christ in creating new creatures. Prison ministry shows us everyone is united as part of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).

The benefit of planting a church behind bars is probably the best practice for prison ministry today! In fact, church planting is God's ordained way to do evangelism and ministry! Currently, there are a couple of examples of planting churches behind bars in the USA. A short summary and brief evaluation will be given as part of the best practices.

Prison Congregations of America (PCA) is a parachurch nonprofit organization using an ecumenical approach to building communities of faith inside and outside of prisons in the United States. PCA has helped to plant at least 24 prison churches (listed at their website at [www.prisoncongregations.org/existing-communities-of-faith](http://www.prisoncongregations.org/existing-communities-of-faith)). These are done in collaboration with any denomination. PCA wants all the financial responsibility, accountability, and oversight to be done by a denomination. This model has been done effectively in many prisons over the last 10 years. The prison church model looks different from a traditional church. With this model, there is an inside church council and an outside church council (volunteer leaders from local churches who partner to plant this church). In prison, one inmate cannot be above another inmate, so they will not allow one inmate to be the pastor or leader. In prison, there must be a plurality of leaders, known as “peer to peer” ministry. This inside council works with the outside council in planning and carrying out the ministry. The outside council comes into the jail to meet with the peer ministers an hour before the worship service. Outsiders join in the services, which



are often held on a weeknight, so it does not clash with local Sunday church services. The only problem with PMA adopting this model is that PMA is not affiliated with any denomination, removing the option for PMA to partner with them at this time. PCA will only work with denominations able to provide the finances, accountability, and supervision.

Another model for prison church planting is the method used by Burl Cain, former warden of Angola Prison in Louisiana. It was once called the bloodiest prison in America with over 6,300 inmates who were mostly all serving life sentences (Choiniere, 2019). It is now completely transformed. Under the leadership of the warden, Burl Cain, it is now a much safer, more secure, and progressive maximum-security prison. When he became the warden back in 1995, his immediate goal was to bring peace on his particular patch of earth. He realized that teaching the Christian moral code of living would be most effective to transform the prison. He felt the need to moralize the prison quickly, to bring down the violence. The Correctional Officers were not allowed to cuss or swear. Everyone had to respect and treat each other with dignity. He helped educate them in godly principles by inviting New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to start an ordination program in the prison. He turned murderers into ministers! They developed the leadership behind bars to follow God's call into the ministry and have planted 27 churches there on the prison grounds. Warden Cain raised funds to build seven different chapels for these prison churches. He made a point in the current prison system, which has forgotten corrections means correcting deviant behavior, to make a difference. Cain set out to encourage a positive uplifting culture of a caring community in a place where fighting, fear, apathy, and an attitude of "every man for himself" ruled the day. He outlined his philosophy to the inmates that their dorm was like a city or community (Shere, 2005, pp. 24-25).

Back in 1992, Angola recorded 1,346 assaults, both inmate on inmate and inmate on

staff. In 2015, there were only 343. This is not an insignificant number but keep in mind Angola is the largest maximum-security prison in America with 6,300 inmates; most serving life sentences for violent crimes (Goldberg, 2015). In a recent article in *Christianity Today*, they shared the Angola story and how they have planted 30 churches in this one prison (Brown, Stetzer, Christopherson, MacDonald, & Kim, 2018). So, the planting of churches by training up leaders from within has been very effective in bringing life transformation through the gospel. It is also interesting to note that they are sending out inmates to transfer to other prisons to plant prison churches in other facilities. This is the principle of leadership multiplication!

One key reason that planting churches behind bars with leadership within is so effective is those inside understand the culture and needs of the inmates better than anyone coming in from the outside. This is pointed out by Brown et al. (2018), “Missiologist Ray Bakke has long contended that the ideal way to reach an indigenous population is not to import foreign missionaries, but rather to train and equip local leaders for the task” (p.1). It makes a lot of sense to train inmates to reach inmates and plant churches. This is the best practice for prison ministry today! A comprehensive study of the program entitled “The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation” by Hallett, Hays, Johnson, Jang, and Duwe (2017), outlines its successes and suggests the model has transformative potential.

The next section of this chapter will look at the best current literature for prison ministry. The first to look at is Spitale (2002) and his book *Prison Ministry: Understanding prison culture inside and out*. This is the best book written on prison culture and issues. Spitale (2002) provides a thorough inside out view of prison life. The author served a prison sentence for armed robbery. Two years after his conversion to

Christianity, he began conducting a weekly Bible study in a local jail and has been involved in prison ministry for more than two decades. For most people, prison culture is like visiting a foreign land, so this book will help to understand it from the vantage point of one who has lived inside a prison. Spitale (2002) covers the feelings, perspectives, dynamics, and culture of the prison.

The next helpful resource book is by Goode, Lewis, and Trulear (2011) called, *Ministry with prisoners & families: The way forward*. The authors give great detail about the impact of incarceration on the lives and communities of African Americans with highlights of how the church can respond to address and help this situation. The authors affirm a continuum between prison ministry and ministry to those reentering society from prison. They promote using the term “returning citizen” rather than the term “ex-offender” which is a very negative label. This book also affirms that prison ministry requires both service and advocacy. They point out the need to address prison overcrowding, sentencing disparity, economic hardship, and limited resources for education, substance abuse treatment, and vocational training which directly affects the quality of life for inmates and their families.

The third resource is Covert (2014) and his book *Ministry to the Incarcerated*. Dr. Henry Covert uses his experiences as both a police officer and state prison chaplain to investigate the needs of inmates and how to minister to them. He details different areas of inmate stress and how they impact upon the inmate's spiritual formation and the role of the Church in offering encouragement, healing, and transformation. He explains the need for staff education, improvements needed in their environment, and a pastoral presence that fosters rehabilitation and hope, rather than discouragement and punishment. According to Covert (2014), many inmates truly desire to change. The presence of the Church can be their strongest form of encouragement

and support. He provides examples of biblical themes that can promote healing and regeneration among prisoners, drawing specifically on the teachings of Jesus. Covert (2014), makes an important statement, “prisons are mission fields that desperately need a strong priesthood, and the most effective servants are the incarcerated” (p. 11).

The fourth resource is a set of books from Von Tobel (2017) and his first book *Prison Ministry Basic Training Part 1: Getting started in prison ministry*. And his second book, Von Tobel (2017), *Prison Ministry Basic Training Part 2: Volunteer recruiting, training, and oversight*. Gregory Von Tobel provides a very practical and brief overview of prison ministry with some practical steps and skills to develop. Part 1 is short, only 78 pages but combined with Part 2, 117 pages, it presents the how-tos of prison ministry for those new starting out, working on your own, developing a team, and for pastors and churches doing prison ministry.

The fifth resource and final book is Beckner and Park (1998), *Effective jail and prison ministry for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. This book is the oldest but does have a wealth of insight from many of the top leaders in the criminal justice arena. There are seventeen chapters, each written by different key leaders ranging from academia to practical ministry. It gives an excellent background and history of imprisonment going back to the times of Genesis, middle ages, colonial America, while looking at prison reform, future of rehabilitation, and a future model of correctional chaplaincy.

Each of these books presents the traditional prison ministry of visiting the prisons, building relationships, doing evangelism, holding Bible studies with those interested, conducting worship services, and meeting with the inmates for prayer and counseling. It is interesting to note that none of them discuss or talk about developing leadership within the prison to form a local church behind bars. There are no books or resources developed yet for

that paradigm shift in prison ministry which the Prison Mission Association (PMA) is developing and this paper hopes to fulfill. There was a recent article in Outreach Magazine by Jonathan Sprowl, called *The Church Inside: A new movement in America's Prisons*. It gives some examples of churches being planted behind bars and leadership development behind bars (Sprowl, 2019).

