FORMER MENTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FAITH-BASED APPROACH TO

REDUCING RECIDIVISM IMPLEMENTED BY THE MARINETTE-MENOMINEE JAIL

OUTREACH, INC.

by

James Drake Langteau

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the impact of a faith-based approach to reduce recidivism. The theoretical frameworks guiding this study included the belief system and self-efficacy theories. Participants consisted of a convenience sample of 21 former mentors of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. The setting was a Christian non-profit organization serving the Marinette and Menominee County Jails located in rural northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Semistructured interviews, surveys, and a focus group provided data to illuminate common themes. Data analysis included highlighting significant statements from volunteer mentors who engaged offenders to effect change. Through highlighting, general themes emerged to examine the research questions under evaluation, and to understand the construct of recidivism by using horizontalization clusters of meaning, and textual descriptions. They all had a story, the importance of family, and engagement or rejection by the church emerged as themes in this research. Comprehensive aftercare was crucial to reduce recidivism, but offenders return to prison because churches do not have the parishioner involvement required to effectively engage offenders. Many church members lack spiritual maturity, evidenced by apathy or fear. Simply incarcerating offenders does not address the causes of crime or diminish the likelihood of repeat criminal offenses. Intervention strategies employed after the offender's release from prison could reveal the experiences or situations viewed as effective or ineffective strategies, which promote change.

Keywords: recidivism, re-arrest, inmate, prisoner, faith-based, values-based, reentry program, aftercare, parole.

Dedication

To all those who engage and care for inmates and released offenders so that the cycle of recidivism may be broken and captives truly set free.

Acknowledgment

I am indebted to my professors at Liberty University, my committee chair Dr. Kenneth Gossett, committee members Dr. James Swezey and Dr. Esther Wakeman, and to the many mentors who helped equip and prepare me for servant-leadership in jails and in life.

Pastor Warren and Gail Worden, though retired years ago, never stopped engaging people and seeing lives change. Their close friendship and example not only inspired me but saw me through, for which I am grateful. I thank the two mentors who personally encouraged me to pursue this doctoral degree: Mary Engle, Regional Executive Director of Prison Fellowship, and Pastor Dave Ekstrom now of Skokie Valley Baptist Church in Wilmette, Illinois. Their frequent phone calls, emails and visits were instructive and also exemplified the relational and restorative nature of transformation. Sheriff Kenny Marks and his wife Kyna of Menominee County, Michigan became close personal friends as they encouraged me with shared goals of seeing lives changed. I thank the Evangelical Pastors Association of Marinette-Menominee Counties, whose fellow members were supportive and encouraging. In addition, I thank the more than 40 volunteers who served with me in caring for offenders since I founded the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach in 2004. Special thanks to Gary Page, Warren Waddell, John Kakuk, Tim Hawthorne, Paul Hueter, Randy Blankenship, Joni Scott, and Greg Williamson, who individually spent many hours advising and encouraging me.

No acknowledgment would be complete without thanking my wife, Sarah, who stood by me and encouraged me throughout. Without her, nothing would have been accomplished. Above all, I recognize with eternal gratitude the Lord, who set me free and gave us the mission of reconciliation, so that through Him others may also be set free.

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List of Abbreviations and Definitions

Aftercare – Services and support for offenders as they re-enter society after completing a prison or jail sentence. Effective and comprehensive aftercare is considered crucial for successful reentry to society which breaks the cycle of recidivism (Wheeler & Patterson, 2008, p. 146).

Cognitive dissonance - the excessive mental stress and discomfort experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values at the same time. (Craig, 2013, p. 91)

Cognitive rehearsal - The visualization of successfully completing a desired sequence of activities (Miller, 2011, p. 242).

Cognitive thinking and processes – The act or development of knowing and perceiving involving reasoning, discerning, and acquiring intelligence and advanced thought. It is associated with information processing, decision making, applying knowledge and changing preferences. The term varies across disciplines (Miller, 2011, pp. 240-243).

Ex-offender or former offender – An individual previously incarcerated in a correctional facility and released from incarceration (Winnick, 2008, p.296).

Mentoring - the discipleship/apprenticeship between two people which provides support, guidance and encouragement. It is a way of modeling good behavior and character that is relational and restorative in nature. Most basically, it is a committed friendship based on truth and compassion. More than any other form of relationship, ex-offenders need a friend who will provide support and encouragement yet will also hold them accountable and

correct them in love while helping them socially reintegrate into society (McClanahan, 2007, p. 8).

Neuroplasticity – A property of the brain that allows it to adjust to changes in environmental and physiological conditions and experiences (Jokić-Begić, 2010, p. 237).

Recidivism—denotes the rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration of offenders. Recidivism is usually measured within 3 years of the offender's release, as it is for the purpose of this study. It may or may not include a conviction for new offenses but could be the result of the violation of administrative conditions of parole (Langan & Levin, 2002, p. 58).

Reentry – The process of leaving prison or jail and returning to society. All inmates experience reentry regardless of their method of release or form of supervision. If the reentry process is successful, there are benefits in terms of improved public safety and the long-term reintegration of the former offender. Reintegration outcomes would include increased participation in social institutions such as the labor force, families, communities, schools, and religious organizations. Successful reentry produces benefits for the individual offender, their families, the communities to which they return, and society as a whole (US OJJDP, 2005, p. 24), (Travis, 2005, p. 14).

Self-efficacy - Refers not just to a person's capability to organize and execute courses of action, but also to a person's perception of being able and capable of successfully accomplishing the action. It is the competence in dealing with one's environment and exercising influence over events that affect one's lives. These courses of action may include behavior, thoughts, and emotions. The effectiveness of coping behavior is believed to be directly proportional to an individual's perception of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, p. 191).

Social learning theory - The guiding belief that personality is learned and social learning focuses on socialization. It often emphasizes the power of observation, imitation and vicarious reinforcement (Miller, 2011, pp. 232-233).

Surrogate family - Significant relationship which compensates for the weaknesses in an original family structure, and includes emotional support, parental resources, accountability, acceptance, and a setting for interaction (Nanlai, 2005, pp. 191-192).

Triadic reciprocal causation – Consists of three factors: biological and psychological characteristics of the person; a person's behavior; and the environment. Each factor is highly interdependent, and each factor influences and is influenced by each of the others (Miller, 2011, p. 239).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

An effective approach to reduce recidivism is necessary to both improve public safety and reduce the burgeoning cost of the criminal justice system. Recidivism negatively affects taxpayers and society through the high financial cost of incarcerating people and the high personal cost to residents who are the victims of crime. The United States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world, and inmates are being released from jails and prisons at unprecedented rates only to commit more crimes and be re-arrested. The U.S. prison population has increased by more than 460% while the numbers of offenders released on parole has increased by over 360% between 1980 and 2006 (Johnson, 2008, p. 2). The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reported that 2,266,800 incarcerated adults were in federal and state prisons and local county jails in 2010, and another 4,887,900 adults were on probation or parole in the U.S. at year-end 2010 (Glaze, 2011, p. 3). The situation is both ineffective and untenable, demonstrated by the fact that with only 5% of the world's population, the United States today has about 25% of the world's incarcerated people (Meiners, 2007, p. 23). Not only is this trend unsustainable, but the cycle of arresting and releasing offenders fails to address or correct the underlying causes of recidivism. Over 60% of released offenders are re-arrested within three years, increasing the burden on society and cost to the government (Hall, 2009, p. 66), (Langan & Levin, 2002, p. 58). So the cycle continues.

The problem addressed in this study is that offenders are arrested and incarcerated in increasing numbers only to be later released to recommit crimes and create new victims, and then be re-arrested to repeat the cycle (Le Blanc & Nolan, 2009, p. 59). Recidivism causes a burden on society in terms of the cost of incarcerating larger numbers of inmates, and the repeated

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victimization of society when the released offenders are unchanged men and women. With the high cost to society and with correction's budgets being cut, innovative and effective means to reduce recidivism must be achieved (Hall, 2009, p. 66). It is important for educators, chaplains and mentors to understand the strengths and weaknesses of faith-based approaches to reducing recidivism in an effort to improve effectiveness. No previous research was conducted on the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach.

Rokeach's belief system theory and Bandura's self-efficacy theory were the theoretical frameworks used in this research. The interpretive paradigm of post-positivism framework used in this phenomenological design showed why recidivism occurs.

This study showed that anti-recidivism approaches that involve both working with inmates while incarcerated and intense follow-up with released offenders in aftercare programs increases the success of reentry to society and decreases the likelihood of recidivism. A faith-based approach to reducing recidivism also improved the inmate's accountability and sense of belonging that helped former offenders readjust to communities as productive members of society (James, Stams, Asscher, De Roo, & Van Der Laan, 2013, p. 264).

This study illustrated the perceptions of volunteer mentors who worked with offenders participating in a faith-based approach to reduce recidivism implemented in the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. The goal was to help those working with inmates and released offenders in anti-recidivism programs to better understand what aspects are most effective and what aspects are ineffective, which could assist others in understanding what factors combat the problem of recidivism.

Situation to Self

I am an evangelical Christian. In 2004, I founded and became the first executive director of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping offenders address the underlying causes of their arrests and break the cycle of recidivism. I completed two elected and successive terms on the board of directors on April 1, 2012, and did not seek reelection, in compliance with a constitutional provision requiring 1year interims between all successive terms after the founder's second term. I hold to an ontological presupposition that reality derives from the existence of God. I hold to an epistemological presupposition that truth exists, is knowable, is ultimately found in Scripture and is consistent with the broader context of knowledge. I hold to an axiological presupposition that values derive from beliefs, which are formed in thoughts and exhibited in behavior (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). Consequently, I believe that for genuine transformation to occur rather than merely short-term behavior modification, people need new perspectives that alter their values to the point that it changes their motivations and goals. While I believe this, I also seek to determine objectively what has worked, what has not worked, and how to improve the methods of addressing and reducing recidivism. In the process, I am determined to go where the evidence leads.

Problem Statement

The problem is the prison population in the United States has increased over 460% between 1980 and 2006 (Johnson, 2008, p. 2). Without an inmate's change of values, there is little likelihood of a change in behavior (Markway & Worsham, 2009, p. 99). Correctional officers release offenders from prison unchanged and without support structures, only to recommit crimes, create new victims, and then be re-arrested as the cycle continues (Le Blanc & Nolan, 2009, p. 59). Over 60% of released offenders are rearrested within three years, creating a

high cost to society in terms of new victims and a financial burden on cash-strapped government with limited corrections budgets (Hall, 2009, p. 66; Langan & Levin, 2002, p. 58).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the impact of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism for offenders involved in the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, and to do so by examining the shared experiences of the volunteer mentors who worked with offenders in the context of a surrogate family. Recidivism is the re-arrest within three years of release from incarceration, which was the definition accepted for this study. The participants were asked interview questions to focus on the perceptions of volunteer mentors who engaged offenders through participation in the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach organization. The purpose of the questions was to determine the impressions of what aspects of the approach were effective and what aspects were not effective in reducing recidivism.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because the inmate population in the United States increased at over 460% between 1980 and 2006, and no other nation incarcerates a larger percentage of their population than the United States (Johnson, 2008, p. 3). The majority of inmates are repeat offenders (Jung, Spjeldnes & Yamatani, 2010, p.181) and they are being released back into society after completing their sentences, whether they are prepared or not. With over 60% of the released offenders being re-arrested for new crimes within 3 years (Langan & Levin, 2002, p. 58), society must find effective means to address and correct the problem. The corrections process can instead make a positive difference resulting in the lives of offenders genuinely transformed, and that would prove noteworthy both in terms of social and economic costs to

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individuals and society. "The research on faith-based initiatives shows potential. Both meta-analysis (studies that combine other studies) and individual case studies indicate favorable outcomes concerning avoidance of future criminal behavior" (Cei, 2010, p. 48). Male and female inmates are sons, daughters and parents. Their transformation or lack thereof, will have a significant impact on their families and society. Breaking the cycle of recidivism has far-reaching implications and is a win-win situation for the offender, their families, and society. The mentors who worked with offenders are an excellent source to determine what are effective or ineffective strategies aimed to reduce recidivism. Examining the perceptions of the volunteer mentors who regularly worked with offenders and were able to understand the inmates' lived experiences was valuable to understand what effectively reduced recidivism in communities nationwide.

Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated:

1. What do mentors perceive as the factors or beliefs that contribute to offenders re-arrests? Recidivism is a serious problem with negative social and economic impacts on communities, and the majority of incarcerated people are repeat offenders. To know what mentors attribute to offenders repeat arrest patterns would be valuable in determining the most useful approach to reduce it, and would be useful for future research.

2. How have offenders gained mastery over their thoughts, emotions, beliefs and actions? It is important to determine what if anything has changed, and how it contributed to breaking the cycle of recidivism

3. How has the greater faith community worked together or failed to work together to support offenders? If a comprehensive approach is necessary, it is useful to know what aspects of broader

faith organizations cooperating together have worked, and what aspects may not work in relations to impacting offenders.

4. How have learning from and interacting with members of the Jail Outreach, in the context of surrogate families, impacted offenders' beliefs, thinking and behavior? It is useful to determine how offenders' understanding of themselves and their environment may be impacted by association.

Research Plan

This qualitative study used a hermeneutic phenomenological design to obtain the perceptions and lived experiences of mentors who engaged with jail and prison offenders who participated in some aspect of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. I chose the phenomenological approach because the goal was to determine the essence of the lived experience of mentors who related to offenders struggling with a history of repeat arrests. Determining shared patterns would be useful in improving anti-recidivism programs and becoming more active in working with offenders. The process included semistructured interview questions, surveys, and focus group discussions to understand the phenomenon under examination and shared themes.

Limitations

This study was conducted at the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, a small Christian non-profit organization that serves communities located near two rural county jails. The demographics consisted of predominantly White/Caucasian men and women of European lineage. The Marinette County Jail had an average inmate population of about 110 prisoners, and the Menominee County Jail had an average inmate population of about 50 prisoners.

Limitations

Limitations are the shortcomings, influences or conditions that cannot be controlled by the researcher and place restrictions on methodology and conclusions. The Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach is a small non-profit organization with approximately 45 volunteer mentors located in a rural setting in northeast Wisconsin and the western upper peninsula of Michigan. The non-profit organization worked with offenders from two small to medium sized county jails and with offenders released from prison and returning to this rural setting. The Marinette County (Wisconsin) Jail has an average inmate population of 110 and the Menominee County (Michigan) Jail has an average population of 50 inmates. Consequently, it is difficult to generalize the results of this study to a more diverse or metropolitan area.

The degree of participation by both mentors and individual offenders is also a limitation taken into consideration. Some offenders participated in multiple components and programs offered while others only participated in one. Some offenders worked daily with mentors while some were less frequent.

In addition, the nature, severity and number of repeat crimes the offenders have committed needed to be taken into consideration. As noted, it is difficult to generalize the results to metropolitan areas and more diverse social constructs.

Another limitation of this study is that many, but not all, offenders self-select for participation, which may reflect that they are more motivated than their peers who choose not to participate in the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach.

Delimitations

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher that describe the parameters set for the study, including what literature is not reviewed, what populations are not studied, what methodological procedures are not used, and why. For the purpose of this study, neither mentors nor offenders were juveniles. This study did not speak to the issue of juvenile offenders. Only adult jail and prison offenders age 18 or older were included in reference to mentor's interaction, and all juveniles were eliminated from inclusion.

This study included mentors who engaged offenders through participation in some form of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc. This included one or more of the following components of the non-profit's methods of engaging offenders: individual weekly mentoring meetings in jail, the six-week *Stinking Thinking* course taught to small classrooms of inmates in jail, support group meetings for released offenders, and/or individual aftercare mentoring of released offenders.

The non-randomized selection of participants allowed for the analysis of the perception of mentors who actually experienced the dynamics of this faith-based approach to reducing recidivism. Only former members and those on sabbatical were included as participants, to avoid interrupting on-going operations within the Jail Outreach organization. This participant group on average had greater experience in terms of both time and education/leadership roles within the Jail Outreach than the current membership.

The focus and scope of the study was limited to determine what worked and what did not work from the mentor's perspective of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism used by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach for offenders in this geographic area. The sole interest

was the perceptions of mentors regarding the impact of the faith-based approach to reducing

recidivism.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The conceptual framework of this study was based on an axiological presupposition that values derive from beliefs which are formed in thoughts and then exhibited in behavior. The conceptual framework was also based on an ontological assumption that led to my decision to examine the perceptions of volunteers who mentor inmates and released offenders to determine the effectiveness of a faith and values-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. The former mentors involved in the research had experienced similar phenomenon yet each participant contributed their own personal perspectives and perceptions. The goal of this study was to discover common themes in their voices and thereby better understand the nature of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 20).

Theories that were significant to this research study were identified and synthesized within this chapter. As a researcher, the gap in the literature was addressed regarding mentor perceptions of the impact that participation in the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the non-profit Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach had on offenders.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was grounded in the research of theorists who have studied human development and change, and had researched social learning. Rokeach's belief system theory (Rokeach, 1960) and Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) provided a broad conceptual foundation for this study. In addition, the Bible was a catalyst from which many of the principles incorporated in this theoretical framework have been instructive and applied. Other theories, including Piaget's cognitive development theory (Piaget, 1936) were mentioned even though this study was not specifically grounded in them.

Belief System Theory

The belief system theory, with Rokeach as a primary theorist, postulated that belief systems are the framework that stimulates cognitive and motivational processes. Rokeach viewed the relationship between beliefs and behavior as interrelated and predictive, and suggested that the changing of central beliefs had great impact on behavior (Grube, Mayton, II & Ball-Rokeach, 1994, p. 154). Values transcend situations and are viewed as single beliefs. As such, values are significant because they are cognitive representations of personal desires (Grube et al. 1994, p. 155).

Self-conception is the most central belief affecting the belief system theory and includes "all of an individual's cognitions about those qualities that define the self." As a result, "All other beliefs and all behaviors are organized around self-conceptions and are in the service of maintaining and enhancing positive self-conceptions" (Grube et al. 1994, p. 156). Belief system theory recognizes that changing an individual's self-conception belief is a catalyst for life transformation.

Rokeach believed that there are three levels in any belief or disbelief system. The first level involves a basic outlook on the world, and the individual either sees it as threatening and dangerous or as safe and accepting. The second level of any belief system addresses an individual's perspective on authority, and specifically who has legitimate authority, what it is based upon, and whether it will be respected. The third level of any belief system details the structure of living and how this varies based on what authority is accepted at any given time. Rokeach demonstrated the connection between people's patterns of belief and their underlying personality structure and their conduct (Rokeach, 1960, p. 12).

When an individual maintains two or more contradictory beliefs or values at the same time, however, cognitive dissonance creates excessive stress. Yet the process of change is incorporated in specifically held values which, when confronted with altered perceptions, is a psychological mechanism for transformation. A significant relationship was found to exist between self-dissatisfaction and change in target values (Grube et al. 1994, p. 165-166).

Self-efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy theory relates to an individual's ability to organize and execute various courses of action. Self-efficacy is a person's effective interaction with the environment. Self-efficacy is demonstrated through exercising influence competently over events that impact one's life. Self-efficacy may be exemplified in mastery over thoughts, emotions, and behavior (Bandura, 1977, p. 191).

Bandura, who developed the self-efficacy theory, said, "It is hypothesized that expectations of personal efficacy determine whether coping behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences" (Bandura, 1977, p. 191). Self-efficacy theory is insightful in developing the concepts behind mentoring offenders, and the role played in developing the self-efficacy of individual inmates.

Bandura defined self-efficacy as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of actions required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1997, p. 192). Individuals do not live their lives in independent autonomy, and self-efficacy is developed in relationships. Self-efficacy is critical to an individual's ability to effectively learn and successfully complete tasks, and is often acquired by modeling the behavior of those one identifies with and with whom frequent contact is sustained (Bandura, 1994, p. 125). Self-

efficacy has relevance outside the classroom because it "is a socially created propensity to view oneself as capable of responding to a range of life contingencies" (Allred, 2013, p. 211). To hold the necessary skills and possess the ability to master a certain task is not enough unless individuals also perceive themselves able and capable of actually using their skills to accomplish the task (Miller, 2011, p. 244). Christian mentors who are willing to invest time with offenders both while incarcerated and upon their release are ideally situated to help offenders develop realistic self-efficacy because of their commitment and because of the shared values they possess and model.

Bandura's self-efficacy theory relates to the current research regarding volunteer mentors working with offenders in a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism. Former offenders face a great degree of rejection, and "high self-efficacy is essential for persisting in the face of rejection" (Miller, 2011, p. 244). Also, Bandura postulated that people learned from the behavior of those they associated with, and endeavored to emulate the lifestyle of those who model behavior with which they can identify. By placing a highly functioning and morally committed Christian mentor with an offender or group of offenders, a relationship develops in which the individual offender may learn both from what the mentor teaches and from what the mentor models. Offenders who are open to this relationship but lack in motivation or self-efficacy will be exposed to a mentor with whom they can identify. By beginning while still incarcerated this relationship can grow and continue after, the offender is released, and it can expand and strengthen with a group of mentors who reinforce transformational behavior.

When embarked upon in the spirit of acceptance in a surrogate family with the offender that maintains boundaries and accountability, these mentors will increase the offenders' perception of their own genuine needs while demonstrating where their needs can legitimately be

met. According to Bandura's theory, this exposure to positive mentors will enhance the offenders' recognition of their own abilities and motivate them to imitate the mentors around them (Bandura, 1994, p. 125). The offenders' perceptions of their own abilities may be altered at a critical stage in their mentoring relationship due to the environment and dynamics created. The new relationships and dynamics can positively transform their thoughts, emotions, behavior and self-efficacy, and thus break the cycle of recidivism. If genuine change does occur within an offender, the reason for the change will transcend the former, baser desires that previously motivated the offender to commit a crime. Consequently, even when no longer in direct association with mentors, the former offender will recognize the short-sightedness and emptiness of the former lifestyle and refrain from returning to it.

While not a specific theory that this study is grounded in, it is worth noting the cognitive development theory, with Jean Piaget as the primary theorist. "One of the important things that can be learned from Piaget is that children learn as they interact with forces and things in their environment. Learning cannot be imposed from the outside. The children must interact with their world" (Hearron & Hildebrand, 2010, p. 2). Vicarious reinforcement is the process by which new behaviors are acquired through watching a mentor or model practicing and reinforcing the new behavior. "A new cognitive structure generates new possibilities, which cause the child to try out new procedures on objects" (Miller, 2011, p. 87). Patricia Miller cited Piaget, who developed the cognitive stage theory. Cognitive development is a progressive reorganization of mental processes that are the result of biological maturation and environmental experience. People construct an understanding of the world, then experience discrepancies between what they already know and what they discover in their environment. Equilibrium, assimilation, and accommodation progress through stages. Ultimately, beliefs influence thinking, and thinking

results in behavior; consequently, if one wants to alter the behavior, one must first alter the beliefs and thinking that inevitably drive the behavior. "Piaget's theory of cognitive development retains its importance through showing us how the exercise of agency is necessary to the development of self-world dualism and to the developing ability to frame explicit judgments about the physical and mental world" (Russell, 1999, p. 248).

"Offenders' readiness to engage in changes that will reduce their risk of reoffending is now recognized to be as important as the design and delivery of programs that support such change" (Anstiss, Polaschek, & Wilson, 2011, p. 690). That readiness is usually achieved only through intensive mentoring and needs to directly address change in dynamic risk factors to successfully reduce recidivism.

The Bible

These aforementioned theories are consistent with biblical teaching. They affirm an individual's self-conception and positional perspective have far-reaching implications. The implication of the concept of cognitive thinking affirms that one's beliefs influence one's thinking, and one's thinking in turn influences or dictates one's actions and behavior. Likewise in Christian faith, one is transformed by faith in Christ into a new creation through an internal awakening. Genuine faith in Christ positively impacts and transforms an individual's thinking and in turn the behavior of new believer, thus radically changing the person. Instead of behavior modification there is a total transformation. This could have a significant impact in working with inmates and released offenders to reduce recidivism. The Bible teaches that, in contrast to the rest of creation, only human beings are created in God's image. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'" (Genesis 1:26, New King James Version). This

establishes that humans were created with unique value and dignity and motivates the restoration process.

Even after sin entered the human race, God made provisions for redemption through Christ. Redemption both demonstrated the value of humans and also provided the means by which transformation could occur. People are eternal, valuable, and redeemable (Erickson, 1998, p. 480, 493-494). Through a Christian perspective, the problem of sin is addressed and corrected, and people are able to be not only forgiven but also reconciled and transformed. "The aim of forgiveness is reconciliation, but reconciliation without justice is an oxymoron, and justice without penalty is meaningless. For all of its difficulties, only the biblical theology of substitutionary atonement covers all the bases. Evangelical Christians have always found it difficult to defend, but defend it they must. The alternatives are wishy-washy forgiveness that produces no true reconciliation, ineffectual justice that trivializes sin, or blunt-instrument justice that perpetuates the conflict. Society and Christianity can afford none of these" (McLellan 2005, p. 15). The implications on the individual and on society are significant.

Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship, founder of the world's largest prison ministry, told the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons that his prisons weren't working and failed to rehabilitate offenders. Colson stated that the only person in the world that could remake lives and transform people so they would not reoffend was Jesus Christ (Oliver, 2013, p. 740). While the secular world tries often unsuccessfully to modify behavior, genuine faith transforms it.

Individuals, however, ultimately behave based upon how they see themselves, whether or not that perspective is based upon reality or a deception. "For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he (Proverbs 23:7, New King James Version). This is why followers of Christ are reminded to only listen to the voice of truth. Worldview impacts the behavior of people because beliefs influence

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thinking and thinking influences actions. Some may say they believe, but their actions will confirm their real belief, which by necessity compels it. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34, New King James Version). Ultimately, individuals are radically changed when they genuinely meet Christ in redemptive conversion, a core belief in Christianity. "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17, New King James Version). What one believes, - really believes, always informs one's thinking and that, in turn, influences one's actions.

Related Literature

Untenable Methods and the Need for New Approaches

Recidivism causes a burden on society in terms of the cost of incarcerating larger numbers of inmates, and the repeated victimization of society when these offenders are eventually released as unchanged men and women. The inmate population in the United States increased at over 460% between 1980 and 2006. During this same time frame, the number of offenders released to parole increased over 360% (Johnson, 2008, p. 3). Approximately two-thirds of all offenders are rearrested within three years of their release from incarceration (Langan & Levin 2002, p. 58).

Corrections budgets grew to meet this increased number of inmates, but can no longer grow at that rate and in fact are being reduced. As a result, recidivism must be reduced using creative and transformative means (Hall, 2009, p.66). The status quo, in which offenders are arrested and incarcerated multiple times, is not effective in addressing the causes of recidivism or correcting the problem. Instead, it led to an ever larger number of offenders and repeat arrests. In the past, the criminal justice system merely increased the number of prisons and parole staff to

meet this growing population of inmates and released offenders, the majority of which would eventually be rearrested.

The result is dismal. The United States has 5% of the world's population yet now has 25% of the world's incarcerated people (Meiners, 2007, p. 23). Crime, however, is not reduced and released offenders continue to repeat the cycle. For the past 30 years, rather than correcting the problem of crime, the United States just increased the number of those who are classified as criminal offenders and repeat offenders.

The criminal justice system in America is a failure. With the highest per capita incarceration rate in the world, violent criminals still nonetheless serve an average of only 49 months (Earley, 2005, p. 58). Tragically, violent and recalcitrant criminals who should not be released are being released, while less serious offenders who are less likely to benefit from incarceration are being processed together in the penal system with little concern for long-term welfare. The Honorable Mark Early, the former attorney general of Virginia and subsequent president of Prison Fellowship, stated, "We have failed to balance justice with mercy by all but ignoring rehabilitation" (Earley, 2005, p. 58).

Recently several states have created initiatives designed to address and correct the causes of incarceration rather than just cycle offenders through the criminal justice system. For example, in 2002 the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) completed a study and recognized the need to reduce recidivism by coordinating various reentry programs in an effort to improve assistance and to help released offenders transition back into society. A change in goals took place that focused more on helping offenders avoid the behavior that contributed to rearrests rather than merely incarcerating them. In the process the Ohio DRC actually redefined its mission to emphasize coordinating sustained continuity between various

reentry programs for a seamless transition of offenders back into society with community

services (Wilkinson, Rhine, & Henderson-Hurley, 2005, p. 158). Earley, known for his strong

position on law and order as a former attorney general, admits he came to realize that

incarcerating criminals were only half of the equation for public safety. Earley states that he

learned it is equally necessary to provide the opportunities for personal transformation of

offenders so that when they return home they no longer pose a threat to public safety. Earley no

longer believes that the key to reducing crime is found in simply financing programs. Instead he

now believes the key is in improving cooperation between volunteers, community-based

organizations and the criminal justice system to facilitate life-changing relationships that

transform and sustain offenders (Earley, & Wiley, 2011, p. 343.)

Community and Para-professional Involvement

The history of paraprofessional and community involvement in social problems is

interesting and varied. One significant event that solidified the involvement of paraprofessionals

in crisis counseling occurred as a result of the Coconut Grove fire in Boston in 1942, which

resulted in the death of over 400 people and overloaded the professional counselors in the region.

Two years later, in 1944, Eric Lindemann studied the grief reactions associated with the Coconut

Grove fire and introduced the first major community mental health program that focused on

crisis intervention (Kanel, 2007, p. 14). Crisis intervention was established on the historical

foundation of paraprofessional services through the work of volunteers (Kanel, 2007, p. 17).

Thus, paraprofessional services in the fields of mentoring and crisis counseling were established

to effectively meet genuine needs that could not be otherwise achieved.

There are two general types of crisis: developmental and situational crisis (Kanel, 2007,

p. 8). Developmental crisis is the normal phases expected as people transition from one stage of

life to another. Situational crisis is uncommon and extraordinary events that a person cannot predict or control. These include rape, crime, death, divorce, illness and community disasters. Typically, situational crisis results in an increase in anxiety that ultimately leads to a dangerous level when the individual experiences the inability to function using normal coping skills. The discomfort associated with a crisis can be useful, for without discomfort people are not generally motivated to change. Mentors can help the individual through cognitive restructuring development, which involves understanding an alternative and more realistic perception of the precipitating event. Changing perceptions will diminish the individual's stress level and increase functioning levels. That in turn opens the possibility of offering and developing with the individual some alternative coping mechanisms (Kanel, 2007, p. 11). Cognitive-behavioral theories are important because every crisis model is based on the behavior problem-solving model. This model is concerned with understanding the person's cognitive views of the problem, and then restructuring any maladaptive cognition (Kanel, 2007).

Merely incarcerating troubled people does not solve the problem. A report by Ohio corrections officials in 2006 documented that the state's prison population was at a record high and appealed for faith-based approaches to reduce recidivism (Persky, 2011, p. 21). Officials recognized that without a comprehensive and integrated anti-recidivism approach, the system merely locks up offenders and then returns them to society unchanged, to repeat criminal offenses. As the number of inmates increases along with the number of repeat offenders, and as the corrections budgets level off and decline, more state and federal corrections officials acknowledge that it makes sense to include cost-effective faith-based rehabilitation programs that demonstrate results (Persky, 2011, p. 21). Increasingly, para-professional community

volunteers are necessary for a comprehensive and effective anti-recidivism approach with offenders.

Due to budgetary constraints and limited human resources, civil authority cannot afford to field the number of mentors needed and must rely on volunteers. Volunteers can be part of the solution because inmates must volunteer for faith-based reentry programs without receiving any special consideration from the state over inmates who opt not to participate. The use of volunteers not only provides fairness, but also ensures that those participating in the faith-based approach are motivated to succeed and not just trying to impress those in civil authority (Cei, 2010, p. 4).

Values that Transform

People tend to act on what they perceive are their needs, whether real or misplaced (Grube et al. 1994, p. 154). Beliefs and goals influence how people perceive their needs and often individuals possess distorted views of what their needs are (Greystone Educational, 2008, p. 1). Jails are filled with people who believed a lie, misperceived their needs, and had distorted views of what their goals should be. Often people in general need help to recognize their true and greatest need, and in the process address and overcome the cognitive dissonance exposed as the disparity between what they say they believe and what their actions actually reveal.

John Stewart Mill in his address delivered to the University of St. Andrews in 1867 emphasized the education for a career alone doesn't change a person's values or behavior. That is evident today because educated people are also involved in inappropriate behavior and crime. Mill stated, "Men are men before they are lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or manufacturers; and if you make them capable and sensible men, they will make themselves capable and sensible lawyers or physicians. What professional men should carry away with them

from a University, is not professional knowledge, but that which should direct the use of their professional knowledge, and bring the light of general culture to illuminate the technicalities of a special pursuit. Education makes a man a more intelligent shoemaker, if that be his occupation, but not by teaching him how to make shoes; it does so by the mental exercise it gives, and the habits it impresses" (Mill & Taylor, n.d.). Mill promoted a deeper, values-laden education that went beyond merely learning skills and knowledge to obtain and hold a career. Mill recognized that to be responsible a person needed to learn values that would be foundational for life.

Changed thinking results from changed beliefs, and changed thinking transforms behavior. Behavior modification alone does not change the desires of a person but only inhibits the fulfillment of the old desires. Remove the likelihood of being caught or punished, and the person often reverts to the adverse behavior. "Values must change before behavior can change and stay changed. Motivations driven by a personal connection to faith principles that themselves are anchored in time-tested, even divine principles can serve as the ultimate underpinnings for a more noble and enduring successful reentry – and successful life" (Markway & Worsham, 2009, p. 99).

Three areas in which values can be important in addressing crime and punishment are organizational values, professional values, and personal values (Day, 2010, p. 290). Each is relevant for rehabilitation, and each is addressed in a faith and values-based approach to reducing recidivism. A collection of values and beliefs is foundational in every individual and is embedded in every group. "The process of revealing the beliefs undergirding a proposed course of action helps participants build a high level of commitment to the new program or effort, even though this process may be personally painful" (Short & Greer, 2002, p. 48). This applies to both the organization of volunteers and to the offenders they serve.

Faith and Values-Based Approaches

Faith and values-based approaches are established on the theory that for behavior to change and remain changed, the values that dictate behavior must first change (Markway, 2009, p. 99). This theory is related to the concept of cognitive thinking and cognitive change, which acknowledges that beliefs lead to thinking, and thinking leads to behavior. To effect a transformative change in behavior there must first be a corresponding change in the beliefs and thinking that would impact behavior. That may require a new approach to the decision-making process and how factors within the process are weighed and viewed. People need to "process information in an adaptive way to survive. If we did not utilize a functional apparatus for taking in relevant data, synthesizing it, and formulating a plan of action on the basis of that synthesis, we soon would be killed or starve to death" (Beck & Weishaar,1989, p. 22). The question is whether the apparatus in an individual is accurate and effective. In the case of high recidivism rates, the answer for recidivists is that their apparatus is neither accurate nor effective. "While there is no commonly accepted definition of faith-based programs, the consensus is that they operate mainly on the theory that by conforming to such religious principles as honesty, truthfulness, nonviolence and service to community, offenders will not commit further crimes" (Cei, 2010, p. 1). These principles when displayed through Christian faith are representative of a way of thinking that is rooted in the belief that truth exists, that all people are created in God's image and are valuable and redeemable, and that there is purpose to life in renewed relationships (Erickson, 1998, p. 480, 493-494), (Thompson, 1999, p. 21-23). As values change, so does behavior. Beliefs do influence thinking which in turn influences and indeed drives behavior.

Ted Harms of Greystone Educational developed a six-week program for offenders in 2008 entitled, *Stinking Thinking: Ex-Offenders Talk about Cognitive Change*. The program

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consists of DVDs and handouts for classroom discussion (Greystone Educational, 2008). The DVDs include a cast of former offenders who identify various examples of stinking thinking, demonstrate how it was destructive, and explain why cognitive change is necessary. The course promotes positive cognitive change among offenders by addressing the stinking thinking that defined their thoughts and attitudes and kept them stuck in destructive patterns of behavior that contributed to repeat incarceration. Offenders are reminded that they can change, that they need to change, that they must be honest and have a sincere desire to change, to set goals and have a plan to reach the goals. Offenders are also reminded that to unlearn stinking thinking takes time, requires an 180-degree change and that a support group increases their success (Greystone Educational, 2008, p. 1).

Inmates live in bondage far greater than the prison bars that physically hold them. Offenders' criminal behavior is merely the result of beliefs and thinking that led to their actions for which they were arrested. If, upon their release, the offenders' only goal is to simply not return to jail, they will often be re-arrested because the beliefs and thinking that lead to the criminal behavior have not changed (Greystone Educational, 2008, p. 2). Inmates have had their negative beliefs and thinking solidified over years, sometimes decades, of reinforcement. This mind-set is manifested in blaming others, feeling entitled, playing the victim card to excuse their inappropriate actions and self-centeredness. Mistrust yet outward compliance were helpful skills for inmates while they were incarcerated, but negatively impact their ability to remain outside the prison after their release (Montoya, 2009, p. 154). Since it took years to establish negative behavior it often takes time to change, but through observational learning and the implementation of cognitive thinking as it is applies to their lives, there is hope (Miller, 2011, p. 234-239), (Greystone Educational, 2008, p. 1). Inmates must finally realize and accept that

they need to change, that change is possible and then commit to the steps necessary to see a change. This may be the greatest hurdle to overcome, and why committed mentors are so important. Rehabilitation and change occur when people realize that human life has value and there is a purpose that transcends the immediate challenges (Greystone Educational, 2008, p. 2). Then and only then will there be a change of heart and a change of mind, and a consequential reduction in recidivism.

The catalyst for a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism is the development of individuals and groups who are empowered to communicate and cooperate together based on trust. The lives of offenders can be changed by incorporating dozens of empowered volunteers of like mind in an organization, and then working together with other organizations toward a shared goal (Short & Greer, 2002, p. 140). The following five leadership techniques foster and support self-management: establishment of clear directions that identify the goals; defined meaningful tasks which enable volunteers to take personal responsibility; organizational context which provides a non-divisive reward structure, an educational training system and an informational system; expert coaching and consultation available both formally and informally and individually and in groups; and adequate material resources (Short & Greer, 2002, p. 148). Communication, cooperation and coordination within the group - performed in a transparent manner based upon servant-leadership - ultimately empowers the mentors and provide an example to the offenders. Offenders need positive role models and they need to see the actual implementation of functional relationships. Mere academic discussions or theoretical concepts alone are not sufficient to help offenders successfully transition to society.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

A central value of Christianity is forgiveness and redemption, and that is particularly salient in relationships where offenders are reaching out and seeking counsel over past offenses (Wade, 2008, p. 358). Unless those who mentor offenders have a strong sense of forgiveness and of redemption for themselves and their own need for reconciliation, it will be difficult to extend it to others. Unless those Christians who mentor offenders believe what they claim to believe – that all people are created in God's image and are eternal, valuable and potentially redeemable – it is unlikely that they will commit themselves fully to the mentoring process. It can be painful for both the offender and the mentor to participate in the process. Coping strategies include acknowledging the biblical premise of a loving relationship with God, a sense of belonging within the church family, and the acceptance that difficulties are necessary aspects of a transformative process (Willis, 2006, p. 211).

The New Testament admonishes Christians to remember prisoners (Hebrews 13:3), and the Old Testament reveals God's concern with seeing prisoners liberated: "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house (Isaiah 42:6-7, New King James Version).

Both forgiveness and reconciliation are ultimately necessary for healing. Forgiveness and reconciliation are not synonymous. Forgiveness has been defined as choosing "to give up resentment and retaliation and, instead, offer the undeserved gift of mercy to the wrongdoer." Reconciliation is the coming together of the injured party and the offender in the spirit of friendship, but in cases where the two parties never come together it can be accomplished when

the injured party simply comes to accept something undesirable from the offender (Coyle, 2002, p. 96-97). If the injured is willing to forgive and the offender is willing and able to receive the gift of forgiveness offered then he/she also may experience healing. In the process, reconciliation may then become a realistic goal (Coyle, 2002, p. 96, 104). When it is not possible to facilitate forgiveness and reconciliation between the injured and the offender, there is still an opportunity to address the possibility of forgiveness from God and reconciliation to God through Christ. That in turn can be a catalyst for offenders seeing transformation and beginning a new life. Ultimately, forgiveness and reconciliation with God have been made possible through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross (McLellan, 2005, p. 4). It may be foolish to some and repugnant to others, but it satisfies the need for justice, provides forgiveness, and facilitates reconciliation while healing and transforming the offender. "Justice without forgiveness cannot produce reconciliation. Forgiveness without reconciliation is possible, but by definition it leaves the relationship issues unresolved. Reconciliation obviously cannot occur without forgiveness, yet there are important reasons for insisting that when forgiveness is offered, to overlook justice is to endanger the whole concept of forgiveness" (McLellan, 2005, p. 5).

Mentoring

Relationships are important to normal human experience, and they are essential to address a crisis and help people relate to it. The desires to be wanted, needed and fulfilled are satisfied with healthy relationships. Jesus came to earth to meet our deepest needs, He died to redeem people back to himself, and to restore the relationship with God and others that was ruptured by sin (Thompson, 1999, p. 11). Often, people are engulfed in a crisis because they cannot reconcile what they know to be right with their failures. Fortunately, reconciliation is accomplished by and through Christ. The affirmation of a person's dignity and humanity is

exemplified by Christ when he interacted with a woman at the well in John 4 through a relationship of trust. He did not just follow a formula, conduct a program, and issue a prescription while maintaining a distinct separation from the woman. Instead, Jesus interacted with and established a relationship with this woman, and he developed a sense of community and belonging that was not missed on her. Jesus even drank from her cup, demonstrating intimacy and acceptance of the person (Thompson, 1999, p. 18). Consequently, successful interactions may be based on the model established by Christ for relationships. Christ was relational and restorative in his interactions with others, and Christ calls those who would follow him to be likewise. It is easier and safer to refrain from the vulnerability of stepping out of one's comfort zone to interact in relationships with those in trouble, but Christ did not model a life of safety or ease. Since Christians have been reconciled to God through Christ, they now have been given a mission of reconciliation, that others may come to God through Christ, based on the Bible in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 and other passages (Thompson, 1999, p. 27-28).

Through observational learning, inmates can develop cognitive thinking. Yet it helps to understand what motivates the crime in order to ultimately prevent it. Therefore, criminal thinking needs to be defined since antisocial attitudes and beliefs are a predictor of recidivism (Walters, 2006, p. 24). Some examples of improper thinking or "stinking thinking" are attitudes of entitlement, making excuses, and blaming others instead of accepting responsibility. Cognitive distortion is a false sense of reality that contributes to stinking thinking (Greystone Educational, 2008, p. 1).

Through training and observing role models, inmates build self-efficacy and begin to practice cognitive rehearsal. First, offenders must be honest and helped to accept the truth and thus face issues based on reality. Only then can prisoners accept responsibility for their actions.

Offenders can establish short term and long term goals and learn through example. Accountability and support group mentoring are foundational and provide for vicarious reinforcement. Studies reveal that the more time a parolee spent with friends known from pre-incarceration days (more than four times per week), the more likely the parolee was to return to pre-incarceration criminal activities, reinforcing the need for new friends and a transitional structure for accountability (Montoya, 2009, p. 154).

Neuroplasticity, a property of the brain, allows it to adjust to changes in environmental and physiological conditions and experiences (Jokić-Begić, 2010, p. 237). Intrinsic and extrinsic incentives can be a catalyst for positive change. Those offenders motivated solely by extrinsic incentives such as avoiding punishment or obtaining monetary gains, fame, praise of people, and material benefits often are more susceptible to re-arrest. The extrinsic incentives can also be transitory or superficial. In contrast, intrinsic motivation is particularly important because it goes to the core of a man or woman's heart and desires, and thus their character. Intrinsic motivation is not overly concerned about or unduly persuaded by peer pressure (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p. 167-169).

A multifaceted approach is used which acknowledges the three factors of triadic reciprocal causation. The three factors of biological and psychological characteristics, the person's behavior, and the environment "are highly interdependent, and each factor influences, and is influenced by, each of the others" (Miller, 2011, p. 239). Individuals actively impact the environment just as the environment acts on the individual. "People filter their experience through their current knowledge and expectations about the world, create their own environment as their own behavior influences the environment, and generate new behavior by reorganizing previously learned behavior" (Miller, 2011, p. 253). For Bandura, the interaction between the

individual and the environment in triadic reciprocal causation is less significant than the new information acquired or the changed self-efficacy that results from the interchange. Genuine faith leads to changed beliefs, changed thinking, changed behavior, and changed relationships. It is a catalyst for transformation. "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor 5:17, New King James Version). As a result, a variety of problems can be met with a variety of services; treatment, training, pre-release programs, and aftercare reentry support (Wheeler & Patterson, 2008, p. 146).