## **Chapter Four: A Case Study of a Hypothetical but Highly Probable Strategy for Prison Ministry in a Post COVID-19 World for PMA.**

The global COVID-19 pandemic has altered every aspect of life. It has changed the way people work, shop, socialize, travel, eat, connect, worship, exercise, entertain, and much more. Almost overnight it seems it has radically changed our society, culture, mindset, and all of consumer behavior. This chapter will present a case study for what would be the optimal approach for prison ministry for a non-profit organization called Prison Mission Association (PMA). This case study will cover four phases. The first phase will be Post Covid-19 changes for volunteer ministry and leadership development. It will require improved and greater information distribution of what God is doing with this new vision for church planting behind bars. The second phase will be to work on building more of a collaborative team of teams. This will be an enhancement of the current 20 regional Bible Correspondence Fellowship (BCF) hubs around America who have helped to decentralize the prison ministry to help cope with the fast growth with over 14,000 new students. The third phase will be developing closer ties and relationships with local churches near prisons who are interested in planting a church behind bars. This would include helping these churches to have live stream videos of their services broadcasted on the local prison's "Offender TV channel". Then phase four will be helping to coordinate local churches, facilitate prison staff and chaplains, and inmate leadership to work together to plant more prison congregations.

### **Case Study Phase One**

#### **Post Covid-19 changes for volunteers and leadership**

With the continuing changes in our world in the last few months, changes in prison ministry is becoming more and more necessary. Volunteers are no longer allowed to visit the

prisons, conduct Bible studies or worship services as they once did. So training and equipping leaders from within the prison has really become necessary for ministry to continue behind bars.

PMA correspondence courses can still get through the mail to the inmates, Praise the Lord!

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, PMA had volunteers come to the headquarters in Port Orchard, WA to work, help print lessons, package and mail out lessons, pick up lessons to correct, etc. Most volunteers than needed to be local and near the PMA home office to help out. Now that everyone needs to work from home, PMA is mailing out packets of lessons to be corrected and the volunteer correctors can be anywhere in the USA. PMA currently is mailing lessons to volunteers in Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, California, Washington, among other states. This will incur higher postage costs but does help to expand the volunteer base, so it is no longer limited by locations anymore.

The PMA director does work remotely from the home office but for the ministry to expand and cover more of the country, more virtual teams for effective ministry is needed. PMA has grown and changed how it handles new students by decentralizing the work to over 20 different hubs across the country and many other countries around the world. Alexander (2017) gives seven practical habits to make these virtual teams successful which will be one of the topics discussed at the team-building retreat for PMA next February, Lordwilling. Utilizing technology and virtual teams, PMA will seek more effective team ministry opportunities to spread the gospel. The next PMA staff person might be able to head up coaching the virtual teams.

Hawkins (2017) shares about “VIM teams- teams that are virtual, international, and multicultural with some amazing potential for seemingly unlimited growth” (p. 134).

Teleconferencing and web-based communications for ministry is something needing to be

developed and used by PMA as well as local churches for effective ministry. Hawkins (2017) has some good resources as well as suggestions from the work of Pam Van Dyke (2016) who did research on virtual group coaching. Dyer, Dyer, and Dyer (2013) have a chapter on high-performing virtual teams that would be helpful. Developing this new area for ministry will be a huge help going forward for virtual teams as it will increase the effective use of resources and people. With this approach, there can be volunteers all over the country serving, not just near the PMA home office in Port Orchard, WA.

Leadership is the key to effective ministry and multiplication of any ministry. There is not only a health crisis from the Covid-19 pandemic but a leadership crisis in our world today. Leadership determines everything. Leadership is the source and solution to many problems in society. Most nations, companies, organizations, and corporations are over-managed and under-led. Almost nothing happens without leadership. Nothing changes without leadership. Almost nothing develops without leadership. Almost nothing improves without leadership. Almost nothing is corrected without leadership. Almost nothing advances without leadership. Almost nothing succeeds without leadership (Everything Rises and Falls on Leadership, 2017). People are always directly or indirectly being led. Crowley (2011) points out,

traditional leadership has not evolved and is failing. Record numbers of people hate their jobs and are effectively disengaged at work. U.S. job satisfaction is at an all-time low with 22 consecutive years of decline. More than half of all workers hate their jobs. (pp. 10-11)

Transformational leadership based upon God's Word and biblical principles is what is needed for prison ministry which brings honor and glory to the Lord.

God gives insight into how He wants leaders to multiply and develop more leaders. The



apostle Paul tells us, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim 2:2). To do this, look for F.A.T. people- faithful, available, and teachable to develop into leaders who will reproduce and multiply more leaders. Becoming a leader is a transformational journey beginning on the inside. “Live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God” (Col 1:10). It means being willing to do whatever your creator commands you to do and surrendering to His will and putting Him first in your life.

One of the best books available outlining the 11 essential qualities to becoming a wise Christian leader is *Learning to Lead like Jesus* by Boyd Bailey. The qualities he shares are learning to lead like Jesus with humility, love, accountability, relationships, teachability, discipline, gratitude, generosity, forgiveness, encouragement, and faithfulness (Bailey, 2018, pp. 19-22). These insights are very thought-provoking following up with questions at the end of the book to use for leadership training in applying and put these principles into action!

Regarding leadership (Burns, 2014) points out the transformational leadership model in contrast to a transactional leadership approach. In the past, this author had been guilty of using the transactional leadership approach to get people to do a task for their own benefit. Transformational leadership goes beyond the transaction of mutual benefit to a higher level of motivation and morality. So, it is transforming within with motivation for a greater purpose of prison ministry. The contrast of transactional leaders and transformational leaders is so interesting. Ford (1991) states,

Transactional leaders accept the rules and values; transformational leaders change them.

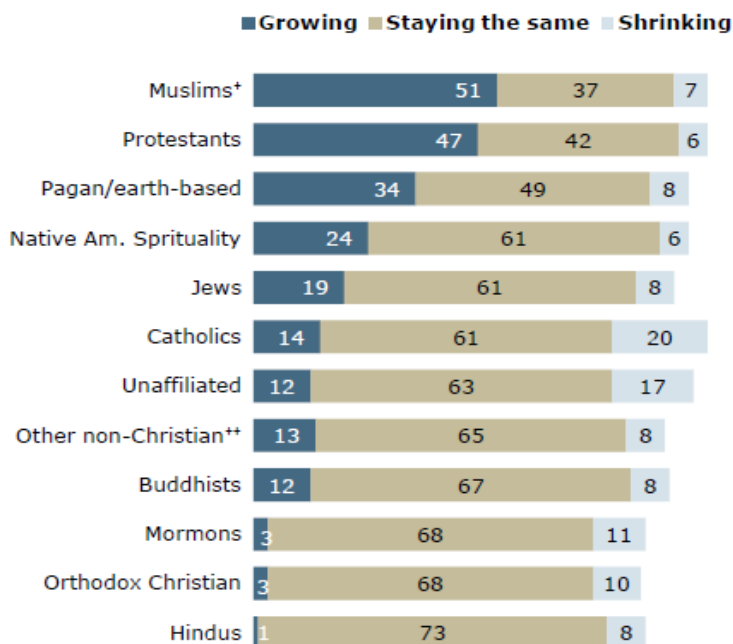
Transactional leaders bargain, transformational leaders symbolize. The transformational leader motivates us to do more than we expected to do, by raising the awareness of

different values, by getting us to transcend our self-interests for the cause and by expanding our needs and wants. ( p. 22)

As mentioned at the start of this chapter with this pandemic crisis, there is a need for leaders to step up and become strong leaders. Where are the transformational leaders needed and where will they come from for this generation? This generation is looking for purpose and meaning in their work. This transformational leadership will be a key way to motivate and build leaders from this younger generation. They want to see the value of what they do as making a difference in the world. Another untapped resource for leaders are the local jails and prisons in this country. A few years ago, Fox News reported that many ISIS recruits are coming from US prisons (Fox News, 2016). The Muslims are tapping into this resource. Here is a chart showing Muslims are estimated to be the fastest-growing group in US prisons according to Pew Research Center, (Religion in Prisons, 2012).