Aftercare and Reentry

Aftercare is the provision of services and support to help an offender transition back into the community during reentry and overcome obstacles to reintegration. Aftercare programs usually includes some form of moral, spiritual, and practical support to released offenders and often include assistance with obtaining basic education, family support, marketable skills, employment and housing (Wheeler & Patterson, 2008, p. 146). The challenge to successful aftercare is fulfilling the broad range of support needed to assist offenders in overcoming obstacles to reintegration. These obstacles include the offender's own survival skills which were honed and proved useful in prison but are counterproductive in society, the lack of informal social bonds to family and supportive friends, lack of employment, and alienation from society (Kurlychek & Kempinen, 2006, p. 364-365).

Effective aftercare addresses these barriers by providing consistent and comprehensive interaction with offenders as they transition back into society. Ideally, aftercare is accomplished within a relationship that encourages both a sense of accountability and a sense of belonging, thus reducing anxiety and improving coping strategies (Johnsen & Herringer, 1993, p. 74). Relationships that provide a sense of belonging and accountability within the context of a

surrogate family help to restore the offenders' sense of humanity. The human interaction is a catalyst that provides an opportunity for the offender to express remorse for their actions, to begin to heal, and to develop self-esteem and hope (Hallundbaek, 2008, p. 8).

While more research is needed on the topic of reentry, it is clear that a comprehensive and intense aftercare program during reentry is one of the single most important aspects to breaking the cycle of recidivism. As more offenders are released from incarceration, it will only become more important. Over 600,000 inmates were released from federal and state prisons in 2002, representing over four times more than in 1975 (Visher & Travis, 2003, p, 90). With recidivism rates that indicate over 60% of released offenders will be re-arrested within three years (Hall, 2009, p. 66), there is a desperate need for effective reentry programs to help offenders make the changes necessary to avoid repeat offense.

The diversity of aftercare programs creates difficulty in comparing them, yet a number of studies demonstrate the importance of aftercare and the impact it has on successful reentry of former offenders. Five studies that will be discussed herein include the Minnesota Comprehensive Offender Reentry Plan, the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention study, an outcome evaluation conducted in Pennsylvania, a meta-analytical study, and a 13 week Lifeskills'95 study conducted in California.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Offender Reentry Plan (MCORP), an offender reentry project, increased offender participation in community support programming, which included mentoring, restorative justice services, and faith-based programming. The findings revealed that recidivism rates were significantly reduced with those who participated, and suggest that facilitating employment, involvement in community support programming, and development of systems of social support reduced recidivism (Duwe, 2012, p. 347).

The United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (US OJJDP) presented findings from a 5 year multisite analysis of their program designed to reduce recidivism among high-risk parolees. The findings determined that effective reentry required not only intensive supervision and services upon release but also focus on reintegration while the offenders were still incarcerated. Successful reentry was predicated on a highly structured and gradual transitional period from incarceration to aftercare (US OJJDP, 2005, p. 24).

An outcome evaluation was conducted in Pennsylvania comparing 337 offenders who participated in an aftercare program with 383 offenders who did not participate. Findings revealed that those 337 offenders who participated in the 90 day resident aftercare component experienced significantly lower recidivism rates compared to the control group after 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years post release. No comparison was completed at 3 years post release, but historically the greatest recidivism occurs in the first year and diminishes over the subsequent years (Kurlychek & Kempinen, 2006, p. 364). These findings suggest that implementing aftercare programs as a continuum of care to extend service to released offenders will reduce recidivism and help offenders overcome obstacles to reintegration and reentry. "Our findings suggest that intensive, short-term aftercare services may prove to be the missing link (Kurlycheck & Kempinen, 2006, p. 381). For the purpose of this study, short-term aftercare is defined as the duration of no less than 90 days.

A meta-analytic study which included 22 studies and 5,764 participants examined the effects of aftercare programs on recidivism, and showed that aftercare is most effective if it is well-implemented and if it consists of individual instead of group treatment. This study concluded, "Whereas the treatment duration and moment of starting the aftercare program were

not related to the program's effectiveness, more intensive aftercare programs were associated with lower recidivism rates" (James, Stams, Asscher, De Roo, & Van Der Laan, 2013, p. 264).

A 13-week parole aftercare program in California called Lifeskills'95 also proved successful. It was designed to improve social skills, addressed drug and alcohol abuse, and promoted education and employment. When comparing an experimental and a control group, each with 115 juveniles, it was found that individuals in the control group who did not receive aftercare were more than twice as likely to be rearrested and three times as likely to have returned to their old peer relationships (Josi & Sechrest, 1999, p. 53).

Aftercare programs vary in length of time. One study that examined various durations of aftercare programs to determine the optimal length of service provided clear insight. A study of a population of inmates graduating from a motivational boot camp compared those who received no aftercare, those who received 30 days of aftercare, and those who received 90 days of aftercare. The findings revealed that those who received no aftercare recidivated at the same level as those who received 30 days of aftercare, in contrast to those who received 90 days of aftercare. Consequently, aftercare programs should not be less than 90 days to be effective (Kurlychek, Wheeler, Tinik, & Kempinen, 2011, p. 781).

Addressing recidivism issues is important especially during pre-release and initially upon reentry into the community. "Ideally, reentry services should begin during the prerelease planning phase while prisoners are still incarcerated. In this way, an assessment plan can be conducted and referrals provided to the most appropriate service provider upon release. As much as possible, the transition from prerelease services to community services should be seamless" (Wheeler & Patterson, 2008, p. 146).

Education alone is not the solution because the problem is not merely academic but a matter of values. It is interesting to note that from a review of 32 studies, it was determined that vocational training, drug treatment, halfway houses, and release programs were seen to reduce recidivism while education programs alone only improved the academics of offenders without any measurable impact on reducing recidivism (Wheeler & Patterson, 2008, p. 146). A study of 51 parolees over 3 years found that, contrary to expectations, family status and education levels were not related to successful reentry. Instead offenders with more positive and supportive relationships and who possessed greater self-efficacy were less likely to recidivate (Bahr, 2010, p. 668).

The label "ex-con" carries a heavy stigma for offenders and creates significant obstacles for their reentry (Winnick, 2008 p.296). Released from prison with little money or job skills and no relationships with caring family, offenders feel labeled and rejected and often gravitate to the so-called friends from the streets who accept them but who also contributed to their initial arrests. The negative consequences behind stigmatizing labels is that an individual internalizes the label given by the social group and then adjusts behavior to actually match the expectations associated with such a label, thus potentially encouraging rather than discouraging future negative behavior (Winnick, 2008, p.298). Mentoring offers an alternative to the stigma by providing new relationships wherein the offender is no longer defined by his or her past.

Offenders who were involved in aftercare mentoring and in Bible studies after their release were less likely to be re-arrested. Yet reentry and aftercare are far less emphasized for offenders after their release, even though reentry and the transition period are both significant. "Compared to reentry, prison ministry is a much easier task to pursue and a safe service opportunity in what many consider to be an unsafe environment. Likewise, faith-based

organizations disproportionately opt for in-prison ministry rather than out-of-prison services because reentry and aftercare are anything but easy or safe" (Johnson, 2008, p. 6). Christians must live out what they claim they believe and engage released offenders, inviting them into their churches, their coffee shops, and their homes so that the real work of restoration can take place for all parties concerned (Colson, 1985, p. 74).

People are complex and their needs are complex. A faith-based relationship that starts with values, is holistic and collaborative in nature, and incorporates mentoring, inspiration, and accountability has significant hope of success. "Values must change before behavior can change and stay changed. Motivations driven by a personal connection to faith principals that themselves are anchored in time-tested, even divine principles can serve as the ultimate underpinnings for a more noble and enduring successful reentry – and successful life" (Markway & Worsham, 2009, p. 99).

Offenders are not the only people who experience positive change as a result of aftercare programs. Rye Presbyterian Church in Westchester, New York reported that church members who participated in aftercare for offender reentry also personally benefited and grew, and the entire church benefited from the renewal. There are different ways in which people are genuinely embraced. For example, annually the entire Sunday worship service is conducted by former offenders at Rye Presbyterian Church, demonstrating genuine acceptance and integration of all the members. Churches that fulfill their biblical mandate by caring for and reaching out to both their own members and to those in the community find a revival of purpose and real growth as new members respond to the authentic relationships (Hallundbaek, 2008, p. 8).

The Evangelical Faith-based Community and Volunteerism

According to some research, conservative and evangelical Christians in general exhibit less compassion toward offenders than their counterparts either in the mainline churches or among the nonreligious (Kerley, Bartkowski, Matthews, & Emond, 2010, p. 521). Nevertheless, evangelical prison outreach programs and ministries, when conducted, have flourished in a way that emphasizes a disparity within the conservative churches between a general trend and the dynamic exceptions. A distinct equilibrium was noted in the subset of evangelicals who participated in the work with offenders, as they balanced both justice and judgment, on the one hand, and compassion on the other. (Kerley et al., 2010, p.505). This desire by a subset of evangelical conservative Christians to reach out to the less fortunate is actually consistent with the theoretical framework of this study and the biblical doctrine that all people were created in God's image and are therefore equally valuable, that all people are offenders and thus in the same need for redemption, that Christ came in mercy and grace to redeem people, and that none are beyond the arm of God to save and transform. The act of engaging offenders is also consistent with the biblical admonition to visit inmates in jail, found in such passages as Hebrews 13:3 and Matthew 25:39-40. The disparity between people in conservative Protestant Churches will be reviewed later in this study. "By contrast, the logic of compassion stresses the importance of forgiveness and highlights opportunities for reconciliation following repentance. In the Christian context, the logic of punishment distinguishes sheep (the saved) from goats (the lost) while the logic of compassion stresses the equality of 'God's children,' all of whom are in need of divine redemption" (Kerley, et al., 2010, P. 507). Within biblical faith, one aspect of the truth is not sacrificed by the other, and both judgment and compassion can and should effectively coexist. In fact, together they represent both reconciliation and accountability and have the

potential for tremendous impact on the lives of offenders. Churches can have a key role in community participation, healing, and restoring individuals and families within society, or they can abdicate that biblical role by refraining from engaging those who are incarcerated and those who are released offenders.

Marjorie Proctor-Smith asserts that there are inherent risks to caring for offenders, but the risks are worth it. Many in churches and faith-based leadership today refrain from meaningful engagement with offenders to mitigate the time commitment required and to avoid the often challenging issues associated with released offenders as they struggle with reentry. The churches and the faith-based community, however, would do well to remember that they were not called to an easy task, and therefore should not seek a comfortable existence. Caring for troubled people is not a hobby, nor an endeavor one commits to half-heartedly. Ministry is challenging, and it requires a devotion to the offender that reflects the highest qualities of love. Those who engage in reconciling offenders, "risk not being heard, risk rejection, alienation, fear; risk opening old wounds, deep wounds" (Procter-Smith, 2008, p.1). Concern for such risk, apathy, or a focus on more pleasant tasks can motivate a church to instead emphasize other, less noble goals. Sometimes this leads to churches refusing to permit sex offenders to even visit their church, regardless of safeguards that could be implemented. Other times it leads to churches accepting the presence of former offenders but refusing to meaningfully engage them. Such marginalization leads to offenders either accepting a quiet place on the periphery or, more often than not, results in former offenders' eventually wandering away from the church, and frequently being re-arrested. After an inmate's release, the second cycle of societal retribution inevitably begins, whether the former offender is considered reformed or not. In his study, Dr. Mbubu reveals "manifest and latent effects of incarceration and finds that a further retribution continues

upon release when society takes over with vindictiveness" (Mbubu, 2012, p. 231). This vindictiveness takes many forms, including marginalization and rejection.

Another study by Blanchard revealed that various counties with a large number of conservative Protestant Churches also exhibited greater degrees of residential segregation along multiple dimensions (Blanchard, 2007, p. 434). A number of scholarly studies of white conservative Protestant congregations have described them as socially disconnected from the larger social aspect of the communities in contrast with mainline Protestant and Catholic Churches (Wilson & Janoski, 1995, p. 138), and inwardly focused with an emphasis on internal social ties (Emerson & Smith, 2000, p. 43). These conservative Protestant congregations also are less inclined to engage in the provision of social services relative to their counterparts in the mainline Protestant Churches (Chaves, 2004, p. 74). Further, research of denominational differences among volunteers reveals that conservative Protestant Churches devote the majority of their time and effort inwardly toward the functioning and maintenance of their own church rather than toward evangelism and reaching the community (Wuthnow, 1999, p. 346).

This body of research showing that conservative and evangelical Christians generally have less compassion for offenders and overall exhibit less involvement with those in the community compared to mainline Protestant and the nonreligious, however, only serve to highlight the unique exception and dynamic presence of conservative and evangelical Protestant volunteers when they do engage inmates and released offenders. When evangelical and conservative Christians do engage in outreach to the jails and prisons, they tend to be far-reaching in scope and magnitude. While many within these churches are complacent, withdrawn, or inwardly focused, there remain some who are being equipped and prepared to fulfill the Christian call to reach out to their neighbors and communities.

Engaged or Rejected by the Church

Considering the biblical admonition to reach out to offenders and the biblical premise that churches are groups of people who view themselves as redeemed by God and in the process of being transformed as new creations based on 2 Corinthians 5:17 and other scriptural references, it would seem only natural that churches should reach out and embrace offenders upon their release from incarceration. But often that is not the case. "Many of these reoffenders have made decisions for Christ and have become spiritually strong, only to be rejected by churches when prisons release them (Reighard, 2009, p. 5). This rejection by churches is often based on fear of former offenders and concern for the safety and well-being of their congregations; unconcern for the eternal value of the offender; or a lack of genuine conviction for the faith that the church members claim to embrace.

Offenders generally expected to be rejected upon release from jail because of the labels assigned to them. "They are fully aware that their personal attributes will be devalued and that they will not be treated 'like anyone else,' but rather as failures, or pariahs" (Winnick, 2008, p. 321). In contrast, relationships which promoted inclusion with offenders also tended to engender an openness by the offenders about their status, in contrast to those relations that promoted exclusion which tended to engender withdrawal and secrecy (Winnick, 2008, p.322). Inclusion is consistent with the doctrine of the Christian faith and offenders, with certain notable exceptions, generally perceived that faith communities were safe havens where they could be accepted and encouraged to grow regardless of their past sins. That is the premise of the Christian faith, that no one need be defined by their past and remain enslaved to it, that every single human being has a past, and that sinners are welcomed toward inclusion in the family of God through not only conversion but transformation.

Chuck Colson, a former offender and founder of Prison Fellowship, recognized, "The church is the visible presence on earth of the living although invisible Christ. But it's harder to tell inmates in prison about the living Christ when they find themselves confronted with locked doors, or rebuke and rejection by Christ's people (Colson, 1985, p. 74). Before people of faith can help offenders be transformed, they must first believe what they claim to believe, and must themselves be transformed into people who genuinely care for others.

The distinguishing characteristic of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism is volunteerism by those who embrace the biblical tenants of mercy, grace and transformation. Mark Earley, former attorney general of Virginia and subsequent president of Prison Fellowship, reminded society that bureaucrats cannot achieve offender rehabilitation and reentry efforts for several reasons. Volunteer mentoring is not a 9-to-5 job, there is not the funding for paid positions, and the amount of manpower needed for an effective reentry program is significant. What is required can only be performed through a community of loving and authentic relationships. These relationships are anything but superficial or administrative, but are exemplified by patient, nurturing, sacrificial and holistic concern for the individual. These relationships are able to sustain a genuine long-term commitment to the welfare of prisoners and ex-prisoners. This kind of relationship can only be formed and sustained by those "who believe that darkness can be overcome by light, evil by good, despair by hope, and addiction by freedom" (Earley, 2005, p. 59). If the rehabilitation is to be realized, it must be delivered by people who believe in hope and transformation even for those who have committed horrible crimes and sins, and who have been bound by addictive behaviors.

Summary

Recidivism is a significant problem today in the United States, which has 25% of the world's incarcerated inmates while only representing 5% of the world's population. Over 60% of released offenders are re-arrested within 3 years, demonstrating that the current corrections environment is not effective in correcting criminal behavior. The status quo is untenable. Society cannot continue to either reward bad behavior or ignore problems. Recidivism, however, is ultimately just a symptom of a greater problem that needs to be addressed and effectively corrected.

Before criminal behavior can permanently change, an offender's values must change. Until then, offenders generally only focus on avoiding capture and re-conviction, not in avoiding the behavior that leads to a conviction or renouncing the desires that compel such behavior. Until the desires change, the outcome does not change. Only when offenders begin to see themselves and other people in a perspective that values human life and dignity over selfish gain will there be a change of values that impact repeat crime.

Thoughts impact emotions. Thoughts cause emotions that fuel the inner drive and desires, and thus emotions contribute to if not dictate behavior. Therefore, mentors address the beliefs and the thoughts of offenders to help them see life in a new and proper perspective that respects and appreciates the innate value of human beings. This can contribute to a renewed regard for people needed to circumvent the destructive behavior born from negative and selfish thoughts and emotions.

A review of the literature revealed that successful reentry was achieved through aftercare that contained certain attributes. Ideally, successful reentry should begin during the pre-release stage of incarceration and establish a foundation for an intense mentorship during aftercare

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following release. Successful reentry was defined by intense and comprehensive interaction with offenders that developed both a sense of belonging and accountability. This interaction was both relational and restorative in nature. Aftercare that was 90 days in duration was found to be significantly more effective in reducing recidivism than programs of shorter duration. Aftercare that emphasizes forming informal relationships and bonds, obtaining employment, and addressing issues of alienation from society were found to be effective. Success was reported through addressing moral, spiritual, and practical support, and doing so through the development of close relationships. Surprisingly, education alone was found to have less significance in reducing recidivism, compared with the importance of substance abuse programs, vocational job skill training, prerelease mentoring programs, and intense aftercare.

Volunteers, unfortunately, show more interest in engaging inmates in prison and jail than working with released offenders in aftercare, but the greatest need is for volunteers to engage released offenders daily to facilitate successful reentry back into society. The faith community provides a life transforming approach through the empowerment of significant numbers of volunteers who are deeply dedicated to caring for other human beings, and providing the accountability and the mentoring proven to contribute positively to breaking the cycle of recidivism.

Supportive relationships and a sense of inclusion are ideally developed during mentoring meetings when offenders are incarcerated, and then strengthened during the aftercare stage of reentry. Aftercare mentoring then becomes a shared journey and the application of all that was learned. This new relationship replaces the old and negative social relationships that contributed towards an offender's incarceration and it also sidesteps the rejection and alienation from society, thus becoming a catalyst for breaking the cycle of recidivism.

Ultimately each person is responsible for his or her decisions and life, and ideal circumstances and positive support alone will not be enough to break the cycle of recidivism without the offender's commitment to a new life. An offender must recognize the need to change, possess the self-efficacy to believe they can change, must want to change, and they must be dedicated to change. The presence of committed mentors can help model and motivate offenders in that process.

Long term change is predicated upon establishing and maintaining relationships that guide, transform and strengthen each member of the community. That is true for all people, but even more important for those who are incarcerated and those who are released offenders. This is accomplished based upon a common and authentic set of values. Relationships between volunteer and community-based organizations and the criminal justice system provide a catalyst for life-changing relationships to be developed between offenders and those in the community to which they will ultimately return. When a faith-based community engages offenders through mentoring, it develops relationships which facilitate cognitive change and the process of self-efficacy needed for transformation. These relationships are foundational in providing intense and comprehensive reentry aftercare for offenders transitioning from incarceration back into the community.

Potential challenges exist in ensuring a comprehensive approach by faith-based volunteers who are willing to be vulnerable and care for people whom society has marginalized, often for very good reason. This study was designed to identify what is effective and what were the shortfalls of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the non-profit Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, based on the perceptions of mentors who cared for and

engage offenders. Chapter 3 will show the design of the study, research questions under

investigation, and my role as a researcher.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Recidivism represents a heavy financial burden on society due to the cost of incarcerating larger numbers of inmates, and a tremendous psychological burden on society due to the repeated victimization of members when the offenders are eventually released as unchanged men and women only to recommit crimes and be rearrested. As noted, between 1980 and 2006 the inmate population in the United States increased at over 460% and the number of offenders released to parole increased over 360% (Johnson, 2008, p. 3). Two-thirds of released offenders are rearrested in less than 3 years of their release from incarceration (Langan & Levin, 2002, p. 58).

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the impact of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism from the perceptions and lived experiences of mentors who had counseled inmates and released offenders through the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach organization. The goal was to identify the perceptions of mentors concerning what worked and what did not work in the process of helping offenders start a new life and break the cycle of recidivism. The phenomenological process articulated the participant's feelings, emotions and perception as they lived it, not just the individual's reaction to the experience (Connelly, 2010, p. 127).

Research Design

This qualitative study used a hermeneutic phenomenological design to describe the common meaning derived by obtaining the perceptions and lived experiences of mentors who engage offenders within a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. The various aspects or approaches of the Jail Outreach

included the following components: one-on-one meetings with inmates; a six-week course on Stinking Thinking taught to a classroom of inmates that addresses cognitive change; support group meetings that meet in the community each week for released offenders; and one-on-one mentoring of released offenders.

Moustakas's approach to conducting phenomenological research was used in this study because Moustakas provided detailed and orderly steps (Moustakas, 1994). First, the phenomenon was chosen to study, which in this case was the volunteer mentors' perceptions of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach organization. Second, it was necessary to bracket out the personal experiences and potential bias of the researcher and assume nothing was known about what the mentors had experienced, specifically regarding their attitudes and perceptions. Third, in-depth interviews, surveys, and a focus group were used to collect data from numerous participants. Fourth, data was carefully analyzed and highlighted, utilizing specific quotes or statements contributed by the participants. Common themes were highlighted, categorized, and then shared using rich and descriptive detail (Creswell, 2013, p. 81-82).