### Which Groups Are Growing and Shrinking?

*% saying each group is growing, shrinking or staying the same size in the inmate population where they work, due to switching*



This unreached people group behind bars is one of the most spiritually fertile harvest fields for potential leaders. They are broken, humbled, looking for hope, and want to change their lives for a purpose as a way to bring meaning to life. Inmates have time to study and learn. It can be what we call the greenhouse effect with concentrated study and application of God's word to transform them from the inside out. They can be set free from the bondage of sin and death as well as bring healing to their souls and their families. Spitale (2002) agrees as he states, "I do not know of any more fertile ground for the gospel in all of the United States than our jails and prisons" (p. 190). Another leader, Francis Chan, said, speaking about prison ministry, "I really believe that if we would just give some of these guys the opportunity, they're going to be amazing pastors and leaders" (Chan, 2014, p. 1).

This is a paradigm shift in prison ministry, rather than going into prisons and doing all the ministry, it is following the biblical mandate, as the Apostle Paul shares,

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-13 )

Therefore, as leaders, we are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry which includes inmates behind bars. Planting churches behind bars by developing leaders on the inside to do the work of the ministry is really the biblical way God wants His church to grow and spread. With 2.2 million incarcerated (Criminal Justice Facts, 2019) in this country, it is a huge mission field. The transformational leadership model is being developed by PMA. As inmates realize who they are and who they are in Christ, the gospel does an amazing job as it is the power of God unto salvation. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings

salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Rom 1:16).

Maital and Seshadri (2012) point out the five key elements of a business are: Structure, Strategy, People, Reward, and Process (p. 279). The core of every business is people. For PMA

**Figure 9.1 The Five Key Elements of an Organization’s Business Are: People, Reward, Process, Strategy, Structure. People Are Central**



their people are central and each of the other areas can be revamped as part of this phase one process. PMA has 14,000 new students in the last five years from which they may draw from to plant churches behind bars (see Appendix figure 1.). This is an untapped potential this ministry will help to mobilize and equip leaders from among this group of people!

With the changes happening in the culture today, it seems as though these changes are happening daily; PMA will need to review and evaluate what they are doing and how they can do it, within the new normal. The staff and teams will need to do conference Zoom calls to pray and discuss this. With explosive growth and the need to adapt to handle this growth, the PMA leadership is in unity and agreement in the need to plant churches behind bars. Since it is not possible to visit prisons, this goal is even more important. There is a great need to figure out how to do the church planting and leadership training by correspondence courses and contacting the prison chaplain. There may be a possibility the prison chaplain might be able to assist in the

mentoring of the leadership and planting the church. This will benefit the chaplain as right now he does not have any volunteers coming into the prison to help him as he did a few weeks ago. So, the warden and program director might see the value of training leaders within the prison to help teach the Bible as well as distribute and correct the Bible lessons right in the prison. What seems like a barrier to PMA might actually serve to motivate the prison staff leadership. It will help them to see the greater need, now more than ever, to plant churches with the men and women who feel called and qualified to help plant the house churches behind bars.

Maital and Seshadri (2012), point out, “the best leaders have come to understand that the likelihood of market success is closely tied to how well they focus their teams’ “attentions” (p. 229). With the changes now in our society, PMA needs to focus on the church planting vision and show the value to all involved so everyone can get on board to support this vision.

PMA has some good action points in the works to plan and communicate the changes needed with phase one. Some of the ideas include making some YouTube stories of the PMA vision for planting churches, a Ted Talk on the new post Covid-19 ministry for PMA, and Zoom calls for weekly PMA volunteer team meetings as well as BCFs (Bible Correspondence Fellowship - see Appendix Figure 2) around the country.

### **Case Study Phase Two**

#### **Building more of a collaborative team of teams.**

To advance prison ministry to an even greater level, PMA will need to continue decentralizing the ministry and collaborate with other prison ministries and churches. PMA has moved from a centralized approach to ministry to a more decentralized approach. Centralized means everything begins and spreads from one central location. For about 60 years, PMA operated under a centralized philosophy. All lessons from prisoners came into the home office

where they were processed. There are several benefits to this type of organization. Key ideas of a centralized approach are control and accountability. Everybody does everything under the watchful eyes of the decision-makers who make sure the process is followed (one size fits all). For PMA it means adding more students who are taking its lessons and sending them into the home office. The keyword is Addition.

Under a decentralized system, authority is delegated to different people who can use their discretion in what works best for them. Currently, there are at least four different ways BCF's are operating. For PMA this means multiplying the number of bases sending out and correcting in coming lessons. The keyword here is Multiplication.

PMA needs to continue to move to a more decentralized approach to ministry. With the tremendous influx of lessons over the past several years, one central office cannot do it all; especially with the continued greater growth in the future. There are many faithful lesson correctors at the home office, but there is only so much they can do. Some of the work has to be decentralized.

The PMA home office (and the board of directors) need to develop a more team of teams approach which is different from a top-down approach to ministry. Each BCF delivers, corrects, and returns lessons to prisoners. They are mostly autonomous groups under their own leader. With explosive growth and bottleneck at the PMA home office to handle any more lessons, we are decentralizing to have local churches, individuals, and hopefully, soon inmate church communities distributing, and correcting PMA Lessons called Bible Correspondence Fellowship Ministry (BCF). PMA has over 20 BCFs, who basically duplicate what the home office does by printing, distributing PMA lessons, as well as correcting them at nearby jails and prisons. Each BCF is independent and runs on its own. PMA supplies the answer keys and masters for the

lessons and certificates. Everything PMA has developed over the last 65 years of ministry will be shared.

As these regional hubs of prison ministry have grown, there are at least four different ways this prison outreach is being done by local BCFs across America. These four types were explained in the PMA Newsletter, Summer 2018 edition.

### **The first type of BCF**

The local church distributes lessons in local jails/ prisons, collects them each week, and has volunteers correct them. This way there are no postage expenses and inmates get a quicker turnaround each week, getting new lessons and certificates regularly. An example of this would be Bitely Community Church, Bitely, MI.

### **The second type of BCF**

The local church has set up a post office box or uses their mailing address for inmates to mail in lessons. They have volunteers correct the lessons and mail back the next lesson with certificates. An example of this would be Anchor Point Bible Church, Norton Shores, MI.

### **The third type of BCF**

An individual who has set up a post office box for inmates to mail in lessons to them. They write to people who get arrested, they read about in the local papers or hear on TV/radio and send them an encouraging note about how God loves them and can help them through what they are going through. They include the one-page short PMA introductory lesson and encourage them to study God's Word. An example of this is Bev Lynn, in Franklin, NC. She has been doing this for 15 years now! She wrote a PMA handout called, "How to start your own BCF" (See Appendix Figure 2). It is also online at [www.prisonmission.org/resources](http://www.prisonmission.org/resources).

### **The fourth type of BCF**

PMA partners with a prison ministry. PMA can give other groups permission to use the PMA lessons to send to their existing students. An example here is New Creations Prison Ministries in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They are using PMA lessons complete with no changes.

Here are the steps to start your own BCF: 1) Pray and ask God how you can get involved. 2) Contact PMA, they can come and visit your church to share the vision and opportunity. 3) Recruit a coordinator to lead your local ministry. 4) Contact local jails and prison chaplains to distribute lessons with your PO box on them. 5) Recruit several volunteers to correct lessons.

PMA has some good working relationships with many prison ministries like Prison Fellowship (<https://www.prisonfellowship.org>), Coalition of Prison Evangelists (COPE- <http://www.copeconnections.org>), Correctional Ministries, and Chaplain Association (CMCA - <https://www.cmcainternational.org>). PMA is also part of the Recovery, Renewal, and Reentry Collaborative of the Twin Cities (<http://www.r3collaborative.org>). This phase two will involve much greater cooperation and collaboration with all of PMA's supporting churches, financial supporters, prayer partners, and ministry partners.