According to Moustakas (1994) and cited by Creswell (2013), after selecting a phenomenon such as recidivism and determining the group of participants to be addressed such as mentors/former mentors, the researcher then collects data from the individuals who have experienced this phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). A composite description was developed for all the participants, and the description included what they experienced and how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). Essential themes were reviewed to determine the lived experiences and presented in both a descriptive and interpretive report that conveyed the meaning of the lived experiences (Creswell, 2013, p. 80).

This was a hermeneutic phenomenological study and the purpose, therefore, was to obtain an interpretation and learn the underlying meaning behind the topic rather than merely present a descriptive work. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it best facilitated obtaining the lived experience of the mentors who worked, interacted and sometimes even lived with offenders. This study then incorporated what took place and how these interactions were experienced (Moustakas, 1994) among mentors who partnered with offenders struggling with a history of repeat arrests as they engaged through a faith-based attempt to reduce recidivism. Determining shared patterns was useful in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism and in improving anti-recidivism programs so that volunteers may become more effective in working with offenders. The process included interview questions, surveys, and a focus group to understand the lived experiences and determine the shared themes.

Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated:

1. What do mentors perceive as the factors or beliefs that contribute to offenders re-arrests? Recidivism is a serious problem with negative social and economic impacts on communities, and the majority of incarcerated people are repeat offenders. To know what mentors attribute to offenders repeat arrest patterns would be valuable in determining the most useful approach to reduce it, and would be useful for future research.

2. How have offenders gained mastery over their thoughts, emotions, beliefs and actions? It is important to determine what if anything has changed, and how it contributed to breaking the cycle of recidivism.

3. How has the greater faith community worked together or failed to work together to support offenders? If a comprehensive approach is necessary, it is useful to know what aspects of broader faith organizations cooperating together have worked, and what aspects may not work in relations to impacting offenders.

4. How have learning from and interacting with members of the Jail Outreach, in the context of surrogate families, impacted offenders' beliefs, thinking and behavior? It is useful to determine how offenders' understanding of themselves and their environment may be impacted by association.

Setting and Sample Size

The sampling procedure was a non-random convenience sample using snowball referrals. Sample size in phenomenological studies like this one are often relatively small but powerful, and in-depth research was completed with the participants (Connelly, 2010, p. 127). The sample size for this study consisted of 21 participants. A membership list archive compiled by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach organization contained a list of mentors and former mentors who worked with offenders. Each of these mentors worked with offenders who participated in various aspects of the Jail Outreach programs, whether mentoring in jail, participating in the six-week cognitive thinking course for offenders, or joining in aftercare meetings for released offenders. Although some former members moved out of the area, the former mentors on the list were contacted to develop an initial sample of those willing to participate and sign the consent form (Appendix E). When contacted, each potential participant was read a recruitment script (Appendix F). All former mentors contacted were willing to participate, and upon reaching 21participants, data saturation was achieved.

The study setting was the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach (also referred herein as the Jail Outreach). This Christian non-profit organization was established in 2004 and consisted of over 40 volunteer men and women from 15 churches and nine different denominations. Although diverse, each member was committed to a biblical statement of faith (available at www.JailOutreach.com). These unpaid volunteers derived from a broad cross-section of society and include corporate CEOs, business owners, educators, medical professionals, and mental health professionals, among others. Approximately 20% of the volunteer members were women who work with female offenders. Although located in a rural area which is predominantly Caucasian, the Jail Outreach embraced ethnic diversity and the membership has included ethnic minorities. The Jail Outreach is governed by an elected board of directors, and at varying times the board has consisted of between 6 and 9 members. The former members and those on sabbatical were not formally part of the Jail Outreach at the time of this research, and therefore were associated only in a non-binding way.

The Jail Outreach was committed to helping offenders come to terms with the underlying causes of their incarceration to facilitate breaking the cycle of recidivism. A faith-based approach to reducing recidivism was implemented through a holistic method that included individual mentoring each week in jail, classes in jail (including the six- week course entitled *Stinking Thinking*), weekly support group meetings for released offenders, paying technical college tuition for released offenders and first month's rent if necessary, a food pantry, and assistance finding employment. The constitution and by-laws of the Jail Outreach stipulated that it is privately supported and would not accept nor receive tax-payer funded public support. The goal was to be part of the solution rather than another burden on the tax-payers, and the membership embraced the concept of personal empowerment and servant-leadership. The Marinette-

Menominee Jail Outreach serves two medium sized county jails. The Marinette County Jail and the Menominee County Jail are located two miles apart in a rural area of northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, just across the state line from each other. The State of Michigan and the State of Wisconsin, additionally, referred released prisoners to the Jail Outreach for reentry mentoring and participation in the weekly support groups.

Participants

The participants were a purposive sample consisting of former mentors, both men and women, who participated in some aspect of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the non-profit Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. The 21 participants in this study were Christians from eight different denominations and attended 15 different churches. A careful analysis was done to compare the differing degrees of participation between individuals since that could impact the outcome. For example, some mentors engaged offenders daily while others interacted weekly or bi-weekly. Likewise, some offenders chose to meet daily or weekly while others interacted less frequently. Each participant mentored offenders who were incarcerated in the Marinette or Menominee County Jails, or after release from a state prison. All participants were mentors and adults age 18 and over. Age, ethnicity, and gender were delineated in narrative or tabular form using pseudonyms to protect the identity.

Procedures

I completed my proposal defense with my committee and submitted an application to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the dissertation committee chairperson. The study was not begun until the IRB granted approval in May, 2014, and I received IRB approval before collecting any data from mentors. (A general timeline is located in Appendix A).

After receiving IRB approval, I determined the sample participant group based on a convenience sample of 21 mentors who participated with offenders in some aspect (whether individual inmate mentoring, a six-week cognitive thinking course, aftercare meetings for released offenders, or some combination of these programs) of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. Each former mentor was given a consent form (Appendix E) to review and sign. Each participant voluntarily agreed and signed a consent form.

The survey was conducted individually and in person. Afterward, the surveys were sorted and reviewed by several categories including length of time as members of the Jail Outreach, aspect of involvement with offenders, and frequency of involvement with offenders.

I then conducted interviews with the participants using open, guiding questions. These interviews were recorded and transcribed for an audit trail. I afterward conducted a focus group with experts who signed the consent form and who were willing to participate. This focus group of experts included a judge, state representative, sheriff, director of a national non-profit, and a doctor of academia. This meeting was held at Perkins Restaurant in Menominee, MI in a private dining room used for closed meetings, to provide a neutral and mutually acceptable location. Data was collected from the focus group using notes and an audio recording device, with the signed consent of all participants.

After all the data was collected and data saturation had been reached, I reviewed it for common themes to establish the essence of the phenomenon being studied. This was accomplished by highlighting significant statements that identify how the participant experienced the phenomenon through a process that Moustakas referred to as horizontalization, and then I developed cluster of meanings from these statements in a process of eliminating redundancy

(Creswell, 2013, p. 82). This process led to writing a textual description of what the participants experienced, and finally to writing a structural description of the essence of the phenomenon called the essential invariant structure (Creswell, 2013, p. 82). I then report my findings in chapter four and provide an analysis in chapter five.

The Researcher's Role

I founded the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach in 2004 and was elected executive director when it was incorporated into a non-profit organization in 2006. I served two terms as the elected director and stepped down from the board of directors in 2012 after completing my second term, in compliance with constitutional requirements for break in each successive term after the founder's second term. I am an evangelical Christian. I hold to an ontological presupposition that reality derives from the existence of God; an epistemological presupposition that truth exists, is knowable, and is ultimately found in Scripture and is consistent with the broader context of knowledge; and an axiological presupposition that values derive from beliefs and are formed in thoughts and exhibited in behavior (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). Consequently, I believe that all people need new hearts for genuine transformation rather than mere behavior modification. Yet I sought to objectively determine what worked, what hadn't, how to improve the methods of addressing and reducing recidivism, and was determined to go where the evidence led.

The Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach consisted of over 40 volunteers from 15 churches and nine different denominations. The broad, inclusive nature of Christian denominations in this non-profit organization diminished the likelihood of members promoting one specific church or denomination, but instead increased a sense of altruistic concern about the

general welfare of offenders based on broad biblical principles. My goal was to determine what

worked and what did not work to reduce recidivism, and to follow the evidence wherever it led

Data Collection

This qualitative study implemented multiple methods of data collection to increase

trustworthiness and integrity of results (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). To establish credibility in data

collection, careful site selection, purposeful sampling, unbiased reporting of data, and

appropriate data collection methods were implemented for this study (Creswell, 2013, p. 177).

Upon reaching data saturation, when new and meaningful information was no longer obtained,

data collection ceased (Creswell, 2013, p. 79).

Survey Validity

The first of the three methods of data collection that were used in this study was a survey.

Surveys are effective instruments in qualitative studies for researchers to discover emerging

themes (Janson, 2010). "The survey is a systematic method of gathering information from a

sample of entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the

larger population of which entities are members" (Groves, 2004, p. 4). A survey was developed

to identify participant's demographic factors and potential influences in the study. This included

the length of time in the membership, the frequency of meeting with offenders, the aspect or

method of meeting with offenders, supporting relationships or lack of, personal beliefs, etc.

Personal identity was protected and confidentiality assured when including survey information

into the study. (The survey is located in Appendix B).

Face Validity

To optimize face and content validity of the survey, a diverse group of individuals,

including academics and practitioners, reviewed the contents before dissemination (Gall, Gall, &

Borg, 2007, p. 196-197). Each representative received drafts of the instrument for review. Feedback determined relevance and comprehensiveness of questions, clarity of the questions, and potential ethical or moral problems with questions (Rea & Parker, 1997).

Semistructured Interviews

Semistructured interviews consisted of open-ended questions to provide a more in-depth consideration of what was gleaned from the survey. "The semistructured interview involves prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses" (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p. 246). Semistructured interviews are among the most popular and widely implemented qualitative data collection method because of their flexibility and effectiveness (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For this study, the purpose of these interview questions was to determine the participant's perception of what caused offender recidivism; what aspects of the faith-based approach of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach failed to impact a positive change; what aspects of the faith-based approach of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach succeeded in impacting a positive change; and to what they attribute a reduced likelihood of recidivism. Experts in the field reviewed the questions in advance and provided modifications as necessary (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

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1. What factors do you believe impacted the behavior for which offenders were arrested?

2. When you first met the offenders before addressing a faith-based approach, what factors do you believe were hindering their change for the better?

3. While meeting with members of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, what factors do you believe continued to hinder offender's change for the better?

4. What factors do you believe impacted or facilitated a positive change in offenders' lives?

5. What factors do you believe reduce an offender's likelihood of re-arrest?

6. Leading up to the offender's arrest, what were their significant relationships? How would you characterize the nature of their relationships?

7. Today, what are the significant relationships for offenders who are successful? How would you characterize their new relationships?

8. What, if anything, changed in the beliefs, thoughts and behavior of offenders?

9. What are the strengths and weaknesses of area churches and the faith community in contributing to reducing recidivism?

10. How can the weaknesses noted above in question nine be improved?

_____

Focus Group

For the third method of data collection, I organized a focus group meeting that was held for 90 minutes with a small group of experts. Multiple participants simultaneously engaged provide a social forum for participants to voice perceptions, and this method frequently results in issues regarding the phenomena that were not previously considered (Morgan, 1997). Ground rules were established and reviewed to maintain participant confidentiality and to ensure respect for all present. The purpose of the focus group was to review the findings of the research and solicit the group's opinions about the meaning of the data, in particular the themes that emerged from the 21 interviews with former mentors, and obtain their recommendations for future research.

The focus group includes a circuit court judge, an elected county sheriff, an elected state representative, a representative of a national non-profit committed to reducing recidivism, and a university professor. Thus, the focus group was represented by members from the judiciary, law enforcement, the legislature, an involved citizen group, and academia. None of the members of this focus group was ever members of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. General, open-ended questions were provided as a source for initiating a conversation. (Details of the focus group are available in Appendix D).

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Data Analysis

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Psychologist Clark Moustakas's approach to phenomenological data analysis was used in this study because Moustakas provided detailed, structured methods for data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994) and cited by Creswell (2013), the personal experiences of the participants in relation to the phenomenon must be carefully described, and

data analysis must including bracketing out the researcher's own experience to allow for the full description of the participant's (Creswell, 2013, p. 193).

Phenomenological qualitative data analysis necessitates that the researcher review the data and highlight significant statements that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomena. Through highlighting, I recognized general themes that were a catalyst in addressing and interpreting the research questions and understanding the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 82).

Horizontalization.

I highlight the significant statements from the interviews, surveys and focus group discussions by categorizing them according to common statements. Data analysis included horizontalization, the placing of all data together to be reviewed as if it has equal value. This list of statements was given equal value, and the researcher worked to reduce it to the list of statements that were neither repetitive nor redundant (Creswell, 2013, p. 193-194).

Clusters of Meaning.

Data analysis included grouping the significant statements found during the horizontalization process into phenomenological themes or clusters of meaning. This facilitated the removal of unnecessary or repetitive classifications and enabled the clustering of data into larger units of information referred to as "meaning units" (Creswell, 2013, p. 82 & 288).

Textual Descriptions.

Afterwards, a narrative textual description was composed that conveyed what happened and provided examples. It was based on the participants' lived experiences as expressed through the themes that emerged during the research. The narrative articulated both the experiences and

the participants' perceptions of the experience to help understand the "essence" of the

phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 82 & 273).

Essential, Invariant Structure.

Next a structural description was written that described how the experience happened.

This information was then transferred into a narrative description that conveyed the "essence" of

the phenomena (Creswell, 2013, p. 194). The essence of the phenomenon being studied

represented, "a brief creative close that speaks to the essence of the study and its inspiration in

terms of value of the knowledge and future directions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 184). This is the

essential invariant structures.

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Trustworthiness

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Steps were taken to protect and provide for credibility, dependability, transferability, and

confirmability of this study by implementing member checking, triangulation, peer review, and

bracketing.

Member checking was conducted to increase trustworthiness by ensuring that each

participant reviewed the findings and their responses were documented and taken into

consideration. Member checking provided each participant the opportunity to check for accuracy

and correct any errors and make changes that were necessary. Member checking also allowed

this researcher to determine if the information was intentionally or unintentionally omitted (Gall,

Gall & Borg, 2007, p. 475).

Triangulation was implemented to obtain data from at least three different sources.

Triangulation was important because it provided the researcher the opportunity to corroborate the

data for verification purposes (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007, p. 474). The different sources of data for

this study were from interviews, surveys, and a focus group meeting.

Peer review of this study provided the researcher with feedback and independent checking for potential problems. Peer review also increased reliability and soundness of the research through objective and professional third parties (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007, p. 476). This is explained under the Survey paragraph, concerning Face and Content Validity.

Audit trail were conducted by third party to audit the events, influences, and actions of the researcher. Records were kept and reviewed in an effort to provide a transparent description on how the qualitative study was conducted. It included field notes, sampling decisions, ethical concerns, and progress. A brief chronological index was created to help the auditor. The auditor was then able to review the field notes and the associated files and documents to reconstruct how the study was conducted and how conclusions were reached. A reliable auditor was selected to become familiar with the study and its methodology, and to audit the research interaction and the methodological and analytical processes of the researcher (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 633).

In the interest of full disclosure and seeking objectivity, bracketing delineated the researcher's role and position (Creswell, 2013, p. 83). This researcher formerly held a leadership role as founder and previous executive director of the non-profit Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach organization, and holds to a personal position as an evangelical Christian.

Ethical Considerations

This study was non-discriminatory. All participants received this disclosure at the onset of the study.

Confidentiality was protected and assured from the onset. A confidentiality agreement was included with the signed consent form (Appendix E), and it outlined the methods in which information shall be disposed of once the study is concluded. Use of pseudonyms for the participants was used for confidentiality.

Data was protected, and data storage was kept in locked filing cabinets and password protected electronic files. Prior to beginning this study, the researcher submitted proper documentation to the university institutional review board, obtained approval at each site for the study, and received written permission from all concerned.

This study did not result in physical discomfort for the participants. This study may have the result in mild emotional discomfort for the participants, although no more than what has been experienced throughout their normal engagement with offenders transition from incarceration. Every attempt was made on the part of the researcher to engage participants by building trust, establishing rapport, and showing respect throughout the entire process.

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the impact of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism for offenders involved in the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. The data collection and analysis processes included the conduct of surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus group interviews to increase the credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2013, p. 177). A coding system and participant consent form helped to protect the confidentially of the participants. In Section 4, I provide a discussion of the results of the participant interviews.

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CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This section contains findings from data collected from participants involved in the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach representing their perceptions of recidivism. I identified seven themes which joined the data to the theoretical framework of the study. An eighth theme was identified through the focus group meeting. This section includes (a) a restatement of the purpose of the study (b) participant profile information, (c) and the participant's perceptions of the contribution to the problem.

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the impact of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism for offenders involved in the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, by exploring the shared experiences of the volunteer mentors who engaged with offenders in the context of a substitute family. Recidivism is generally defined as re-arrest within three years of release from incarceration, and that definition was accepted for this study. This study illustrated the perceptions of volunteer mentors who engaged offenders through participation in the faith-based approach of reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach to determine their impressions of what aspects of the approach were effective and what aspects were not effective in reducing recidivism. In an effort to better understand the phenomenon, the following research questions were developed to guide this study:

1. What do mentors perceive as the factors or beliefs that contribute to offenders re-arrests?

2. How have inmates gained mastery over their thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and actions?

3. How has the greater faith community worked together or failed to work together to support offenders?

4. How have learning from and interacting with members of the Jail Outreach, in the context of surrogate families, impacted offenders' beliefs, thinking and behavior?

Identification of these four research questions allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of participant's views. The Atlas.ti software showed code frequency and co-occurrence analyses and seven themes emerged from the data supporting the study's research interview questions. I achieved triangulation of the data through mentor surveys, mentor interviews, and a focus group meeting consisting of experts in the field who reviewed the findings and made suggestions. The participants who were surveyed and interviewed were purposefully chosen based on their experience as mentors who had served with the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. Of the participant pool, 21 participants were selected, and completed the survey and were interviewed before data saturation was reached. The focus group consisted of five participants who were purposefully chosen to represent experts from the judiciary, legislature, the executive branch, a national non-profit organization, and academia

Mentor Surveys and Interviews

I randomly called by telephone the participants from the pool of volunteers and read a recruitment script. The survey process took place between May 6 and May 23, 2014. The survey contained demographic data questions to determine a participant profile, and open-ended questions regarding mentoring. Semistructured interviews conducted between May 6 and May 23, 2014 with 21 participants consisted of a broad-based representation of mentors who served in the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach.

The data collected from 21 participants, including six women and 15 men represented 15 different churches and eight denominations. At different points during their tenure, 10 participant mentors also served on the board of directors. During the data analysis process, I noted the average age of females participating in this study was 55 and the average age of male participants was 54. Sixty-six percent of the female participants underwent post-secondary education compared to 80% of the men. Both female and male mentors had average of 5 years of mentoring experience, and both groups had two mentors with over 8 years. All females noted that they interacted with the inmates at least on a weekly basis while only 60% of the men had that same commitment (see Table 2). Regardless of the frequency in which specific participants met with inmates, the inmates were able to sign up each week and meet with a member of the Jail Outreach for mentoring because the Jail Outreach regularly rotated various members into the jails to be available to inmate.

Table 2.

Interview Participant Demographic Data

	Gender	Race	Age	Post-Secondary education	# Years mentor	Frequency of meetings
Participant 1	Female	White	51	Associate	3	Weekly
Participant 2	Female	White	57	Bachelors	2	Weekly
Participant 6	Female	White	58	None	8	Weekly
Participant 8	Female	White	55	Master's	6	Weekly
Participant 12	Female	White	45	None	2	Weekly
Participant 19	Female	White	65	Bachelors	8	Weekly
Participant 3	Male	White	42	Bachelors	1	Daily
Participant 4	Male	White	65	Associate	1	Weekly
Participant 5	Male	White	39	Bachelors	3	Monthly
Participant 7	Male	White	67	Bachelors	4	Weekly
Participant 9	Male	White	49	Master's	5	Monthly
Participant 10	Male	White	61	Bachelors	2	Bi-monthly
Participant 11	Male	White	58	None	4	Bi-weekly
Participant 13	Male	White	50	Master's	2	Weekly
Participant 14	Male	White	53	None	8	Weekly
Participant 15	Male	White	67	None	5	Weekly
Participant 16	Male	White	56	Master's	5	Weekly
Participant 17	Male	White	45	Associate	8	Weekly
Participant 18	Male	White	48	Associate	4	Weekly
Participant 20	Male	White	50	Bachelors	3	Monthly
Participant 21	Male	White	58	Bachelors	6	Weekly

Note: Average Age Females: 55. Average Age Males: 54

Findings

The data from mentor interviews resulted in seven themes, and an eighth theme was later derived from the focus group interview of five experts in the field of recidivism. The first three themes related to Research Question 1; Theme 4 & 5 related to Research Question 2; Theme 6 related to Research Question 3; and Theme 7 related to Research Question 4.

The Seven Themes and their Categories:

Category: Contributions to Offenders' Recidivism

1. They all had a story.

2. Importance of family.

3. Connecting to society.

Category: Mastery of Self

4. Christ as our Savior.

5. Reason for change.

Category: Greater Faith Community

6. Engagement or rejection by the church.

Category: Jail Outreach impact

7. Connecting to Outreach.

Contributions to Offenders' Recidivism

Contributions to offenders' recidivism is the first category and includes the first three themes. The research topic explored the research question concerning what mentors perceive as the factors or beliefs that contributed to offenders rearrest. The data led me to develop the codes and themes between the codes, yielding 67 codes and 2,040 significant quotations supporting key themes and constructs of the study. Examination of data included in the qualitative phenomenological study gained results as I reviewed the total counts for codes relating to the themes: they all had a story; the importance of family; and connecting to society (see Table 3).

The findings indicated all offenders had a story, and there was a flaw behind each story that contributed to an irreconcilable disconnect between the offender and society. The offenders' perceptions were skewed, and they did not realize their own value or appreciate the value of

others. The lack of a functional family that offered both a sense of belonging and accountability contributed to recidivism, but a surrogate family of people who could fulfill that need was seen as helpful. The lack of long-term, comprehensive, and interactive aftercare between mentors and offenders contributed to the likelihood of recidivism and resulted in a disconnect between offenders and society. These factors contributed to offenders' recidivism, and when successfully addressed could reduce recidivism.