After studying the book *Team of Teams* (McChrystal, Collins, Silverman, & Fussell, 2015), to go to a higher level, PMA will need to move to a command of teams and eventually a team of teams approach in this post Covid-19 world. This will be a process of educating each group as they are working independently at the moment. Creating a short summary of the principles from the book, with Scripture supporting, will be helpful. PMA would even create a course on these principles as this same team of teams would be effective for ministry in the prison and planting prison churches.

This idea of a team of teams is really right in line with the biblical model of the Body of Christ. Ministry is never to be done alone but all working together as the Body of Christ



(Romans 12: 4-5). When God looks at the city you work in, how many Bodies of Christ are there? There is only one Body of Christ. All Christians are all part of the same team. Churches and ministries should be a team of teams, working together with the same purpose and trusting God and each other. The unity of the Holy Spirit is there and churches (God's team) are to make every effort to keep that unity.

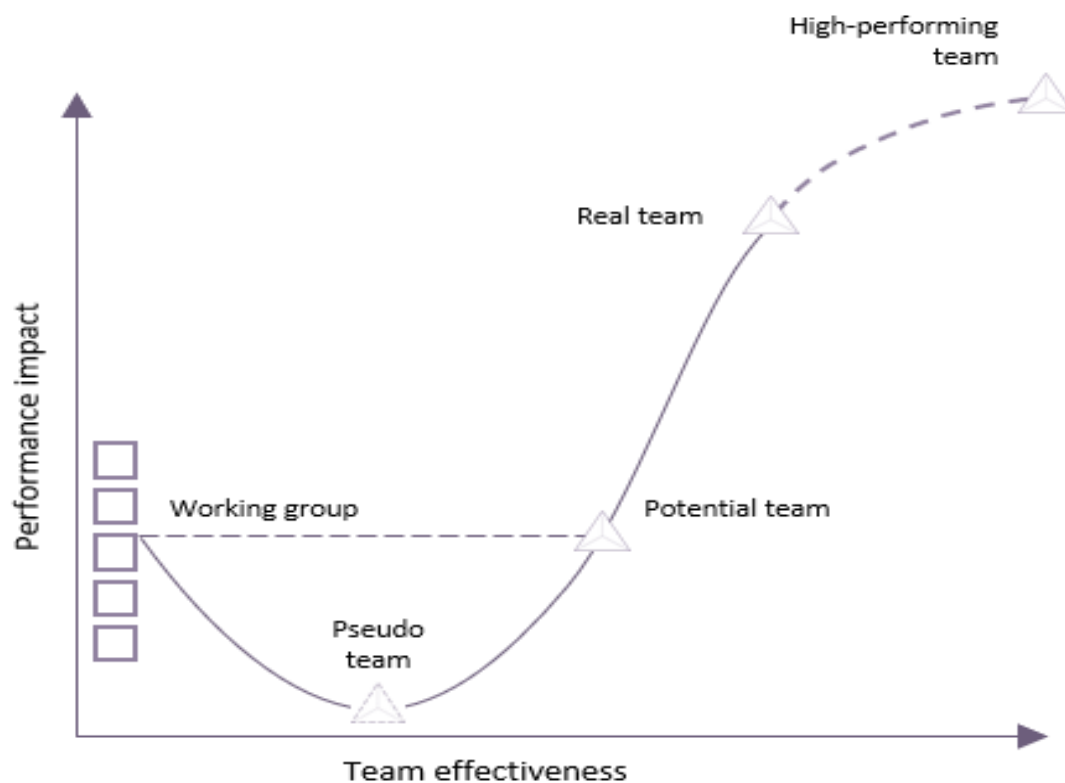
Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph. 4:2-6 NIV)

The church is not the building but the people. Doing church as a team might be a new mindset for some but if the church is going to be relevant for people in this modern-day, God's people need to create a team of teams! The church as God describes it in the Bible as the Body of Christ is more like an organism with living parts that must move and work together as a whole, not just an organization.

McChrystal et al (2015) explain why and how they had to change how they fought in Iraq to defeat the Al Qaeda network. They could no longer use the traditional top-down organizational and tactical approach. It presents the new rules for engagement for our ever-changing and complex world. McChrystal et al (2015) explain the concept of the team of teams. PMA and local churches need to realize it needs to adapt and change to keep up with today's society and world. PMA is an association and works with like-minded groups to reach inmates for Christ. If the church would take this challenge seriously, God could be working with all churches-working like a network of teams and not separate silo denominations as they are now.

As part of the team of teams developing for PMA, it would be developing high-performance teams (HPT). Think about what organizations should have the most high-performance teams? The church, the Body of Christ! The church should be setting the example for cooperation and collaboration with the power of the Holy Spirit which no other team has!! The church, the Body of Christ, has been given leaders to equip the saints for the ministry as we are told in Ephesians 4. This is our common purpose with clear roles, accepted leadership, etc. All of these can and should be applied to churches and nonprofits for the work of the Lord! The goal would be to work on moving existing committees, BCFs, volunteer working groups will need to be transformed into real teams, and move to become HPT.

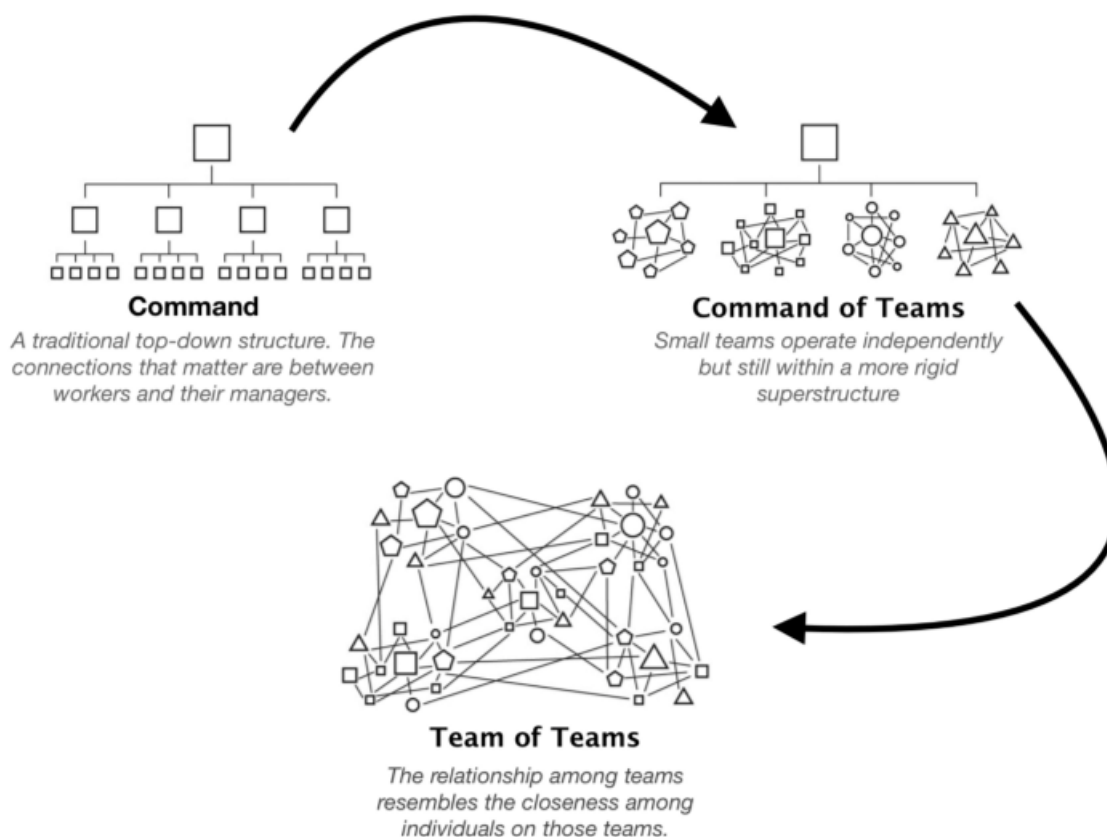
Katzenbach and Smith (1993) studied how an effective team could develop into an HPT. Their model below shows the progression with the team performance curve diagram (p. 84).



After developing high-performance teams, PMA can then work to move them to become a team

of teams collaborating and working to develop a new structural plan. As leadership is developed with HTP for ministry, it will be a process working to move from command to team model to a team of teams network which is what is needed to be effective in this day and age when things move so fast.

PMA is currently using the traditional organization command model below. It will need to move to command of teams and then progress to team of teams. This will take a strong commitment of the leadership and patience in this process using all of the principles discussed in this paper. Here is the diagram of the differences comparing the command model, to the command of teams and the team of teams model (McChrystal, et al. 2015. p. 129):



This team of teams model is something that can be applied both theoretically and practically with many organizations. Traditional organizational charts with lines and boxes simply do not capture the complexity and frequency of interactions taking place within

organizations. Furthermore, many businesses are struggling to break down silos between teams and improve performance through better information flow.

Something important to understand when looking at this model of having a team of teams is the structure of a person's organization in a way that becomes their strategy. In other words, how it is organized is going to affect how they operate. How an organization deals with questions of command and control, determines how they operate. People can talk about being agile and flexible all they like, but if they retain a traditional hierarchy, there are limits to how those goals are achieved. In order to really adapt, they must work not harder but differently.

By restructuring an organization using the team of teams model, it will enable greater flexibility, faster communication, and collaborating more effectively. With this closer teamwork, this network will be able to accomplish much more than using the traditional model. This shift in strategy will also help shift from reactive to proactive, keeping up with the latest developments happening in this ever-changing world. This will also bring great cooperation and a more effective analysis of all the shared data and facts they all gather to help each other.

To practically apply this to an organization, it will take a strong leader who will need to explain the vision and why these changes will benefit everyone. It would be good to follow a strategy like Kotter's *Leading Change* (2012) to facilitate this radical shift in structure and strategy to an organization. Once the teams understand how this will greatly empower them and enhance their effectiveness it will be something most teams would welcome. It is going to be a win-win for everyone.

One other factor hindering the American churches is they often leave the ministry up to the pastor to do. This is not biblical. The pastor is to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry,

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:11-12)

Every member has a ministry and has a spiritual gift. Each has a purpose and needs to work together for the glory of God. Imagine if everyone in the local church was using their gifts toward a single goal and purpose. Then imagine if all the local churches were working together as a team of teams, that would be a wonderful testimony for the unsaved. This is actually the prayer that Jesus prayed,

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:20-21)

What is needed is for many organizations to evaluate their organizational structure and see if it will be able to deal with the fast changes happening in the world today. Are they able to adapt, have resiliency and improved communications to keep up? They need to realize improvements will have a ceiling as long as they are limited to a team level. McChrystal et al (2015) points out, “as the world grows faster and more interdependent, we need to figure out ways to scale the fluidity of teams across entire organizations: groups with thousands of members that span continents” (p. 125). It is clear from McChrystal et al (2015), Covey (1991), Gillispie (2019), MacMillan (2001), and biblical passages mentioned that a team of teams approach makes a lot of sense and should be considered for many organizations to be more effective and relevant to accomplish its purpose. When teams work together, especially God’s

people, nothing is beyond reach as it will truly glorify the Lord and honor Him by showing the unity of our faith for the world to see!

The church needs to put the teamwork principles into practice and Cordeiro (2004) does a great job of explaining how to help each church member to identify their hidden calling so the church can work together as a team using its gifts and calling to transform the ministry. When every member is working as a team following God's purpose and calling in a unified way, working as one toward a single, clearly defined goal, anything is possible! Doing it this way everyone shares in the joys and rewards of success and the glory all goes to God, not individuals! An organization like Prison Mission Association (PMA) can use this team approach for its board and its Bible Correspondence Teams. Anthony and Estep (2005), has a great chapter on transforming groups into teams using practical insights and principles. Anthony & Estep, (2005) point out "what is the qualitative distinction between a group of individuals and a team? In a word: synergy. Synergy enables a team to accomplish more" (p. 334). If churches and PMA develop and multiply high-performance teams to do the ministry, it will be able to see many more churches planted behind bars and across this country!

Moving to a team of teams is building a network collaborative that goes beyond just one church or nonprofit. Greer and Horst, with Heisey (2018) give some insight "for Christians, we are not just building organizations. Our success is not defined by where we stand in relation to our "rivals" or how long our name endures. We are participating in an eternal Kingdom" (p. 20). This team of teams would be a Christian network of organizations collaborating as we are all working not for individual missions but for God's mission to build the Body of Christ. Greer et al (2018) is right in line with this vision as the title of their book is *Rooting for Rivals: how collaboration and generosity increase the impact of leaders, charities, and churches*. It looks at

the bigger picture of what God is doing and how we can work together more like a network of teams. That is what God wants for PMA and local churches.

The ideal for PMA would be to develop a command of teams approach with the BCFs. The command of teams is small teams operate independently but still within a more rigid superstructure. To do this there will need to be more structure and better communication. One next step is to develop a central online platform to share all the lesson updates, answer keys, certificates, instructions, and best practices and how-tos. A possible platform being tested right now is called workplace.com at <https://www.workplace.com/>. It would allow a better connection, sharing of content, and ministry helps all in one place. PMA also has Microsoft teams software providing the option for video conference calls, file sharing, etc. With all people getting used to working from home, PMA will be able to do many of those things, having volunteers and BCFs connecting together and working together better than ever before!

PMA could hold virtual Prison Ministry Conferences with training and education in how to do prison ministry in the post covid-19 world, planting churches behind bars, etc. All this could be recorded and archived so any new volunteers who missed a training could access it as well.

### **Case Study Phase Three:**

#### **Developing a stronger partnership with local churches.**

The church planting strategy for prison ministry is a paradigm shift in prison ministry. Traditional prison ministry parachutes in on a Sunday and then leaves for a week, or a month, until they come back for one hour of ministry. The PMA church planting vision and goals are actually more in line with the Bible now for this is the God-ordained way of doing ministry through a local church, not a parachurch organization. By developing leaders from within the

prison to plant a grassroots prison congregation who will have the potential to bring more people to Christ in every prison across the country! PMA will be following the biblical pattern for church planting laid out in Acts 14. There are six phases outlined that the apostle Paul used for church planting. First, preach the good news (Acts 14:21a). The PMA introductory lesson is a powerful evangelistic tool. Thousands have come to understand the gospel and put their faith in Christ by this very first lesson. Second, make disciples (Acts 14:21b). Bible correspondence courses help to train, disciple, and mentor the new believer. Thirdly, train the disciples (Acts 14:22a). As inmates become strong in their faith, they will reach other inmates for Christ! Fourthly, encourage. PMA needs to find and recruit local churches as well as strong leaders in the prisons who can partner to plant a church there (Acts 14:22b). Fifthly, appoint Church leaders (Acts 14:23a). The local church is needed to mentor and train leaders in the prison to do the peer to peer ministry behind bars. Sixthly, commit the Church to the Lord (Acts 14:23b). It is worth the risk to establish a biblical church in the local prison where they can have a huge impact! This is the biblical pattern for New Testament ministry and should be applied to prison ministry. This is biblical and gives God all the glory!

The challenge now is to educate local church leaders and churches regarding this transformational leadership so they can be part of what God is doing behind bars. PMA does not want to be the one planting the churches behind bars but be the catalyst and support local churches near the jails and prisons to reach out to mentor and develop leaders within the prisons to plant these churches. It is to be a grassroots movement from within prison and local churches, not from a parachurch nonprofit like PMA. The local church can help supply the prison leadership with PMA lessons to distribute and the prison church leadership can do the correcting of the lessons as well. This will help expand the ministry as PMA is decentralizing its ministry to



keep up with the fast growth. PMA has about 20 of these regional hubs now. These prison churches will be a satellite church campus or multi-site congregations for their local churches. It is a great way for the ministry to expand and grow in ways most churches would never have dreamed of. It also will help lower the recidivism rate as those who are part of their satellite church campus on the inside will be greatly helped to be able to join the outside campus when they are released from prison. This will give them the support they need for themselves and their families. It is also the vision of PMA to see these leaders coming out of prison to serve as local pastors, missionaries, and church planters as they are mentored and grow in their skills and transformational leadership.