Table 3.

Codes Representing the Elements of Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

	#Theme One: They all had a story	#Theme Two: Importance of Family	#Theme Three: Connecting with society
+Support /relationships others/members	3	12	5
+Church as a means for change	3	6	3
+Growing in faith	3	5	1
+Faithful servant	0	8	8
+A chance to reflect	1	2	1
+/- Responsible members of society	0	2	4
+Hope/healing/forgiveness	2	3	2
+Related their own personal journey	0	5	0
+Acceptance	0	2	0
+See themselves differently	0	2	1
+Different relationships	1	2	2
+Beginning to feel safe	0	0	0
+Trust, respect, meaning, purpose	1	2	0
+Unconditional love	2	0	0
+Enjoy life	0	0	0
+God is present	0	0	1
+Other factors leading to change	1	1	0
+Reestablishing relationships families/society	0	0	0
+Tight schedules, but they show up	0	0	0

Note: Positive (+) or negative (-) contributors to Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

Table 3. (Con't).

Codes Representing the Elements of Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

	#Theme One: They all had a story	#Theme Two: Importance of Family	#Theme Three: Connecting with society
-A change in thinking/belief	8	7	3
-Support/accountability is needed	1	6	3
-Battle between truth vs lies/good vs evil/values	1	1	0
-Going back to the same situation/choice	9	2	6
-Need to feel a sense of belonging	10	4	0
-Unable to see themselves change	1	0	0
-Lack of family support/environment	6	11	1
-Mentors could not relate to inmates	3	0	0
-Their faith is lacking	10	1	3
-They didn't know how to make different choices	7	4	0
-A change in behavior is needed	12	5	4
-Alcohol and drug abuse or another unlawful behavior	24	21	5
-Blaming others for their poor life choices	13	6	7
-Friends/family were destructive	14	10	6
-Unable to relate to those that are lost	1	0	0
-Church members have a conflicting stance	0	0	3
-Felt stuck	3	4	1
-Inmates could not relate to mentors	2	0	1
-Jail was not a deterrent	5	1	0
-Negative outside influences - not friends/family	1	1	1
-Negatively affect others in their circle	2	6	1

Note: Positive (+) or negative (-) contributors to Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

Theme 1: They all had a Story

Recidivism is a serious problem with negative social and economic impact on communities. The majority of incarcerated people are repeat offenders. Their stories are similar, and often contribute to their incarceration. The participants asserted that all offenders had a story, and there was a flaw behind each of their stories which contributed to incarceration. The offenders' perceptions were skewed, and thus they did not realize their own value or appreciate the value of others.

Participant 5 explained that offenders repeat the same behaviors because nothing has changed in their lives, such as their environment, their friends, and their lack of hope or faith. Exploring what mentors attribute the offenders' repeat arrest patterns to may be valuable in determining the most useful approach to mitigating such behaviors and breaking the cycle of recidivism. Although reoffenders may remain in prison, inmates can still change. Recounting their personal experience may help other people make better decisions (Participant 10).

Participant 1 believed that inmates did not have a good understanding of how drugs and alcohol would negatively influence their life. Offenders were unaware that this behavior could destroy their future. They just wanted to have fun. Their misguided beliefs made them feel indestructible, and were often exemplified by a desire for immediate gratification without reflection on consequences.

All of the inmates had a story, and the challenge was to help them see the flaw behind their individual stories. Stories seem to center around the influences in the offenders' lives pertaining to their childhood or environment. Who loved them? Who did not? Who nurtured them? Who did not? Most important, who set the foundation and values for them to follow and who did not (Participant 4). Since the inmates often felt that no one cared, they inevitably turned

to the only people whom they thought did care, or sought to possess the only things they felt would bring fulfillment, regardless of the negative consequences. They felt accepted and a sense of belonging by associating with a gang or group of people who frequently contributed to their incarceration. This acceptance seemed to fill a void in their life, even while doing so in a negative way. The theme, they all had a story, showed that most offenders did not grow up in an environment where faith was part of their life; therefore, Participants 12 and 20 felt the inmates did not have a structure to know right from wrong. Inmates sometimes do not seem to care adequately about themselves or others, enough to change, which may relate to their upbringing and the stories they tell themselves to justify their unlawful behavior.

Participant 7 believed that the inmates chose their path, mostly because they never thought authorities would catch them, reflecting on the lack of sound values and notion that the ends justified the means. Participants 3 and 8 felt inmates would often return to jail because, after their release, they went back to the same conditions as before their arrest. Many of the offenders who met with the Jail Outreach mentors only had a superficial involvement with the volunteers. Some inmates could not relate to a life free from the cycle of repeat arrests because they did not think they needed to change or thought they could change. Some mentors felt that at times offenders were not listening, and stated that the offenders' body was there, but their mind was absent. Their relationships, their family dynamics, and their life choices did not support a change initiative. In these cases, there was no basis for change. Participant 2, remarkably, could not understand how certain inmates decided to return to their previous lives, or why they should not want to make a change. This participant questioned why some offenders are not afraid of returning to jail, and why they chose not to accept help in realizing a new life of hope and freedom. Participant 4 seemed to equate the inmates' stories of incarceration to their use and

abuse of drugs or alcohol. He noted they must have a false sense of belonging because they look to these negative influences as a source of stability. Many times, a person with an alcohol or drug addiction problem will feel they have the issue under control and put themselves in situations where they try to test those boundaries, only to find themselves back in the same situation.

Participant 11 also at times felt overwhelmed by some inmates' lack of response and commitment to change or transformation. Participant 3 recounted that when inmates did not have a change of heart they found themselves back in trouble because they "lacked purpose or value in their lives." Such inmates were unable to forge a path for change because they did not have a commitment to Christ, who changes hearts. Many offenders failed to grasp who they are and what God's purpose was for their lives. Sometimes it is tiresome, and trying to help someone who does not want help is frustrating. Drugs and alcohol have a hold on most offenders to the point where they do not see any other way out. Other inmates may not understand how they ended up in jail, yet, no matter what they tried to do never to return, they always ended up back in the same place. Many inmates seem to have a tough time taking responsibility for their past mistakes. Although some offenders want to make better choices and change, they often continued to associate with the wrong people who reinforce false values and destructive choices (Participant 18). That decision might be the catalyst that returned them to prison. Participant 3 noted that inmates might not know how to make a change to break the cycle of reincarceration.

The threat of jail or other forms of punishment deter the majority of residents from crime, but they are not a deterrent for these repeat offenders. Moreover, participant 10 stated jail did not rehabilitate or encourage them toward a change of life, which was later affirmed by the focus group experts. Inmates may feel controlled by outside influences, and in turn, they may feel the need to control other people or situations around them (Participant 10). Most inmates never took

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responsibility for their lives or decisions. Many inmates tend to blame other people, such as their family or friends, and then blame law enforcement by stating that "well you know they are looking for ya, they are going to watch you until they get you again" (Participant 17). Figure 1 shows the offenders' perception of the value of others when arrested, based on the perception of this study's participants. Mentors perceived that repeat offenders possessed mostly negative perspectives of other people when they first engaged them in jail.
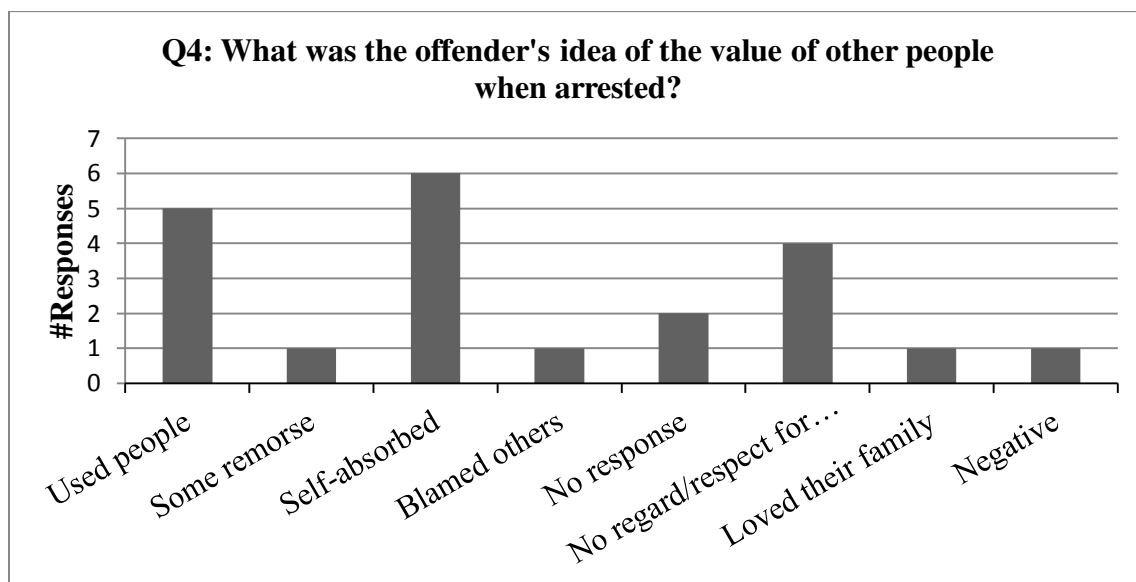
Figure 1. Offender's value of people, from the perception of mentors

Inmates may feel stuck and trapped in the false belief that they do not have a choice to break free. Offenders' main purpose in life was to have fun at the moment without concern for their future or for the impact their actions have on other people. Offenders did not grow up in faith or a sense of hope, so they did not have that type of foundation which sees the eternal value in themselves and all other people, which could help them through life's challenges. Participant 17 believed that the whole issue of why inmates return to prison is because of the negative influences surrounding their lives. Inmates continue to blame their friends and others for their

poor life choices as they revert to their old behavior of drugs, alcohol, using people and violence. Inmates lacked purpose, and they did not have an identity. Offenders frequently feel unable to change. This sense of isolation made them connect with like-minded people involved in drugs and the pursuit of immediate gratification.

The participants stated many offenders who attend the Jail Outreach meetings reported being influenced by other inmates to not take part in the meetings. Participant13 noted these influential relationships between an inmate and their cellmate oftentimes support the offender's behavior and contribute to their predicament. Jail is a symptom. The underlying issues are a lack of family and faith, their upbringing, their past relationships, and their environment (Participant 15). Participant 10 suggested the reason many inmates turn to a life of crime that results in incarceration is their fathers are non-existent in their lives, their dysfunctional socioeconomically status, and their poor choice in friends. Most important, they do not have a solid foundation in faith, which the participants believed provides meaning, purpose and hope.

Without a firm foundation or sense of purpose, these individuals turned to alcohol, drugs, and other pursuits of pleasure, leading to a life of crime. Participant 14 stated no matter what route one takes, without a relationship with God offenders all end up in the same place. The power of God and the hope he provides can heal their souls (Participant 4). Unfortunately, offenders grew up without a sense of who God is or who they are, and external influences overshadow the sense of genuine meaning or purpose in life.

Theme 2: Importance of Family

The importance of family illumined as a theme when I endeavored to understand what issues, if any, of the faith and values-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc., contributed to reducing recidivism. The lack of a

functional family that offered both a sense of belonging and accountability was seen as contributing to recidivism, but a surrogate family of people who could fulfill that need was seen as helpful in reducing recidivism.

Participants reflected on the past and provided some insight into what may have contributed to the inmate's reincarceration. Internal and external factors such as family and choices in friends seem to advance the problem (Participants 2, 4). The aspects that most influenced the behavior for reincarcerated offenders were the lack of a role model, absent fathers, and divorced parents (Participants 5, 14). These conditions shaped the inmates' belief system, since their backgrounds did not meet their emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical needs. Participants 9 and 18 found that the family's lack of support could negatively affect the offenders. Some family members were self-absorbed and worried only about themselves and their baser cravings instead of focusing on their children or the family's greater good. Participant 11 compared situations from two inmates. The first was an angry man who grew up with an abusive father, but was fortunate to have an active influence from his Christian grandmother. The other offender grew up without a father or positive role model, which adversely impacted the sense of value. Both men lacked positive paternal influences and made poor decisions, which caused them to serve time in jail. Participant 11 believed that for inmates to change, they must not associate their negative relationships that they have with their worldly fathers to the relationship available with their heavenly Father God through Christ Jesus. They must understand that even if they stumble and make mistakes as they begin their walk with God, He will cleanse their soul, change their lives, and provide the meaning and purpose they have lacked.

Participant 11 discussed the reason he felt one particular inmate became a re-offender. He gave evidence that the inmate suffered from an inability to understand the consequences of his actions, compounded because the offender was a victim of fetal alcohol syndrome, which left him cognitively impaired. This participant believed that if this offender could understand how his thoughts influenced his actions and how his actions prompted his reincarceration, he would have made a better choice, such as continuing to attend mentoring meetings and then later attended an area church after his release. The focus group experts later recommended that mental health counselors take a greater role in a community multi-faceted approach to helping offenders.

Participant 8 noted that these inmates came from a life of trying to prove they had value. In many cases, drugs and alcohol were a way of life passed down from generation to generation. So many people have hurt them that they feel they are not worthy of love and that life consists of using people and being used. Many offenders tried to soothe their hurt by turning to alcohol and drugs, but over time some of them have learned this escape is merely a temporary solution that only exacerbates the original problems. When offenders come to accept the inherent value they have as eternal and redeemable people created by God, their lives begin to find meaning and hope. Participant 9 illustrated the grip of addiction by describing how inmates would even sacrifice their friends and family to get drugs or alcohol. The behavior of these offenders was a perpetual source of destruction. Inmates seem to feel caught in a pattern of dysfunction between victim, abuser, and rescue roles. The hurt from their past makes them feel stuck in these roles, and they turn to alcohol and drugs as a way to cope with the hurt they experienced from these relationships. Participant 11 recalled a situation where an inmate was exposed to alcohol while his mother was unable to make even small decisions.

The trauma of feeling unsafe or not loved by one or both parents makes lives more difficult. Participant 3 noted how the reality of the lack of love from inmates' parents was the cause of such destruction in their lives, which could be a cyclical, generational trait. Feeling abandoned by the people who should be there to love and nurture them shaped their behavior. These offenders lacked discipline, love, and guidance, and in turn grew up to later demonstrate the same sentiment to their children. Their family did not have a relationship with God and thus their lives reflected the unregenerate nature (Participant 10). Participant 14 related how one inmate fell back into old behavior simply because he grew up that way and thought his environment was healthy, so after release he returned to that environment and the behavior associated with it.

Offenders often lack good character and seem to gravitate toward friends who perpetuate conduct unacceptable to society. Offenders' sense of distorted values and their ideas of acceptable conduct are molded early through selfishness and abuse (Participant 16). Many inmates felt unloved and unlovable and could not form healthy relationships with the opposite sex. Participant 15 believed that many of the inmates simply use people. He told stories of how inmates fathered multiple children from just as many women without any sense of responsibility or concern. If inmates had faith, they would not abuse people because they would see themselves and others as valuable, redeemable, and ultimately worthy of honor. Instead, many turned to drugs and alcohol to mask the emotional pain, and use others for their immediate gratification.

The Jail Outreach does give the inmates a sense of belonging (Participant 17), but the program also illuminates how their dysfunctional family situation contributed to their behavior. The fact that they felt unloved much of their life had a real impact on how they connected with the community. Some inmates had a false sense of security. Growing up too quickly even while

still at an early age without the formation of concrete values or a sense of who they were did not help them understand right from wrong or normal versus abnormal behavior. Some inmates tried to please people who did not love them. They were in a cycle of loving someone who did not show love in return. In some cases, this experience made them incapable of loving anyone unless a change first took place within them. The inmate's anger turned to hate, and their hatred turned to destructive behavior to themselves and others (Participant 12).

Participant 2 discussed how the inmates self-talk contributed to their inability to forge a new path. Participant 2 wondered if it was excuse to say that an inmate's family relationships were the causes of their bad choices. Offenders may not have had a meaningful relationship that would make a difference. Families who model desired behavior attain desired results. The research question did not illuminate how the inmate's parent's demands, such as work, school, number of children, or financial problems either contributed to or detracted from, their life, therefore, could be a recommendation for future research.

Theme 3: Connecting to Society

Alienation from people and society contributed to inmate recidivism. The lack of long-term, comprehensive, and interactive aftercare between mentors and offenders resulted in the marginalization of offenders and ultimately increased the likelihood of recidivism. The faith-based approach of the Jail Outreach organization has several components, including weekly one-on-one meetings with inmates, a six-week course taught in classrooms in jail that address cognitive change (Greystone Educational, 2008), and a support group meeting for released offenders who meet in town weekly.

Participant 14 believed that our society's decaying values contributed to the downfall of the nation. Our culture shifted to where we have lost a sense of right and wrong. Prison

incarcerations are, unfortunately, an indication of how society functions. Some inmates returned to the same situation because they did not believe they were doing anything wrong. They had a strong connection to the streets, and somehow they justified their actions. Participant 20 stated that it was hard to understand how inmates can suggest that they do not know these differences. It comes down to a lack of understanding of what is truth and absolute. Society must return to a structure where families provide a strong foundation of values to their children. In a perfect world, people would get along, and violence and other unlawful acts would be non-existent. Participant 11 recalled a conversation he had with an inmate upon his release. The released offender openly questioned why he had to be nice to people in authority, as his parole officer. The participant explained to him that if he walked with Christ, he would treat everyone with respect. This particular inmate's thinking had not changed as he seemed to lack a genuine concern or respect for others.

Participant 10 worked with many less fortunate people living in homeless shelters, and he even entered into business relationships with some of them to help them gain employment, often only to regret that decision. For mentors, a conflict occurred between their desire to care enough to provide shelter for people less fortunate, and taking on an unplanned financial burden when offenders do not pay their bills. The inmates do not seem to concern themselves about anyone or anything. For some, God is not even a passing thought (Participant 10). Inmates tend to want to blame their environment, their family conditions, and even their friends for their wrong choices (Participant 16). The type of relationships they had before they met with the members of the Jail Outreach were selfish (Participant 16). They focused around their feelings, and in most cases their perceptions were not reality. Their friendships were destructive. Whether influenced from groups or individuals, inmates seem to feel they do not have a choice in these situations.

Recidivism is high because inmates return to what feels natural (Participant 7). Ultimately, it comes down to a person's choice of either walking away from a situation or following along. They lack the character and discernment required changing and instead seek the comfort of familiarity. The only way people are going to change is if they detach themselves from the negative people influencing their life, begin associating with new and constructive relationships, and pray for God's intervention.

Participants 17 and 3 suggested that outside influences, such as the media, also contributed to an inmate's destruction. Television, newspapers, and comic books all show good and evil, but some characterizations leave the wrong impression on people. Moreover, outside influences have taken people away from the truth that can set people free. The activists and special interest groups have all chiseled away from the concept of right and wrong. In the world today, homosexuality is accepted. Previously, homosexuality was considered immoral but now biblical morals are viewed as archaic at best or even hateful. It is difficult to speak out against sinful and destructive behavior or offer freedom from it in Christ even when it is destructive for the parties concerned due to all of the demands for equality (Participant 17). There is an emotional struggle within these reoffenders between right and wrong, good and evil, and truth versus lies. The battle comes from fighting the embers that burn beneath the ashes. Participant 13 noted that it was not until he joined the Jail Outreach that he began to understand the cause of how inmates ended up doing time. Prior to talking with them, he thought that the reason they turned to a life of crime was simply due to their environment or drugs. Before becoming a mentor, he "did not give it serious thought to the process of their world view. How they viewed others around them or how they viewed the world." This participant began to understand how offenders' world view was an underlying impetus that led them to justify the choices they made.

Likewise, participant 15 stated that with God's help and good mentors, inmates can conquer their sinful nature, change, and live transformed lives.

When inmates are in jail, they lose their freedom. Jail is supposed to be a deterrent, but effective programs are not in place to help them address the underlying issues and ultimately readjust to society with new, supporting relationships. There are a number of social programs, but most of them fail to impact a genuine change of heart and thinking, which is necessary to transform behavior. Participant 8 reiterated that inmates should not return to their old environment but develop relationships with a broad cross-section of mentors, form different relationships when reconnecting with the community, and get involved in area churches upon release. Prolonged support from the mentors can help inmates change by helping them develop their spiritual relationship with God and others. Moreover, members can help by reintroducing offenders into society where they can find real fulfillment. Former inmates need to surround themselves with people that enjoy the simple things in life and individuals who value an honest day's work. If offenders cannot successfully transition back into society, develop new or restore old relationships, and gain employment, they will return to the life they once left behind with predictable results. Offenders feel stuck as they do not believe they can attain a comfortable lifestyle without a real income. The research topic explored the interview question of what do mentors perceive as the factors or beliefs that contribute to offenders rearrest.