Another opportunity from this pandemic is developing with churches doing a live stream. The Super Max prison has given us permission to supply live worship streams recorded by Bethesda Church of Prior Lake, MN that will be given to them on DVD. Chaplain Paul has agreed to use the DVDs of the live streams to broadcast the worship services on the offender TV channel in the Oak Park Heights MN State Prison. This began June 1, showing every Monday at 9 am each week now. As this develops, there is hope to expand this to Stillwater MN State Prison and the rest of the state prisons of Minnesota. The hope is to then distribute to federal prisons and other state prisons as this builds momentum. PMA could develop its leadership and ministry training for church planting curriculum on DVD to train those called to help plant the churches behind bars. This could be a huge breakthrough for this outreach!

The church planted behind bars will look different to a traditional church since no inmate is allowed to be above another inmate. This means you cannot have one pastor, you need a plurality of eldership which is actually more biblical. In prison, it is called peer-to-peer ministry. It is more like a house church than a traditional church adapted to suit the prison culture much

like missionaries will adapt when planting churches in overseas cultures. There are about 64 prison churches like this in America at this present time. The prison church will have an inside council made up of the prisoners who are biblically qualified to be leaders. It also has an outside council of leaders made of people who will come from local churches on the outside and commit to ministering and mentoring the inmates. Inmates cannot meet on their own, so they are dependent on outside folks coming in for the meetings. They often have their church meetings on a weeknight, so it does not clash with their home church services on a Sunday morning.

It has been helpful to think through each of the steps of Kotter's Model of Change in regard to the changes needed at PMA (Kotter, 2012). It is the prayer of PMA that God will continue to lead and guide to fulfill His will so thousands more can be reached with the gospel and churches planted behind bars in the USA; also in prisons around the world as this new vision for PMA gains acceptance and support.

The PMA leadership is now committed to following God's ordained method to do ministry which is planting churches by following the model of the Apostle Paul who appointed elders in each community he visited as he planted churches (Acts 14:21-23). The parachurch organizations have their place, but God's ordained way is to plant churches. PMA is planning how to plant churches behind bars. These prison churches would not be planted by PMA but local churches near the prison who would mentor the leadership and be involved like a multi-site church extension of their local church behind bars. "We believe the multi-site church model is both biblically grounded and a theologically sound ecclesiological model" (House, 2017, p. 12). This would be the most effective way to accomplish their mission which is to "Reach prisoners for Christ." The PMA board asked the director, Dwight Anderson, to write up the 10-year plan which they then all agreed to support at the following board meeting.

Once the PMA board was all in agreement with the new ten-year church planting vision, Pastor Dwight then wrote up this plan in the next PMA newsletter (mailed out to their 2,000 prayer partners), created a video explaining it on YouTube, a PowerPoint presentation as well as a trifold brochure, all posted on the PMA website. As Pastor Dwight and PMA representatives across the country showed the video and PowerPoint there was great excitement and enthusiasm for how God was working to build a team to achieve these goals.

PMA is developing new vision videos with testimonials of former inmate students who are now out of prison and doing ministry. These will be on a DVD that can be used in what they will call a PMA home meeting to share the PMA vision and how people can get involved. Dwight Anderson and board members will contact their current donors to see if they would be willing to host a home meeting with friends of theirs so they can share the new PMA vision.

The next step is to develop the biblical leadership and church planting ministry training curriculum for those who have completed all 35 of the original lessons and feel called to help plant a church behind bars. As they identify and train leaders in the prisons, these inmate leaders would supervise correcting the lessons and distributing them in the prison. They would recruit students and shepherd their small groups. These can become the core of planting a church in that prison.

PMA is looking for some retired pastors to also help in writing this new leadership and church planting curriculum for those behind bars who feel the call of God to help plant churches. PMA has permission from The Timothy Initiative (TTI) to use their training manuals they have used to plant over 50,000 house churches as part of Converge. PMA also has permission to use some of Larry Kreider's books on planting house churches. "House churches are flexible and fluid and can take place in any location" (Kreider, 2007, p.65). The other small helpful book

PMA has permission to use in its correspondence courses is *Planting a church without uprooting yourself* by Steve Elzinga (2000).

Phase three is helping local church pastors mentor the prison church leadership as an extension of the local church. PMA needs to find local church pastors and churches who would adopt this vision to plant a church behind bars near their church. A local church might sponsor the funding to print the lessons or print and deliver the PMA lessons to the inmates in their area. They know some inmates are in for life and would be good candidates for this leadership role.

Fully trained prison pastors in a prison will have their own elders and local leadership for this ministry. When they have their first church planted in a prison, PMA can duplicate this in all 50 states for the glory of God! The vision then is to begin to do this in overseas prisons with lessons translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Swahili. The Apostle Paul teaches on the biblical principle of multiplication “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim 2:2 NIV). This is what will happen with the multiplication of the prison churches planting more prison churches.

PMA should plan on regular evaluation and discussions about progress to help consolidate the changes. PMA needs to make sure they implement the vision over a long enough period of time, so it becomes the new normal. As part of this stage, it is recommended to use the four frames given by Bolman (2017) to help evaluate from the different perspectives as more growth continues and needs change.

### **Case Study Phase Four:**

#### **Overall coordination and evaluation working with local churches, prison staff and inmate leadership to work together in planting more prison congregations.**

Once these leadership development courses and church planting behind bars is successful here in the USA, it is the prayer of PMA to do this overseas in the jails and prisons there. They have their lessons in Spanish, Portuguese, and Swahili at the moment with other languages being worked on as well. So, the vision for this is worldwide as it is God's heart to reach the lost in every corner of this planet. This leadership philosophy is still developing as PMA is currently working to create the biblical leadership and ministry courses for planting churches behind bars. The plan is to add more staff with regional directors, at least 10 to cover all 50 states in working with local churches to build this network of prison churches.

This important phase is to develop leadership courses and training to plant house churches in the prisons with those who have completed all the PMA lessons. With leaders on the inside, they could help distribute and correct PMA correspondence lessons in the prisons, which would speed up the lesson turnaround and save a great amount of money currently used for postage. This would help PMA handle their shortage of volunteers to correct lessons and also cut the high costs of postage for thousands of students.

The planting of house churches in prison is also appearing to be very timely as the prisons have stopped allowing volunteers and visitation due to the coronavirus situation right now: no outside prison ministries can come into the prisons. The PMA lessons can still come in through the mail and those who are called by God to do ministry in prisons, who have completed all PMA lessons, could continue to do ministry on the inside of prison.

Black & Gregersen (2008) point out the three barriers to change are: failure to see, failure

to move and failure to finish. Failure to see means they fail to see the need for change. People keep using the same maps since those have worked for them in the past, but the landscape changes and they need new maps or new ways of thinking and doing to be most effective. The second barrier is the failure to move. This means even though people realize things need to be changed, they continue to do what they did before because it is more comfortable than having to learn new ways of doing things. They would rather be competent in what they used to do than incompetent in doing the new things they have never done before.

The final barrier is the failure to finish. Black and Gregersen (2008), point out, "the key to overcoming the failure to finish – lies in changing a large number of individuals, not pulling organizational levers" (p. 88). What he states is very impactful, to bring the change you do not change the structure or system; you need to change the individuals. Many managers do not understand it starts with individuals. As the title of their book states, *Change starts with one*.

Of the three barriers, PMA has come through the first one. At this last board meeting, all the leadership was very supportive for changes to the PMA ministry and adopting this new vision of planting churches behind bars. PMA has changed the mental maps so they realize they should not keep doing it the way they have done it for over 60 years. They now have the new mental map of where PMA needs to be going. So, PMA is at the second barrier where they need to start to change the individuals, not just the system to bring the changes. Change starts with just one. The PMA director needs to work with each one and help them see clearly they have the required resources as God has called them to this new vision for His glory and not their own. There is a great diagram below which really lays out a great plan for overcoming each barrier in figure 7.1 (Black & Gregersen, 2008, p.83).

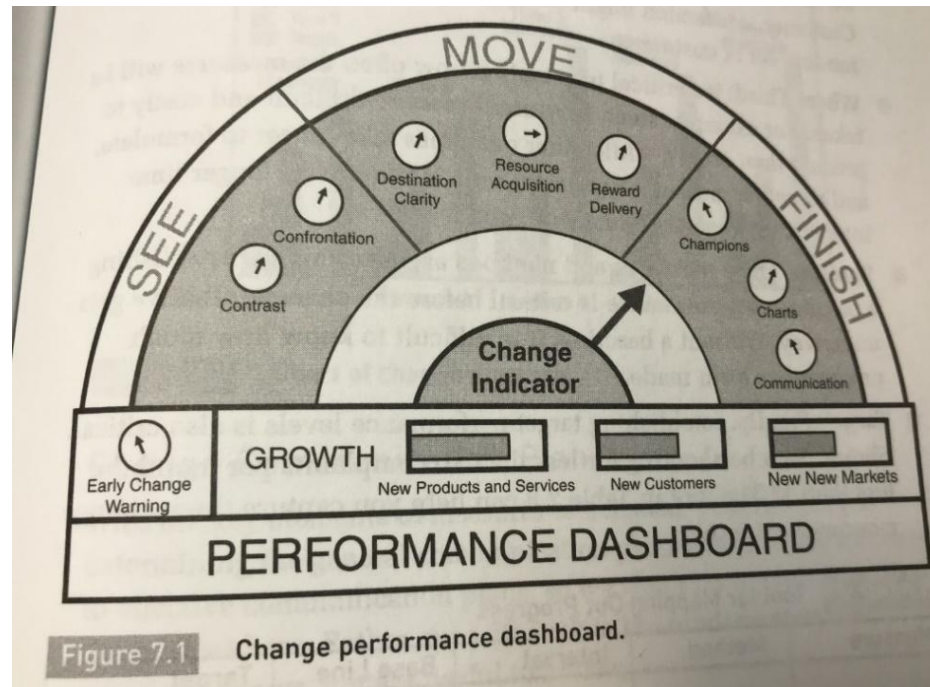


Figure 7.1 Change performance dashboard.

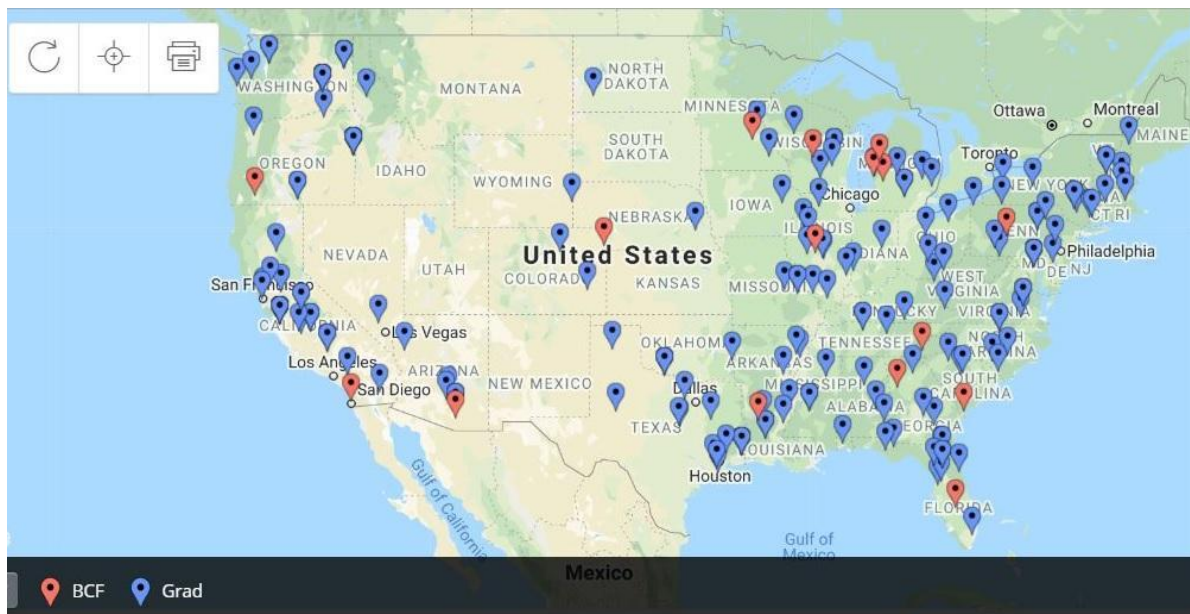
This performance dashboard illustration is very helpful and gives the areas to work on for each of the three key areas to: See, Move, and Finish. The second one is the one PMA needs to work on. For Move, the three components to overcoming the second barrier are: destination clarity, resource acquisition, and reward delivery. These are the areas PMA needs to work on for the project of planting churches behind bars. It is the individual's beliefs in each one of those three areas: clarity, resources, and rewards that really matter, not just what the director thinks. Once they get past this second barrier, PMA will need to navigate through the final barrier of overcoming the failure to finish.

PMA will need to develop these three areas for PMA: destination clarity, resource acquisition, and reward delivery as part of the plan to create a successful PCM strategy in implementing this new strategy of church planting for PMA.

For PMA the number one goal is to plant a church behind bars. They are working on the strategy to accomplish this. This will include adding more staff, increasing the budget to handle

this growth, growing more PMA hubs, and church partners around the country near prisons where these churches behind bars can be planted. This will also include recruiting more volunteers and inmates who feel called by God to be part of a church planting team. Much prayer is needed for God to raise up and call leaders to serve as lay pastors behind bars. “Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’” (Matt 9:37-38 English Standard Version).

PMA has mapped out recent graduates and the local BCFs and found there were only three that were close together. One near Anchor Point Bible Church, MI, one near the Evangelical Free Church, Green Valley, AZ, and one near Bethesda Church, MN. PMA is writing to each of these graduates and will speak to the BCFs if those graduates feel God’s calling to plant a prison church. Here is a map of the results. Blue markers are graduates, red markers are the BCFs.





## Chapter Five - Conclusion and Next Steps

It is the desire for PMA to follow God's will in developing leadership in the PMA organization, developing leadership behind bars, developing volunteers in local churches to help plant churches behind bars, and equipping God's people to work together to plant non-denominational Bible churches in prisons all across this country and eventually in prisons around the world! It is the goal of PMA to develop great leaders of leaders. Henry and Richard Blackaby in their book, *Spiritual Leadership*, say that "leaders lead followers and great leaders lead leaders" (Blackaby, 2001, p. 134). This is a vision far greater than one organization can do on its own. It will take a mighty movement of God, a collaboration of many prayer partners, supporters, churches, and prison ministries to work together for the Glory of God.

Today the world is shrinking like never before with improved communication software like skype, zoom, google hangout, etc. The concept and practice of virtual offices on a global level is a trend that creates a massive shift in the way workers and work is managed. Kohnen (2007) mentions highlights from Colleen Gaton's book, *Managing Without Walls*, "things a virtual manager must cope with to develop effective virtual teams such as time, language and cultural differences that must be considered to be effective" (p. 63). With these tools, there can be greater collaboration and cooperation in doing prison ministry and planting churches behind bars!

With companies and organizations working across many countries, it becomes essential to understand the culture and the way people think as things continue to change around the world. There are case studies and new research to help improve a person's Cultural Intelligence (CQ) which makes the leader more effective and brings greater harmony. "Ninety percent of leading executives from sixty-eight countries identified cross-cultural leadership as the top

management challenge for the next century” (Livermore, 2015, p.13).