Mastery of Self is the second category and includes the fourth and fifth themes. The research topic explored the interview question of how offenders gained mastery over their thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and actions. Figure 2 shows how offenders' lives changed after mentoring with the Outreach. The mentors saw a change in many of the offenders' attitudes toward other people. Examination of data included in the qualitative phenomenological study

gained attention as I reviewed the total counts for codes relating to the themes Christ as our

Savior and reasons for change (see Table 4). The theme, Christ as Savior, provides

empowerment of the offender through the restoration of a relationship first with the creator and

then with others, which include a transformation of purpose and desire that enhance mastery of

self and inherently affects behavior. The theme, reasons for change, provides a catalyst for

mastery of self.
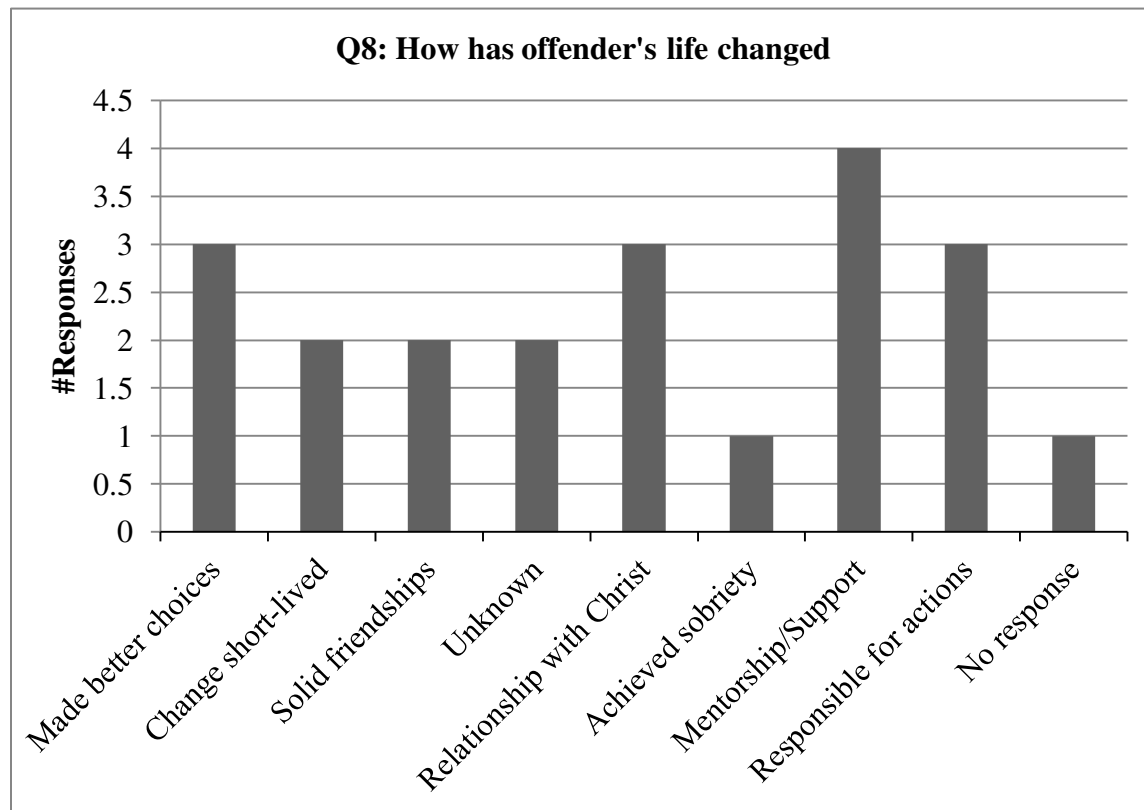
Figure 2. How has offender's life changed, from the perception of the mentors

Table 4.

Codes Relating to the Themes Christ as our Savior and Reasons for Change.

	#Theme Four: Christ as our Savior	#Theme Five: The reasons for change
+Support /relationships from others/members	11	4
+Church as a means for change	16	1
+Growing in faith	10	2
+Faithful servant	15	2
+A chance to reflect	5	3
+/- Responsible members of society	1	0
+Hope/healing/forgiveness	12	4
+Related their own personal journey	4	4
+Acceptance	5	2
+See themselves differently	3	1
+Different relationships	1	3
+Beginning to feel safe	0	2
+Trust, respect, meaning, purpose	3	0
+Unconditional love	4	1
+Enjoy life	0	0
+God is present	0	4
+Other factors leading to change	2	2
+Reestablishing relationships families/society re	0	2
+Tight schedules, but they show up	0	0

Note: Positive (+) or negative (-) contributors to Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

Table 4. (Con't).

Code Frequency and Co-occurrence Analyses

	#Theme Four: Christ as our Savior	#Theme Five: The reasons for change
-A change in thinking/belief	2	6
-Support/accountability is needed	0	2
-Battle between truth vs lies/good vs evil/values	1	9
-Going back to the same situation/choice	1	2
-Need to feel a sense of belonging	1	0
-Unable to see themselves change	2	0
-Lack of family support/environment	0	1
-Mentors could not relate to inmates	1	0
-Their faith is lacking	5	3
-They didn't know how to make different choices	0	1
+Unconditional love	4	1
-A change in behavior is needed	1	3
-Alcohol/drug abuse or another unlawful behavior	3	4
-Blaming others for their poor life choices	3	5
-Friends/family were destructive	5	2
-Unable to relate to those that are lost	0	0
-Church members have a conflicting stance	1	0
-Felt stuck	0	2
-Inmates could not relate to mentors	1	0
-Jail was not a deterrent	0	0
-Negative outside influences/not friends/family	0	2
-Negatively affect others in their circle	0	0

Note: Positive (+) or negative (-) contributors to Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

Theme 4: Christ as our Savior

Some inmates do not want to experience a sense of healing or see a change of life

necessary to break the cycle of recidivism, even after the mentors engage them in jail. Those who

do want to change are up against strong and ingrained influences that oppose change. The interactions between the Outreach mentors and the offenders must be frequent and consistent (Participant 4). In the context of surrogate families, learning and interacting with Jail Outreach mentors may help offenders' understand themselves and their environment, which could contribute to the change of offender's beliefs, thinking, and behavior.

Participant 15 learned that the main hindrance for change with the inmates he encountered was the negative thinking and evil forces permeating their lives. The offenders did not know the Bible (Participant 5), and they did not understand how sin affects a person's ability to change. This realization comes from the relationship they build with Christ (Participant 3). God's grace saved us (Participant 15) from bondage and strong-holds that enslave people. Participant 15 used the term, born again, to describe how Christ calls his people to profess their faith and repent to be set free from destructive behavior and its consequences.

Participant 14 believed that the first step to healing is that inmates must admit they need help. Once they recognize their need, then they are more inclined to have an open heart to accept responsibility for change and a savior in Jesus. Participant 11 recounted his experience, and his initial reluctance to live by the Bible. As a younger man, he thought that he would have to give up the worldly ways, and he was not ready to do that because he feared that he would lose his freedom. What he realized was that by submitting to the Lord, there is tremendous freedom. Oftentimes, inmates have a distorted view of reality and what a Christian life entails. Inmates need to want to change. Offenders must want a better life than what they had before. The support they receive from mentors allows them to open their heart to Christ. Through this love and acceptance; change begins (Participant 17).

Participant 7 suggested that learning about and coming to know Christ is a life-changing experience. Participant 17 felt over time; many inmates did open their hearts and wanted to hear about the Word of God. Mentors must relate the truth continuously to inmates because learning is a never-ending process, and they must relate the word of God to them in a way they understand. Inmates need to accept the help of both the mentors and of area churches after their release to help them appreciate their self-worth, to know they are valued and respected, and mitigate their destructive feelings (Participant 2). Participants 12 and 7 stated that when inmates decided to put their trust in God, and accept Christ as their savior, life began.

Participants noted that it should be obvious to people in jail to see how others' lives have changed through transformed beliefs and thinking. Observing such behavior causes some inmates to reflect on their stories and question why they are different (Participant 12). The mentors provide a valuable resource to those in need. Participant 9 stated that Christians in the churches have an aim to not only help those who are in jail, but all people who need their help. They do not personally count how many people they have helped in a year, but they do look to document the success stories so that others who come for help can see how God works in this way. Through the interactions with mentors, the inmates' faith can grow as they find forgiveness, transformation, and freedom through Jesus.

The greatest gift that Jesus gave to his people was that he died for their sins. This realization can help sinners overcome their feelings of guilt and shame by understanding that through him, sins are forgiven and destructive behavior patterns broken (Participant 12). There is nothing to big or too small that will cause Jesus to turn away from those who accept him as their savior, believe in his word, and ask for his forgiveness. Faith and hope have become a way of life, and the offenders see themselves differently because they are growing in faith. When the

inmates allow Christ to enter their lives, change occurs. They found their place in society and found healing and comfort in God's word. Participant 4 believed that this new foundation in their faith changed their lives. Participant 3 recalled how, through Christ, an inmate was able to change and feel a sense of purpose. The offender stopped envisioning how his friend perceived him and focused instead on how he thought God perceived him. New believers are vulnerable. They must take steps not to end up back in jail by returning to a life of crime that is most familiar. They must walk with Christ. Getting to know Christ showed offenders they could take responsibility of their life and make better decisions (Participant 3). Participant 7 noted that as the inmates' relationships change, they have hope that is now the basis of their faith.

Theme 5: Reasons for Change

People, such as their friends, family, and possibly even teachers were the negative influences in the inmates' past that contributed to their perception that no one cared about them and led them astray toward a path of sin (Participant 11). This betrayal could be a contributor to their feeling of despondency. Offenders then chose to befriend those who stole, took drugs, and lived a life of crime. These offenders did not know how to break free from these influences and behaviors. Participant 8 believed that it was important to separate the inmate from their negative environment to help them break from the counterproductive influences and at the same time, surround them with a broad cross-section of caring people to help them heal emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Replacing unhealthy and dysfunctional relationships are critical to an inmate's recovery (Participant 9).

Participants reiterated their belief that many inmates want to change and that they want something better for themselves (Participant 9). Participant 3 noted that having a relationship with Christ is a portion of that equation. People do not live their lives in independent autonomy,

and self-efficacy develops through relationship acquired through modeling (Bandura, 1994, p. 125). Participant 3 also believes that merely a positive family influence or fear of going back to jail is not an effective deterrent. Figure 3 shows the only way they will make a permanent change is if they have a change of heart, which will evoke a sense of right and wrong that, when genuine, guides their conduct.
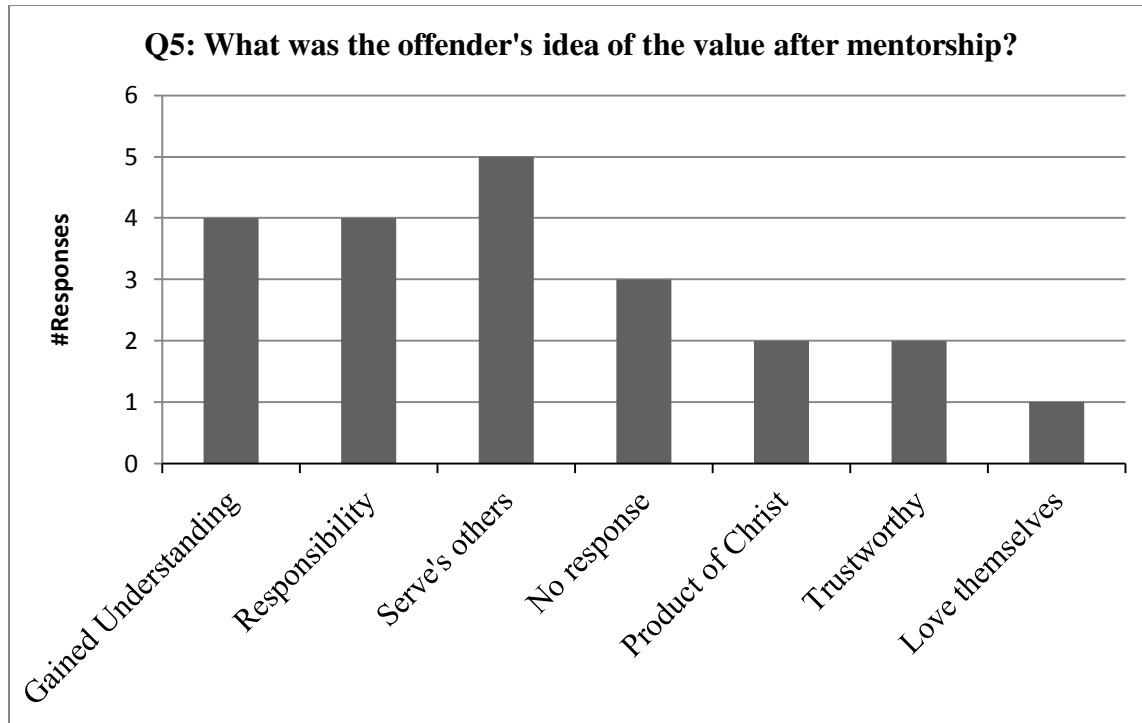
Q5: What was the offender's idea of the value after mentorship?

Figure 3. Characteristics of change.

Participant 1 found that after the inmates chose a different path, some experienced sadness when they found themselves alone. Offenders recognized they shouldn't go back to their old friends who promoted recidivism. These offenders struggled with their decision to separate from the people of their past, so that was the time they needed the help and support of mentors and the area churches upon their release.

Greater Faith Community is the third category and includes the sixth theme. The research topic explored the interview question of how the greater faith community worked

together or failed to work together to support offenders. Examination of data included in the

qualitative phenomenological study gained attention as I reviewed the total counts for codes

relating to the theme of engagement or rejection by the church (see Table 5).

Table 5.

Codes Relating to the Theme of Engagement or Rejection by the Church.

.	#Theme Six: Greater Faith Community
+Support /relationships from others/members	9
+Church as a means for change	5
+Growing in faith	2
+Faithful servant	6
+A chance to reflect	3
+/- Responsible members of society	1
+Hope/healing/forgiveness	2
+Related their own personal journey	2
+Acceptance	4
+See themselves differently	2
+Different relationships	2
+Beginning to feel safe	1
+Trust, respect, meaning, purpose	3
+Unconditional love	1
+Enjoy life	0
+God is present	1
+Other factors leading to change	1
+Reestablishing relationships families/society re	1
+Tight schedules, but they show up	0

Note: Positive (+) or negative (-) contributors to Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

Table 5. (Con't)

Codes Relating to the Theme of Engagement or Rejection by the Church.

	#Theme Six: Greater Faith Community
-A change in thinking/belief	5
-Support/accountability is needed	9
-Battle between truth vs. lies/good vs. evil/values	0
-Going back to the same situation/choice	5
-Need to feel a sense of belonging	1
-Unable to see themselves change	0
-Lack of family support/environment	0
-Mentors could not relate to inmates	11
-Their faith is lacking	2
-They didn't know how to make different choices	0
+Unconditional love	1
-A change in behavior is needed	4
-Alcohol and drug abuse or another unlawful behavior	0
-Blaming others for their poor life choices	0
-Friends/family were destructive	1
-Unable to relate to those that are lost	6
-Church members have a conflicting stance	8
-Felt stuck	1
-Inmates could not relate to mentors	1
-Jail was not a deterrent	0
-Negative outside influences other than friends/family	0
-Negatively affect others in their circle	1

Note: Positive (+) or negative (-) contributors to Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

Theme 6: Engagement or Rejection by the Church

There are times when participants questioned their role within the church. Many reflected on the failure of the area churches to get more involved with inmates or to welcome and engage released offenders. Churches in general must realize that everyone comes into salvation at different times, and they need to understand that everyone's progress is not always the same

(Participant 7). To help an inmate realize a change of heart, Christians must be patient and love the person through the process.

Each participant articulated both strengths and weakness of area churches. The primary strength of the church was reported as both the awareness of the underlying problem and possession of the solution. Participant 14 acknowledged the strengths of the church included an awareness of the need and the solution, and that some mentoring occurred where people felt accepted. The strength of the church is that people feel loved "because God created them and loves them and has a purpose for them" (Participant 12). This realization causes inmate to realize, maybe for the first time that they have a sense of value and honor in Christ, and that can be a catalyst for a transformed life.

The strength seen in people within the church is also a weakness when some church members forget where they came from and "don't want to interact" with offenders. Participant 12 characterized this as "both a lack of compassion and lack of concern."

Participants reported that the main weakness in the area churches was that the majority of church members were unable or willing to extend themselves to help less fortunate or troubled people. This failure was attributed to the lack of spiritual maturity on the part of many church members. Sometimes this is evidenced in a lack of concern and other times in the sense of fear.

Participant 14 reported the weaknesses of the church being, "there aren't enough people who would have knowledge and training to be good at mentoring." There was a perception that many church members were at different levels of spiritual growth, and many were "not spiritually mature enough." Participant 16 said that a weak faith in the church caused many members to be inwardly focused and uncaring because they failed to see the value in others.

Participant 11 questioned the commitment of many of the church members and suggested they must make time in their daily routine to care for others and visit inmates. Participant 17 believed that church members must find a way to be more welcoming, and demonstrate genuine care for offenders and others like them who need help. Some church members may judge others based on the clothes they wear, their past conduct, or where they came from, instead of opening their homes and hearts to those in need as the faith requires. Participant 13 believed that even some pastors and church leaders are still in the process of their growth in their faith and might also continue to struggle in their journey. Participant 13 stated, "To a certain extent we who are 'healthy' struggle with the same thought processes where we are out for ourselves, and our pleasures," and that requires a certain degree of continued transformation of our beliefs and thoughts so that our actions will be consistent. Participant 9 concluded that, although some church members do not have a good track record of reaching out to people who need help, there are still members who do open their hearts, and they tend to volunteer as mentors.

The strengths and the weaknesses of area churches are interrelated and represent the presence and the absence of the same characteristics. Although the Jail Outreach disseminates information to a large number of area evangelical churches to solicit volunteer mentors to join the Outreach and reach out to inmates and released offenders as Christ commanded, participant 15 reported that the response is "very, very low." Admittedly, the Jail Outreach is a challenging activity because of the high rate of recidivism and the need for volunteers to commit time and invest personal concern (Participant 15). Many Christians within area churches behave as if they believe that since they have not personally committed a sin that is a criminal offense that leads to incarceration, they cannot relate to those that have committed those types of crimes. They falsely

feel that they are good Christians because they do as expected, and that is good enough (Participant 15).

The potential for church members to partner with the Outreach can save a life. God works through people. Unfortunately, since there are many people within the area churches that refuse to get involved in Outreach, the opportunity is lost to introduce the offenders to God's word. The existing number of mentors is not sufficient to engage all the available inmates and released offenders. Participant 11 believed that churches sometimes have opposing views on what the Bible calls upon them because congregations do not have many members willing to get involved. Due to limited church member support and involvement, overburdened mentors still work with the volunteers they already have, yet these mentors feel an obligation to help more than their numbers can achieve. Area churches have an internal conflict between proactively leading the way in outreaches such as this, or the belief that offenders should seek help on their own.

Many church members want to isolate themselves in fear and self-interest. The church members sometimes indicate their priority is to protect their families from the perceived negative influences that interacting with inmates may incur. Many church members choose to turn their backs on lost offenders. Participant 4 felt that their actions were hypocritical. Even if it is not convenient, mentors of the Jail Outreach need to and do provide help to the inmates (Participant 8). They need to show they care about them through both their words and actions. There is also a human condition as others remain judgmental; they compare one to another and cannot accept those less fortunate or with problems. This acceptance of those with problems requires patience, genuine concern, and prayer. Love thy neighbor as yourself is sometimes hard to practice (Participant 10). It is difficult for church members to care for offenders unless they see offenders

as valuable, redeemable, and eternal – ironically the very same thing that mentors recognize the offenders need to realize in their lives before they too can change.

Another weakness is that area churches sometimes have a hard time relating to offenders upon their release from incarceration. Participant 14 noted that one of their shunned youth group volunteers had a hard time expressing himself and relating to others because of issues at his home. One could see the scars on his arms from cutting. Members of the church feared getting to know him because of his outward appearance. The church needs servant leaders who have a biblical understanding and educational background that can equip them and their members to help those in need. The churches preach about how God loves people and Christ died to set people free, but the fact remains most church members seem to lack the consistent concern that offenders need. Everyone is at different levels of growth, so many within the church are lacking spiritual maturity needed to support others (Participant 14). Although many members of area churches need to find better ways to relate to the prisoners upon their release and other less fortunate people or troubled people, gratefully through Christ different relationships may form from learning to see others as God does – eternal, valuable and restorable. That can bridge the cultural and generational differences.

When it comes to helping offenders break the cycle of recidivism, participants expressed concern that area churches fall short in their efforts. Many church members cannot relate to inmates or released offenders, and they sometimes marginalize or ignore offenders. Participant 7 believed fear could lead people, even otherwise loving church members, astray. This participant seemed to indicate that some church members are in conflict with fear; although they want to help the offenders, they believe getting involved could put themselves or their family at risk. It seems even members of the church family can get caught up in their everyday life and neglect

those who need their help. Participant 3 admitted having lost touch with some of the inmates over time, but that is different from refusing to engage released offenders. What causes church members to decide to marginalize the problem and push offenders to the side instead of engaging with them? What drives the fears of church members to turn their backs on drug addicts, molesters, and others who commit violent crimes but who expressed a willingness to learn about God during their incarceration (Participant 3)? Participant 17 believed that the church must be more open and willing to accept people with different views and behavior, which they can do without compromising the truth in Scripture. Otherwise, how could offenders hear Scripture and change based on the teachings of the Bible if members of the church are not open to meet people where they are in life?

Jail Outreach mentors felt the members of the area churches can lose focus and forget why they must help those less fortunate. Participants 17 and 9 acknowledged that in the eyes of God, everyone is a sinner. Even church members can fall victim to negative behaviors and show partiality. Some members of area churches who have attended church for 30 years are still prejudicial, critical, and possess a feeling of superiority and self-righteousness. This behavior is contradictory to the teaching in the Bible and is not evidence of life changed by Christ. How can members of any church turn their back on those who are less fortunate and who are in desperate need of change? It may be a lack of compassion and concern (Participant #2).

Participant 21 acknowledged a correlation between offenders and many within the church who likewise fail to see themselves as created in God's image, and equally valuable and redeemable. Participant 21 stated, "There are a lot of people in our churches today who are just not living to their potential and they don't know what's there for them in Christ so, I mean, whether they're in a church or in a prison, I guess it doesn't matter as much about the

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environment as what they are or aren't taking advantage." Participant 21 emphasized the weakness of the church is many people are quietly caught up in the busyness and appear uncaring or selfish, probably the result of ignorance and lack of training rather than malice. These Christians may have abdicated their biblical responsibilities as stewards of the church (Participant 7). Participant 2 noted some church members tend to hinder change and make their interactions unrelatable to offenders. Participant 17 believed church members must instead be honest with themselves. Church members need to deal with their issues before they can help others, and so they may help others. Through God's grace, and only after their change of heart, can these church members see a transformation – and ever hope that offenders will also see a transformation.

The problem identified with churches is they often do not exemplify a biblical lifestyle that actively and consistently engages those in need outside their churches to help them change. The church members themselves may require training, and in some cases the motivation to see others as God does so they will want to help them. It is contradictory to what God has called us to do (Participant 15). Fear and indifference seem to be the two main barriers in area churches that keep them from significantly engaging those outside their walls and their faith. What kind of intervention can church elders provide (i.e., mentorship, support group, or education) to help them and their church members become more willing to help those in need? Could a renewed relationship with God open their hearts and cause them to not judge others so harshly? In order for Jail Outreach mentors to help offenders see others respectfully instead of as potential victims, offenders must first be reborn. Then, they will know the Lord, who transforms people, and they will begin to learn to relate to others. We cannot give away what we do not have (Participant 7). Participant 12 stated that church members must remember that God calls upon us to help others

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when the opportunity presents, not just when it is convenient. We need to show we care about the people around us by helping the offenders realize they are not beyond hope, and they can be forgiven and transformed in a fulfilled life through Jesus Christ. The consistent theme with this research question shows that offenders need support, and if they do not receive help from the church, Participant 3 thought offenders would indeed return to the wrong crowd and the life they are trying to leave behind. Church members need to acknowledge that it is hard for released offenders to make a new start and find someone who cares enough to help. Rebuilding a life is not easy without the help and support from others in the greater faith community. The solution to the prejudice, indifference and lack of preparedness within the church to reach out and engage others in mentoring is in a revitalized leadership: "They've got to speak the truth, and they cannot be afraid to do it" (Participant 17).

Jail Outreach Impact is the fourth category and includes the seventh theme. The research topic explored the interview question of how learning from and interacting with members of the Jail Outreach, in the context of surrogate families, impacted offenders' beliefs, thinking and behavior. Figure 4 shows what mentors attribute the change in offenders' beliefs. Examination of data included in the qualitative phenomenological study gained attention as I reviewed the total counts for codes relating to the theme of connecting with Outreach (see Table 6).
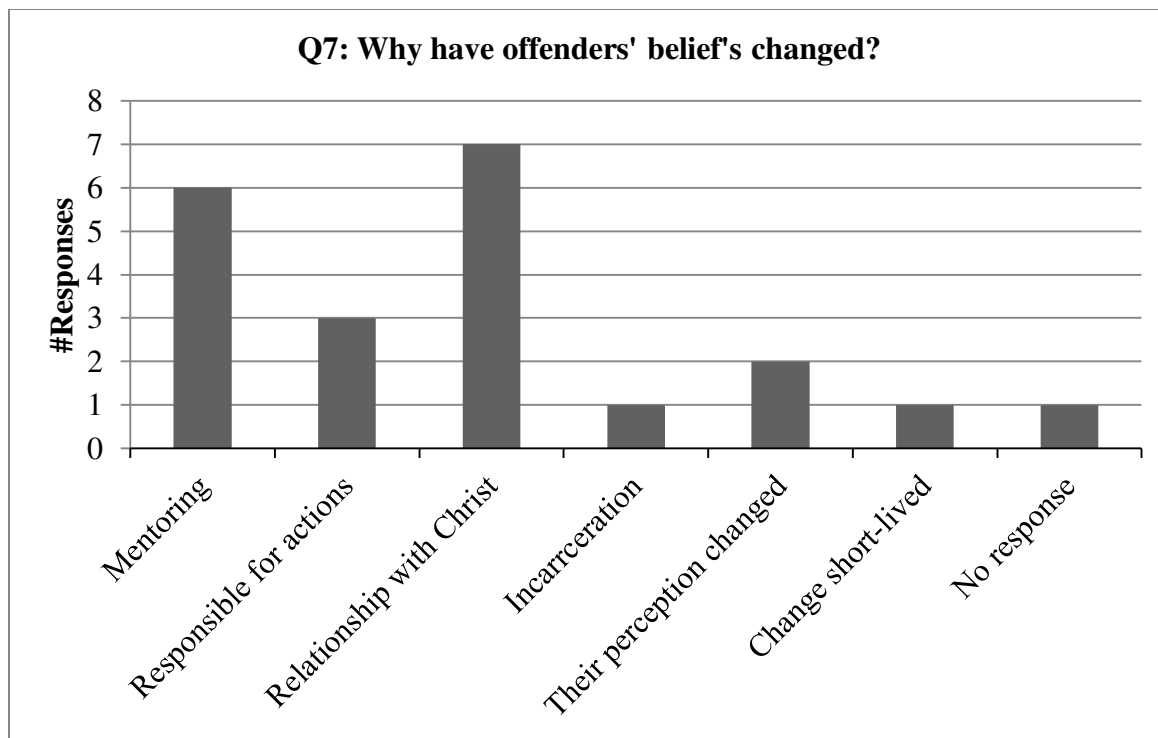
Figure 4. Causes of offenders' changed beliefs

Table 6.

Codes Relating to the Theme of Connecting with Outreach

	#Theme Seven: Connecting with Outreach
+Support /relationships from others/members	27
+Church as a means for change	25
+Growing in faith	15
+Faithful servant	12
+A chance to reflect	11
+/- Responsible members of society	7
+Hope/healing/forgiveness	7
+Related their own personal journey	7
+Acceptance	6
+See themselves differently	6
+Different relationships	5
+Beginning to feel safe	4
+Trust, respect, meaning, purpose	4
+Unconditional love	2
+Enjoy life	1
+God is present	1
+Other factors leading to change	1
+Reestablishing relationships families/society re	1
+Tight schedules, but they show up	0

Note: Positive (+) or negative (-) contributors to Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

Table 6 (Con't)

Codes Relating to the Theme of Connecting with Outreach

	#Theme Seven: Connecting with Outreach
-A change in thinking/belief	14
-Support/accountability is needed	10
-Battle between truth vs. lies/good vs. evil/values	8
-Going back to the same situation/choice	5
-Need to feel a sense of belonging	5
-Unable to see themselves change	4
-Lack of family support/environment	3
-Mentors could not relate to inmates	3
-Their faith is lacking	3
-They didn't know how to make different choices	3
+Unconditional love	2
-A change in behavior is needed	2
-Alcohol, drug abuse or another unlawful behavior	2
-Blaming others for their poor life choices	2
-Friends/family were destructive	2
-Unable to relate to those that are lost	2
-Church members have a conflicting stance	1
-Felt stuck	1
-Inmates could not relate to mentors	1
-Jail was not a deterrent	1
-Negative outside influences -not friends/family	1
-Negatively affect others in their circle	1

Note: Positive (+) or negative (-) contributors to Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach

Theme 7: Connecting to Outreach

The Jail Outreach can and does do two things: It can help offenders transition back into society, and it can provide a safe place where people feel cared for and loved within the community of accountability (Participant 8). Participant 15 knew that before the establishment of

the Jail Outreach, inmates did not have a sense of hope for change while incarcerated. One day just led right into the next, and there were not any opportunities to improve. Participant 17 expressed how important the Jail Outreach was to offenders. Participants acknowledged that prior to meeting with mentors, these offenders did not have a relationship with Christ, nor did they realize how their choices would affect them. The concern and the love that pours out from the mentors helped the inmates realize that God can forgive their sins, they have value, and they can change their lives. Inmates found acceptance through the positive interactions with mentors.

Participant 1 found that some inmates embraced the support they received from mentors and transitioned into functioning members of society. Participant 17 valued the Jail Outreach and connected with the inmates on an individual level, emphasizing the importance of such an intimate relationship. He experienced how important the engagement is in helping these offenders in their journey toward Christ and a new life set free from crime and repeat arrests. Participant 17 explained how the Jail Outreach can help inmates as they relate their personal journey with the offenders. Through the support of the Jail Outreach, inmates found a way to change. The mentoring and their new faith guided them towards a new direction. The mentors were able to share their personal stories, which helped the inmates relate and feel a sense of hope. The mentors were able to make a connection with them because they have lived their life and experienced the same temptations and emotions, even if they did not share the same responses and criminal behavior. Participant 8 stated that perhaps by mentors "meeting the inmate's where they are" means they can relate to one another on a personal level. Building an authentic life where they would not question hope because they felt the power of God's love and acceptance from people who actually cared. Offenders could grow in faith and transition into people who care about others as well as themselves.

Through this healing process, offenders found meaning and purpose to their life. Participant 3 believed inmates changed when they were able to understand their role and sense of purpose in life. Until then, they were lost. They need to feel a sense of value and find acceptance from those around them. Jail Outreach mentors and hopefully area churches provide this support and accountability by holding them up if and when they should stumble. The Jail Outreach has helped connect the inmates to Christ and the hope of a new life that restores them to healthy relationships with others. The Jail Outreach is laying the foundation, which can help them after their release (Participant 11). The theme of C*onnecting to Outreach* showed how the mentors worked together to provide a comprehensive approach between organizations and area churches to help offenders, especially upon their release from prison.

Participant 9 acknowledged that the degree by which inmates connect with a broad cross-section of society upon their release would either promote or deteriorate their recovery process. Participants 1 and 9 noted that, in the outside world, inmates did not have the support they needed. The wrong crowd influenced them. Offenders did not have a feeling that someone cared about them until he or she met Jail Outreach mentors during his or her incarceration. The inmates needed someone to talk to while they were in jail. They needed someone whom they could begin to trust and share their innermost concerns. That is where the Jail Outreach helped. The Jail Outreach did not see just the inmate's bad acts, but also a person of value. They saw this time as an opportunity to discuss the teachings in the Bible and to show the inmates the love that Jesus provides. Participant 1 explained how the mentors related to offenders and helped them transition from their negative feelings by providing resources and a perspective along with a sense of belonging. As the mentors were able to connect with the offenders, positive reinforcement showing how God loves and restores helped them openly reflect on their past to change their

future. Participant 17 stated, "Yup, they are no longer a number." Participant 11 reminded me they were able to form relationships with the inmates because they could relate to them in a way that allowed them to feel valued. This relationship demonstrated to the offenders a path that could lead them to change. Participant 15 explained that the mentors of the Jail Outreach took a personal interest in helping the inmates and continued that engaged relationship after their release from jail.

In most cases, the inmates did not grow up in strong family units, and building a bond with the mentors can provide the support system the inmates lacked. Participant 17 reiterated that it was especially important for the outreach mentors to connect with the inmates after their release to build a close relationship.

Participant 9 felt that the Jail Outreach was a way to help offenders break their pattern of unwanted and destructive behavior, although some inmates are not ready to change. It is difficult for mentors to go through this process because of their attachments to the inmates that grow as they get to know them, and the ups and downs associated with helping them improve. Speaking of inmates, participant 17 stated, "Sometimes they do not see the value until years later, but don't give up." Participant 3 indicated that the first thing inmates think of are ways to get out of jail, but not of how their thoughts and actions led to incarceration. Prisoners initially meet Jail Outreach mentors lacking an understanding of how to change (Participant 8). The Jail Outreach can provide offenders with the answer. Mentors talk to them and address immediate material and spiritual concerns, and help them separate emotional, cognitive, and physical pain.

The environment in which the mentors meet the inmates was sometimes uncomfortable. Participant 4 noted that the meeting space was small where he could barely move around. The tight quarters seemed to hinder an open dialog.

The participants sometimes did not have a strong sense that the prisoners wanted help; therefore, in those cases no real change occurred. The Outreach members must show inmates that they can have relationships with people who are not going to hurt them (Participant 12), whereas "man will disappoint, but the love of God never will" (Participant 4). Participant 3 believed that it was important for mentors of the Jail Outreach to be vulnerable or emotionally available when interacting with the inmates. As the interactions amid the Outreach team and the inmates grew stronger, mutual feelings of trust between these two groups developed.

Mentors began to form friendships with people who want to change. Mentors can relate to their situations, in some cases because they have experienced similar feelings and struggles in the past, even though they did not commit a crime. Creating a bond with people who are experiencing the same feelings and emotions, allows mentors to support one another. Participant 11 showed how the inmates have built relationships with the mentors over time; they are also building a relationship with God. Participant 14 noted the strength of the Jail Outreach is that the inmates are introduced to other former inmates who understand their situation, because they were ex-offenders. Inmates changed, and they led by example. Inclusion offered them a chance to learn about God and changed their life while establishing boundaries through accountability. They realized that they had a choice to change (Participant 10). As peoples' values and beliefs changed, they began to value other people and the blessings in their life. They find meaning in God and appreciate his creations as they begin to find their purpose in life. Gratitude, which almost universally lacks in offenders, began to appear. Talking with changed former offenders, no one can deny the reason that caused these people to change his or her thinking and behavior (Participant 17).

Participant 4 joined the Jail Outreach in its early years. He believed the organization had a favorable impact on the inmates because it gave them an alternative to their old way of life. In turn, inmates may achieve a sense of self-respect and become involved in positive things, like giving back to the community. Moreover, the Jail Outreach also provided basic needs to keep the inmates off the streets, and then work with them to gain the skills to become a productive member of their community. It was noted that this aftercare typically includes moral, spiritual, and practical support and the Jail Outreach has provided tuition support, food, assistance obtaining employment, and paid initial rent for those seeking housing. Mentors show inmates that they are welcomed and loved. This feeling of acceptance and hope helps them want to change their life. Honest communications and positive role model helped improve the inmate's outlook, thereby transforming their lives to accept God's Grace. Being honest with the inmates establishes trust (Participant 6). This level of honesty and intimacy shows offenders that everyone makes mistakes and sin, but they do not have to remain in that condition. Having someone to share their life's experiences will teach the inmates that he or she may have a chance at a better future. Offenders seem to be much less likely for re-arrest if they move to a continuation of the mentoring upon their release from incarceration. Through the Jail Outreach, inmates were able to build relationships with people who enjoy a sense of mutual respect and accountability. They need people in their lives they respect and who can reinforce them and help support their re-emergence as a successful member of society.

God deserves all of the glory, and we should recognize that we are "no better than the ones we serve" (Participant 7). Hope is alive because we can see the benefits of how lives can change. When offenders recognize that hope, it can motivate change. The offenders may not have known how to make different choices, and while they are in jail, the mentors helped them

gain a vision of seeing themselves change. This intervention can bring awareness to inmates on how to realistically understand situations and make better decisions, which may ultimately lead to a better life (Participant 2). By developing a relationship with God, inmates can find a sense of peace. Participants feel that Jail Outreach mentors working with area churches can help those less fortunate and meet basic needs not only for the inmates, but also their families. The Jail Outreach guides offenders to a place of recovery of mind, body, and soul. Participant 9 purported that the Jail Outreach has the means to help guide the offenders through tough times. Mentors have the experience not to let the offenders manipulate them, and they have a desire to help others grow in faith. Participant 9 is thankful for the Jail Outreach because he has seen the process work for inmates. This participant has witnessed a change in behavior and their growing faith to carry them through the difficult times. The support the inmates receive while incarcerated and after their release works. Offenders find love and acceptance, but also accountability from the mentors who believe in God, and transition that level of faith to the willing spirit.

Fortunately, the mentors from the Jail Outreach are willing to share their lives and the truth from the Bible, and show the inmates the road back to a life of freedom. Those whose hearts are receptive will benefit and improve, but some offenders have hardened hearts, and little change arose. Participant 19 stated, "The seed falls there, and they might receive it but it has no root, so it does not take root in their lives, and it dies." The Bible relates the parable of the sower and the seed, which refers to the analogy of the seed of the truth falling on various soils that represent the human heart; sometimes on fertile ground and sometimes on hard, rocky soil (Participant 5). It was noted the Bible in Mark 4: 1-20 illustrates forgiveness and transformation when it shows that seeds planted on such favorable land, representing open hearts, can germinate

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and produce wondrous fruit. Inmates need to have a change of heart, but they also have to "understand it in their brain" and be free to change. The heart and mind are connected (Participant 3).

Participant 3 hoped inmates understand that through Christ, they can change and not return to a life where their poor decisions lead them back to prison. Participant 3 noted, "Their lack of spiritual knowledge and respect for God" caused them to succumb to the negative influences in their lives. Participant 11 noted how remorseful the inmates were at times and how they made new choices not avoid repeating the same mistakes. Offenders relinquished control to their Creator and welcomed the interactions they received from the mentors and sometimes later from area churches upon release. Mentors listened as the inmates reflected on their past. Offenders sometimes requested that the members pray for their family, and at this point some found a measure of healing that was foundational for growth.

Participants conceded that inmates must want to change to have a better life. Prisoners must *have a change of heart* to make better choices and the only way that change will occur if they accept God into their life. Inmates who develop a bond with Christ will know the difference between right and wrong. Offenders will then have the desire to change, and their heart will be in a place of acceptance (Participants 5, 9). This transformation will evoke a sense of right and wrong (Participant 12). Participant 12 reiterated her belief that she did feel the inmates she works alongside indeed want to change; they want something better for themselves. Sometimes, however, a change is not going to happen because of their family influence, and because their fear of going back to jail alone is not, usually, sufficient motivation for change.

Participant 12 reflected on the interaction the Outreach provides with inmates, including love and support. She recounted a conversation with a female inmate and said that through the

mentors, the inmate did develop a relationship with Jesus and experienced a significant and real change of heart and behavior. Through developing a relationship with Jesus, this female inmate found peace, and probably for the first time she experiences genuine love. This offender's attitude changed, and she is now praying for her family and herself. She is now grateful and giving thanks for the blessings in her life. Participant 11 discussed the power of prayer. Offenders must repent for their sins and take steps to walk a different path. The participant acknowledged that mentors of the Jail Outreach must continue their relationship with the inmates after their release, and stated that they should encourage the offenders to enlist the help of a local church to continue their grow in faith.

The participants recalled times when the inmates expressed their appreciation for the Jail Outreach. Offenders realized that they were loved and cared for, not because it was the mentors' job but because these unpaid mentors cared, which affirmed the inmates' sense of value and renewed hope. The inmates understood this caring stemmed from the faith and beliefs of the mentors. Through the mentors, the inmates gained an understanding of the teaching of the Bible in that they realized God created them and loved them, and that each person had value and was restorable. Through no personal agenda of their own, the mentors exemplified this. The participants expressed the belief that the offenders' new relationship with God will sustain them over time, but a participant #2 noted, "We gotta keep working with them." Jail Outreach mentoring and Bible study groups are two ways in which Christians can unite to improve their impact. Participants believe that to have a relationship with God is to know and respond to God's love through Christ, and be able to love oneself and others. Through this understanding, change will happen for inmates and their family, thereby illuminating a change of heart (Participant #2).

In conclusion, themes showed how inmates' friendships, family dynamics, sense of hopelessness, and their life choices influenced recidivism. Some participants felt that, in some cases, offenders did not have a structure to know right from wrong while others felt that inmates did not seem to care about themselves or others enough to change. The Jail Outreach volunteer mentors are themselves members of area Conservative/Evangelical Protestant Churches and work with area churches to provide a comprehensive approach supporting offenders, especially upon their release from incarceration. Mentors take a personal interest in helping the inmates while incarcerated, and continue aftercare mentoring upon their release in an effort to help them realize the hope that exists, and to help them restore old relationships or develop new and positive ones.

Expert Focus Group

After collecting the mentor surveys, completing the mentor interviews and deriving the associated coding of this data which resulted in seven themes, I convened a focus group of experts. The five participants of the focus group represented members from each of the following: the judiciary, executive law-enforcement, legislature, a national non-profit, and academia. The focus group reviewed the synopsis and the seven themes derived from the mentor interviews. I prepared six open-ended questions (Appendix D) to ask the focus group participants to obtain a different perspective of the phenomena.

Focus Group Participant Profiles

Participant 1 was a circuit court judge who had previously served as a prosecutor. His experience in the judicial system gave him significant and varied experience with recidivism, especially from the perspective of sentencing.

Participant 2 was a state representative who serves on the judicial committee. He wrote and voted on legislation that deals with corrections and recidivism.

Participant 3 was a county sheriff who serves in elected law enforcement. In his capacity as sheriff, he is also responsible for the county jail and the corrections officers who operate it.

Participant 4 was a director for a national non-profit committed to engaging offenders for the purpose of breaking the cycle of recidivism. She had significant experience both with offenders and in management of programs designed to reduce recidivism.

Participant 5 was a doctor in academia and serves as a professor and researcher of both qualitative and quantitative studies. He had significant experience with offenders.

Focus Group Discussion and Perception

The focus group discussion affirmed the results of the interviews with the 21 former mentors and concurred with the seven themes developed from the interviews. The focus group unanimously confirmed the mentors' perceptions of the reasons for recidivism and summed it up ultimately as resulting from offender's associations and behaviors. The judge articulated, "The top two causes of criminal behavior are: whom you associate with, and then secondly criminal thinking" which results in criminal behavior.

The focus group discussion also concurred that that no one changes without there being a sense of hope that compels them. Concerning recidivism, the sheriff affirmed that, "We are not going to arrest our way out of this."

The focus group confirmed the mentors' assertion that offenders need hope and a reason to change. The judge stated, "Nobody changes for themselves. People change because they have a reason to change. My point is that this type of a program is clearly an opportunity to give them a reason for changing. So while it is not the only reason people change, it is certainly a

substantial reason and historically has been the basis for a lot of change." The sheriff added, "This helps them realize their potential. There are success stories all the time." The director of a national non-profit concurred, stating, "I totally agree, they have to have a reason to change. For some of them, it is hitting rock bottom" before realizing that their hope was misplaced and being helped to see they have real hope.

The focus group expressed their confirmation of the former mentor's assertion that it is important for offenders to make meaningful connections. The sheriff stated, "Connecting to society, having somebody like a Church or somebody in the Jail Outreach…somebody makes that connection and pulls that person out of the cycle." The director of a national non-profit added that connecting with family is important but sometimes the offender's family is not well and there is alienation, and mentors become a surrogate family by caring for and reinforcing positive interaction. The focus group agreed that influences from outside the family can have a significant impact, whether good or bad, and thus the role of mentors was important.

The focus group also unanimously agreed that community mental health was an issue that simultaneously needed more emphasis. The traditional justice system with other component parts within the community, including mental health professionals must be incorporated. The judge stated, "One of the great things that this research can do by way of moving the people and the community to being more responsive" is to convey that "there are holes in the mission and if we're going to have a total approach to this, the community has to step forward and fill these gaps."

Each of the focus group participants concluded that there are no guarantees when attempting to reduce recidivism but that a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism was viable and effective. The sheriff stated, "Is faith-based important? Yes. I believe you have

adequately addressed it." The judge concurred, stating that some offenders will not break the cycle of recidivism, "but the whole point is you need to keep trying because you will turn around and save lives. And every time you get those people out of the criminal justice system and get them to be responsible citizens you really have created a new life and it's a positive experience." The director of a national non-profit agreed the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism was important because the offenders' "story many times is they don't see the value within themselves" necessary for transformed behavior, and that is directly addressed through this approach.