PMA is developing global leaders as over 59% of inmates are minorities. Nationally, according to the U.S. Census, Blacks are incarcerated five times more than Whites are, and Hispanics are nearly twice as likely to be incarcerated as Whites (Initiative, 2014). So, this means it will be a multi-cultural ministry and PMA needs to equip these leaders in CQ. One example of applying CQ principles in ministry is in how PMA is planting churches. With the culture in prison, PMA is adapting what the churches look like behind bars.

Using these culturally intelligent principles will be essential for the global leaders of today. Prison Mission Association (PMA) has used culturally intelligent leadership principles to connect with prison inmates. Prison is a totally different culture and they use many books like *Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out* by Lenny Spitale and interview inmates to understand the best way to approach them. PMA has done many things differently in the last four years which contributed to the faster growth and better responses adding 14,000 new students in the last five years (See Appendix 1.).

Follow up with recent PMA graduates that are near BCFs to help foster those who feel called of God to help plant prison churches is one of the next steps. Building stronger support and connection of all the BCFs as part of a team of teams is also a vital next step. PMA also will map out their list of supporting and praying churches with recent PMA graduates to see any other potential opportunities for partnership in planting prison churches. This will be similar to the map on page 56 but will have many more churches so hopefully, many more graduates close by.

We are called by Jesus to be fishers of men and women (Mt. 4:19). The best place to fish is where the fish are biting. There is a honey hole near most churches - the local jail and prison! Churches need to be fishers of men and women in their local jails and prison. PMA wants to help

any interested and partner with them. This ministry outreach will make an eternal difference in the lives of many! It is time to rethink the opportunity in the local jails and prisons much like fishing in a stocked pond - a captive audience! People there are broken, humbled, and ready to turn to Christ when they hear the good news of the gospel.

PMA will need to continue to gather feedback from its partners in this collaboration, evaluate, improve, make necessary changes, and continue to develop as God leads. There is no limit to what can be done. The Washington Post pointed out “we have slightly more jails and prisons in the U.S. -- 5,000 plus -- than we do degree-granting colleges and universities” (Ingraham, 2015). PMA wants to turn each of those jails and prisons into greenhouses for God to work, educate, change lives by God’s power and grace, and develop transformational leadership that will plant churches in each one of those prisons! When those Christian leaders are released from prison, they will be equipped to serve the Lord and God will raise some up to become missionaries, pastors, youth pastors, chaplains, and church planters!! All for the Glory of God!!

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Figure 1. Prison Mission Association Student enrollment (2014-2019).

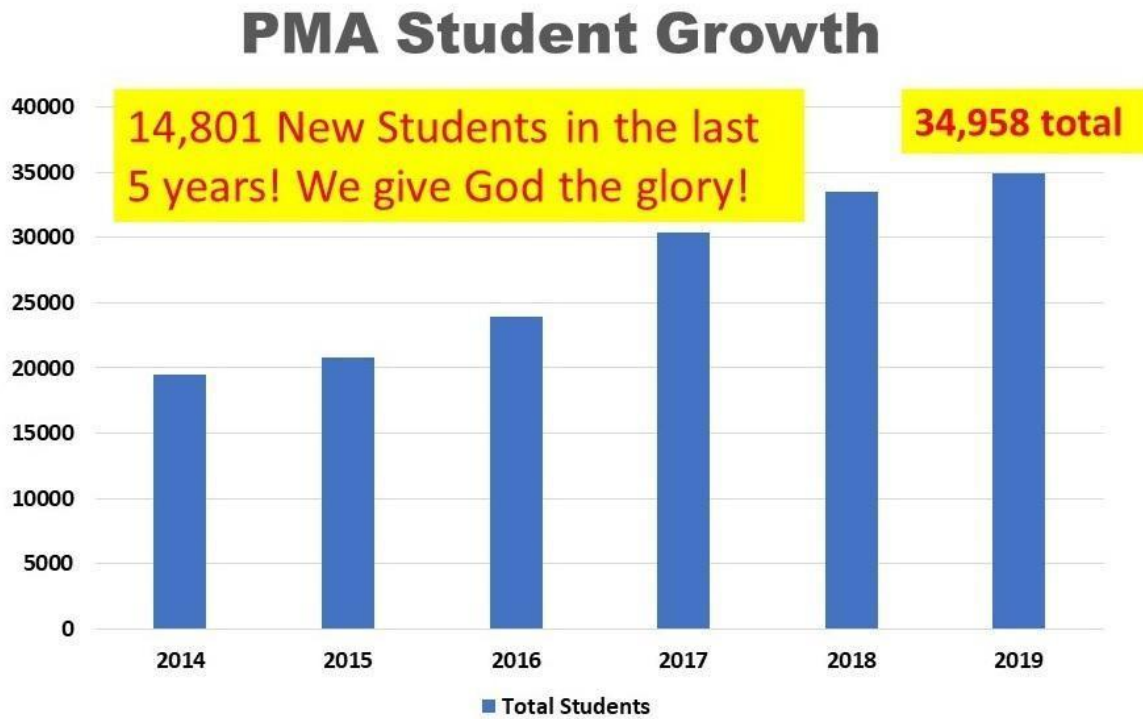


Figure 2. “How to start your own Bible Correspondence Fellowship”

Here is a letter from a retired couple, who are friends of Prison Mission Association, who want to share their story.

Since 2006 we have been sending PMA lessons to prisoners scattered all over the US. It all began when our friend Pastor who was serving as a chaplain in our local county jail, led a young lady to the Lord and suggested we print lessons from the PMA website to get her established in her spiritual life. In her fervor as a new believer, this person "advertised" the lessons in our local jail, and then to several more facilities in North Carolina, and into the federal system as well. This ultimately has led to perhaps a few thousand contacts.

Prior to this, we had never considered getting involved in prison ministry. One of our sons is a police officer in our little town, so we certainly were aware of the need, but our efforts, we feel, have been Holy Spirit inspired from the onset.

Currently, two friends, from our home Bible study group, are active in jail visitation, so we get new contacts from them, but most of our new folks are referred from current students. Occasionally we get lessons mailed to us from guys we've never heard of before explaining, "this appeared on my bunk" or "I found this in the trash."

At times we feel led to contact people, without their having asked, such as those in our area we've read about in our local newspapers. Some of our most faithful students and even graduates have resulted from what we can only acknowledge as the Holy Spirit's guidance.

For those wishing to initiate such a ministry as individuals, we would suggest a phone call or visit to your local sheriff's office to obtain a contact with their chaplain, perhaps offering a sample of the lessons and explaining how the process works. While we've tried various methods

to exchange completed and new lessons, we've found the most reliable to be our federal postal system. We advise using a post office box with the name of your ministry and when corresponding, use only your first names. It's difficult not to get personally involved with individuals, as on many occasions we are their only supportive contact "on the outside".

We have, however, been greatly blessed by men and women praying for us, especially when one of our sons was deployed to the Middle East on four different occasions. It's also advisable, as a leader, to do all of the lessons to familiarize yourself with the material and format. A cd of all the available lessons and answer keys can be obtained by contacting the PMA director. The director, Pastor Dwight Anderson, and Karen, operations manager, have always been helpful and quick to respond to our needs as a satellite of this great organization.

On a practical note, the expenses associated with this ministry are the post office box, paper for printing the lessons, envelopes, and postage. We use business size envelopes for the initial two page "An Introduction to New Life in Christ", or if they indicate they are already a believer we send the 11-page Introductory lesson. Then for returning a completed lesson and the next lesson, we use a 6 by 9 inch booklet envelope. Other expenses would include a rubber stamp with your address, and a digital postal scale. We add the advisory sheet of how best to utilize the lessons, a tract, calendar pages, and devotional pages up the next ounce of weight.

There are very specific restrictions from some facilities as to what may be sent to prisoners, such as no stapled material, no stickers on the outside envelope. These and other items will be brought to your attention by the mailroom supervisor if something you send is not allowed. We are constantly seeking God's wisdom as to how best to respond to folk's individual questions related to their studies or personal problems. He is faithful to provide in all facets of

this most amazingly rewarding ministry.

We would be happy to "coach" newcomers to this type of ministry.

To God be the glory,

Friends of PMA