The focus group recommended an increased use of treatment courts, and further attempts to increase cooperation across organizational lines so that the communities, the courts, law-enforcement and social groups work together in a comprehensive manner, much as was demonstrated by the annual regional symposiums on public safety and recidivism which were sponsored by the Jail Outreach. The judge stated, "Looking at the veteran's courts, the drug treatment courts, those programs that mirror you, and by mirror you I mean the veteran's court programs clearly have mentors and those programs probably are showing a 25% to 30% recidivism rate, meaning that you are doing twice as good as the traditional system."

The focus group also recommended promoting greater community engagement with offenders. The judge stated that, seeing that the issues have been identified in this study, now the entire community needs to get more involved. "It doesn't do us any good if we spend all this time with offenders, we get them clean and sober, and then we realize they have a significant mental health problem but nobody in the community cares and so we are just at a dead end." The state representative agreed, "I think the strength of these mentoring programs is so dependent on the community, not just for the mentors themselves but what is waiting on the outside. In our

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churches and in our communities, we have a culture right now that is afraid to invest it's time in other people, and everybody wants to be very superficial and say he or she care." The risk of engaging offenders may scare some people away, but if the success stories were better-reported it may encourage more community involvement. It was acknowledged that either indifference or fear caused a lack of engagement by many in the community and area churches. The director of a national non-profit affirmed this, "We need to prepare the churches, we need to educate the churches and the community as to helping these men and women coming back into the community." The focus group affirmed the overwhelming conclusion of the 21 former mentors who asserted in their interviews that, while the churches had dynamic members committed to engaging those in trouble, the majority needed to be nurtured or trained to see others as Scripture articulates, and then act accordingly. In conclusion about the study, the judge stated, "It kind of affirms what I would have thought intuitively…so I'm quite pleased with what you got actually."

Theme 8: Accountability

While accountability was a concept interwoven into the seven themes, the focus group recommended the accountability be established as an eighth theme due to the importance of the issue. Speaking for the group, the state representative asserted, "The ability to accept that responsibility to me would seem to be critical to their (offenders) ability to change and accept change, and not return." The university professor agreed that the accountability should be an additional theme. Accountability and engagement by mentors contributed to breaking that duplicitous mindset. Since the government agencies are overwhelmed, the sheriff pointed out that reliance on government to solve the problem and provide accountability is not realistic. The sheriff explained, "The accountability issue is huge, following up with and mentoring people who are returning back into society and helping them continue on the path. There has to be a

combination of community and churches, and all kinds of different people to help them out, and this mentoring concept is huge" in providing the needed accountability for released offenders. The director of a national non-profit said that offenders need help "to develop a relapse prevention plan." This includes helping them understand what their triggers are and what often leads to relapse and recidivism, and how to overcome those triggers with the help of mentors.

Summary

My goal was to conduct a qualitative phenomenological study to strengthen my understanding of the perceptions and experiences of participants who work with inmates in jail and released offenders in the community to understand how a faith-based approach affects reducing recidivism. In conducting the study, I acquired skills necessary to persevere as a knowledgeable and experienced qualitative researcher while exploring the topic of mentor engagement within this unique interaction with offenders. Interacting with study participants in an open and relaxed atmosphere permitted the identification of seven themes derived from interviews with 21 former mentors, and an eight theme derived from a focus group meeting with experts from the judiciary, legislature, executive/law-enforcement, academia, and a national non-profit. It also led to the investigation uncovering the strengths and weaknesses within the greater faith community. My goal and focus were to exclude my personal biases from affecting this environment, thereby only obtaining the opinions and perspectives brought forth from the study participants.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the impact of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism for offenders involved in the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, by exploring the shared experiences of the volunteer mentors who engaged with offenders in the context of a surrogate family. Recidivism is generally defined as re-arrest within 3 years of release from incarceration, and that definition was accepted for this study. This study illustrated the perceptions of volunteer mentors who engaged offenders through participation in the faith-based approach of reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach to determine their impressions of what aspects of the approach were effective and what aspects were not effective in reducing recidivism. This chapter consists of six sections: (a) an overview, (b) a summary of the findings, (c) a discussion of the findings, (d) implications, (e) an outline of the limitations, and (f) recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Findings

This final chapter of the study reviews the guiding research questions. I discuss the implications of the study results and provide recommendations for future research on the phenomenon of recidivism. The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to examine the impact of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism for offenders involved in the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach and to do so by examining the shared experiences of the volunteer mentors who worked with offenders in the context of a surrogate family. Rearrest within 3 years of release from incarceration was the accepted definition of recidivism for the purpose of this research. Semistructured interviews illuminated the perceptions of volunteer

mentors who engaged offenders through participation in the faith-based approach of reducing recidivism as implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach.

Three forms of data used for this study included surveys, interviews, and focus group information to assure reliability and validity through triangulation. The participants who were surveyed and interviewed were purposefully chosen based on their experience as mentors. Of the participant pool, 21 participants were selected, completed the survey, and were interviewed before I reached data saturation. The focus group consisted of five contributors who were purposefully chosen to represent experts from the judiciary, legislature, the executive branch/law-enforcement, a national non-profit organization, and academia.

The mentor survey consisted of a series of open-ended questions designed to examine the mentors' perceptions of the effectiveness of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism. The mentor interviews detailed the phenomenon and provided an opportunity to address deeper issues regarding the experiences of mentors and what that could mean for improved effectiveness in reducing recidivism. The expert focus group was implemented to examine the themes derived from the mentors' interviews and present a different perspective of the effectiveness of this faith-based approach to reducing recidivism.

The results showed the mentors' perceptions of what aspects of the approach were effective and what aspects were not effective in reducing recidivism. In an effort to better understand the phenomenon, the following research questions guided the study and were answered by the data obtained through the participants:

1. What do mentors perceive as the factors or beliefs that contribute to offenders re-arrests? Recidivism is a serious problem with adverse social and economic impacts on communities, and the majority of incarcerated people are repeat offenders. To know what

mentors attribute to offenders repeat arrest patterns would be valuable in determining the most useful approach to reduce the conditions. Mentors perceived various factors as contributing to recidivism, including dysfunctional families and personal relationships, skewed perceptions, a lack of realizing their own value or the value of other people, and a lack of long-term and comprehensive after-care.

2. How have offenders gained mastery over their thoughts, emotions, beliefs and actions? It is important to determine what if anything has changed, and how it contributed to breaking the cycle of recidivism. The mentors perceived that offenders gained mastery over their thoughts and broke the cycle of recidivism through establishing new relationships and disassociating with negative relationships, interacting with role models and the positive example of others, and through Bible study that led to new values and perspectives.

3. How has the greater faith community worked together or failed to work together to support offenders? If a comprehensive approach is necessary, it is useful to know what aspects of broader faith organizations cooperating together have worked, and what aspects may not work in relations to impacting offenders. The mentors perceived that the churches were dynamic because they had the answers from the Bible and in a personal relationship with Christ which could transform their lives and the lives of offenders, and because 15 churches demonstrated they could come together to work unselfishly and without tangible benefit to help offenders through the Jail Outreach. The weakness of the churches, however, was that only a minority of members did so, revealing that the majority in the churches needed the same transformation that the offenders needed, so that they'd see others as valuable and redeemable. The participants thought that more training in Scripture would help the indifferent church members see the call of Christ on their lives and be willing to engage and care for others.

4. How have learning from and interacting with members of the Jail Outreach, in the context of surrogate families, impacted offenders' beliefs, thinking and behavior? It is useful to determine how the association may impact offenders' understanding of themselves and their environment. The participants perceived that those offenders who responded to the mentoring exhibited changed mindsets in which they began to see themselves and others as valuable, they developed a personal relationship with Christ which restored them to not only to God but facilitated restored relationships with others, they changed friends, they improved communication, and ultimately they demonstrated changed behavior.

Discussion

This discussion section is to discuss the study findings in relationship to the empirical and theoretical literature reviewed. I grouped eight themes that emerged from the data analysis in chapter four to organize the discussion of the research findings according to the corresponding research questions. Seven themes derived from the data gleaned from the participant interviews with 21 former mentors of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. The eighth theme derived from the meeting with five experts in the focus group.

Interviews with participants found offenders repeat the same behaviors because nothing has changed in their lives, such as their environment, their friends, and their lack of hope or faith. According to previous research, the more time a released offender met with former friends known from pre-incarceration days, the more likely the parolee would recidivate (Montoya, 2009, p. 154).

This research study's participants noted most offenders did not grow up in an environment where faith was part of their life, contributing to a lack of structure required to know right from wrong. Inmates did not seem to care adequately about themselves or others, and

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the participant's reported when they initially met offenders they routinely did not care enough to change, but instead justified their behavior. The root of this attitude was seen as the lack of sound values and the notion that the ends justified the means. Offenders' values must change before their behavior can change (Markway & Worsham, 2009, p. 99).

Overall, as reflected in chapter four, the data from the participant surveys and interviews and from the focus group meeting confirmed that individual mentoring both while in jail but especially after release from jail was important in reducing recidivism. The threat of jail or other forms of punishment deter the majority of residents from crime, but they are not a deterrent for these repeat offenders. Participants asserted jail did not rehabilitate or encourage repeat offenders toward a change of life, and this was also later affirmed by the focus group experts. Previous research also indicated that incarceration alone does not motivate repeat offenders to break the cycle of recidivism but that creative and transforming means must be considered (Hall, 2009, p. 66). A report by Ohio corrections officials supported the idea that, without an anti-recidivism approach, the cycle of recidivism continues (Persky, 2011, p. 21). The participants likewise asserted that individual, intense, and frequent mentoring in aftercare over an extended period of time of at least 3 months was more effective in reducing recidivism, which was also consistent with research that suggested that intense and comprehensive aftercare improved success (Kurlycheck & Kempinen, 2006, pp. 364, 381).

The mentors unanimously expressed the perception that it was essential for offenders to hold a belief that there was hope for change. Each offender had to want to change and believe they could change. The participants felt inmates may feel stuck, trapped in the false belief that they do not have a choice to break free. Rokeach demonstrated that self-conception is the most central idea impacting the belief system theory because self-conception defines the self (Grube et

al. 1994, p. 156). Yet some inmates could not relate to a life free from the cycle of repeat arrests because they did not think they needed to change or thought they could change. Participants reported that offenders frequently felt unable to change. Bandura's self-efficacy theory affirms that it is not enough for individuals to have the necessary skills and ability to accomplish a goal unless they also perceive themselves able and capable of doing it (Miller, 2011, p. 244). Other programs also report that perhaps the greatest hurdle is to help inmates realize they must change and that they could change (Greystone Educational, 2008, p. 2). Participants conceded that inmates must want to change to have a better life, and that was supported by studies that revealed an offender's readiness to change was as important as the program designed to support change (Anstiss et al. 2011, p. 690).

The participants identified several obstacles to successful reentry to society, including duplicitous behavior learned while incarcerated, lack of positive role models, dysfunctional family relationships, unemployment, and a sense of rejection, which was also confirmed by previous research (Kurlycheck & Kempinen, 2006, pp. 364-365). The participants noted that offenders tend to blame other people, such as their family or friends, and then blame law enforcement. Other literature confirmed that examples of inappropriate thinking which promotes antisocial behavior common among offenders include the attitude of blaming others for their actions, feelings of entitlement, and making excuses (Greystone Educational, 2008, p. 1).

Personal relationships provided both a sense of belonging and accountability that diminished the likelihood of recidivism, but it was not a guarantee about personal success because each offender needed to be committed to change. This was consistent with other research which showed mentor relationships that engaged offenders with both acceptance and

accountability through a surrogate family reduced anxiety and improved coping strategies (Johnsen & Herringer, 1993, p. 74).

The participants stated many offenders who attend the Jail Outreach meetings reported being influenced by other inmates to not take part in the meetings. Jail is a symptom of relationship problems. The underlying issues are offenders' lack of family and faith, their upbringing, their past relationships, and their environment. Lack of fathers, dysfunctional socioeconomically status, and their poor choice in friends contributed to incarceration. Most important, it was determined that offenders do not have a solid foundation in faith, which was seen as a catalyst for providing meaning, purpose and hope. Meaning and hope are established principles of the Christian faith rooted in the biblical belief that people have inherent value and are redeemable and that life has purpose in renewed relationships with God and others (Erickson, 1998, pp. 480, 493-494).

Figure 5 shows the mentors' techniques for engaging offenders in developing meaningful and supporting relationships. The 21 mentors independently listed various means by which they engaged offenders in developing relations and establishing a foundation for interacting. Some of the techniques were similar or interrelated. One of the 21 mentors chose not to provide an example. The mentors emphasized: communication, support, the outreach program, Bible study, and various means. Each of these techniques required the mentor to leave their comfort zone and risk rejection as they engaged offenders.

Q1: How did you develop supporting relationships?
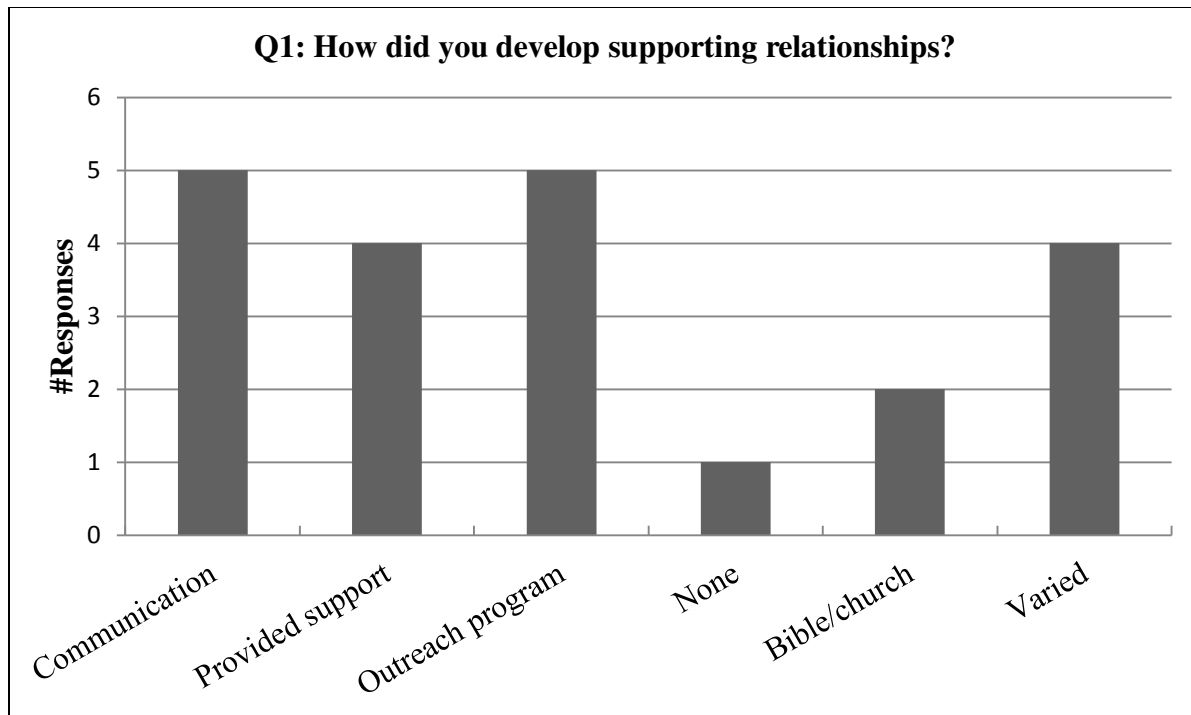
Figure 5. Supporting relationships

Figure 6 shows what aspects of mentoring proved effective, according to the 21 members who were individually interviewed. One member chose not to answer the question, and one acknowledged he didn't see a change. The answers included: outreach/mentoring, Bible study/prayer, testimony, and provided support. Again, some of the answers are interrelated since mentoring can include Bible study or sharing of a personal testimony, for example. Each of these examples represents engagement and the development of an interpersonal relationship. In turn, those relationships mature into bonds that convey a sense of personal human value, which is foundational to both establishing a sense of belonging for the offender while also developing a basis for accountability. Offenders' world views were an underlying impetus that led them to justify the choices they made, yet their world views could be corrected through interactive mentoring. Piaget explained that children learn as they interact with forces in their environment and world, which develops their perspective (Hearron & Hildebrand, 2010, p. 2).

Q2: What aspect of mentoring was effective?
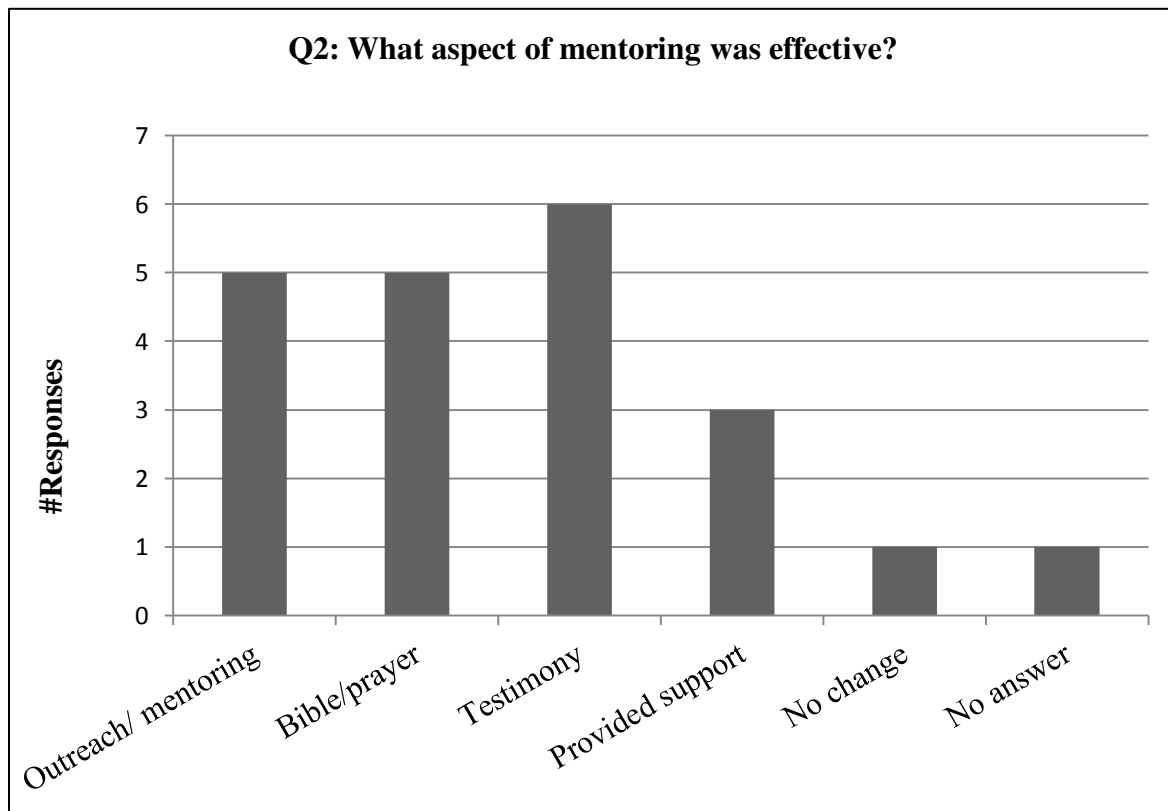
Figure 6. Effective mentoring techniques.

Mentors believed that offenders repeat the same behaviors because nothing has changed in their life, such as their environment, their friends, and their lack of faith. Mentoring addresses this. Many offenders tried instead to soothe their hurt by turning to alcohol and drugs, but over time some of them have learned this escape is merely a temporary solution that only exasperates the original problems. According to Markway (2009, p. 99), for behavior to change first the values that influence behavior must change, and this is the basis of faith-based approach. When offenders come to accept the inherent value they have as eternal and redeemable people created by God, their lives begin to find meaning and hope. One participant summed up society's problems as decaying values. Our culture shifted to where we have lost a sense of right and wrong. Prison incarcerations are, unfortunately, an indication of how society functions. Other

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scholars affirm the idea that values impact behavior and thus society, stating that individuals tend to act on what they perceive are their needs, whether real or misperceived (Grube et al. 1994, p. 154). Society must return to a structure where families provide a strong foundation of values to their children. As early as the mid-nineteenth century John Stewart Mill recognized it was necessary to promote a values-based education that went beyond job skills and general knowledge to mold responsible citizens (Mill & Taylor, n.d.).

Mentors reported that, as important as it was for offenders, merely having a positive family influence and a healthy fear of going back to jail were alone not effective long-term deterrents. Offenders needed a change of values which would then evoke a sense of right and wrong. The concept of intrinsic incentives could affect the transformation of a person's desire (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, pp. 167-169).

Mentors thought that the primary issue of why offenders return to prison is because of the negative influences surrounding their life. Stories seem to center around the influences in the offender's life pertaining to their childhood, their environment, and the perceptions that offenders assign to their value and the value of others. Those beliefs dictate their thinking, and their thinking determines their behavior. The participants felt that aspects which most influenced the behavior for reincarcerated offenders were the lack of a role model, absent fathers, and divorced parents. These conditions shaped the inmates' belief system, since their backgrounds did not meet their emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical needs. Rokeach's belief system theory considers the relationship between beliefs and behavior as both interrelated and predictive (Grube, Mayton, Il & Ball-Rokeach, 1994, p. 154). Since the inmates felt that no one cared about them, he or she turned to the only people whom they thought did care. They felt accepted by belonging to a gang or a loose group of people who held similar values. This

acceptance seemed to fill a void in their life. Mentors understood inmates were unable to forge a path for change because they did not have a commitment to change, and often didn't believe they could change. They lacked an awareness of their true value in Christ or commitment to Christ. Although prisoners want to make better choices, they continued to associate with the wrong people who reinforce counterproductive lifestyles. That decision might be the catalyst that returned them to prison. An inmate's main hindrance for change was the negative thinking permeating their life. A common finding in previous research revealed how mistrust and duplicitous thought processes actually helped offenders cope while incarcerated, yet later negatively impacted their ability to break the cycle of recidivism (Montoya, 2009, p. 154). Chuck Colson said that only Jesus Christ could remake lives and transform inmates so they would not recidivate (Oliver, 2013, p. 740).

Figure 7 provides a graphical representation of what mentors perceived as the nature of breaking the cycle of recidivism. The 21 mentor's answers included: changed mindset, relationship with Christ, support, change in friends, communication, and changed behavior. Once again, these answers interrelate with each other and represent aspects or results of interactive mentoring.

Q3: What is the nature of effectiveness in breaking recidivism?
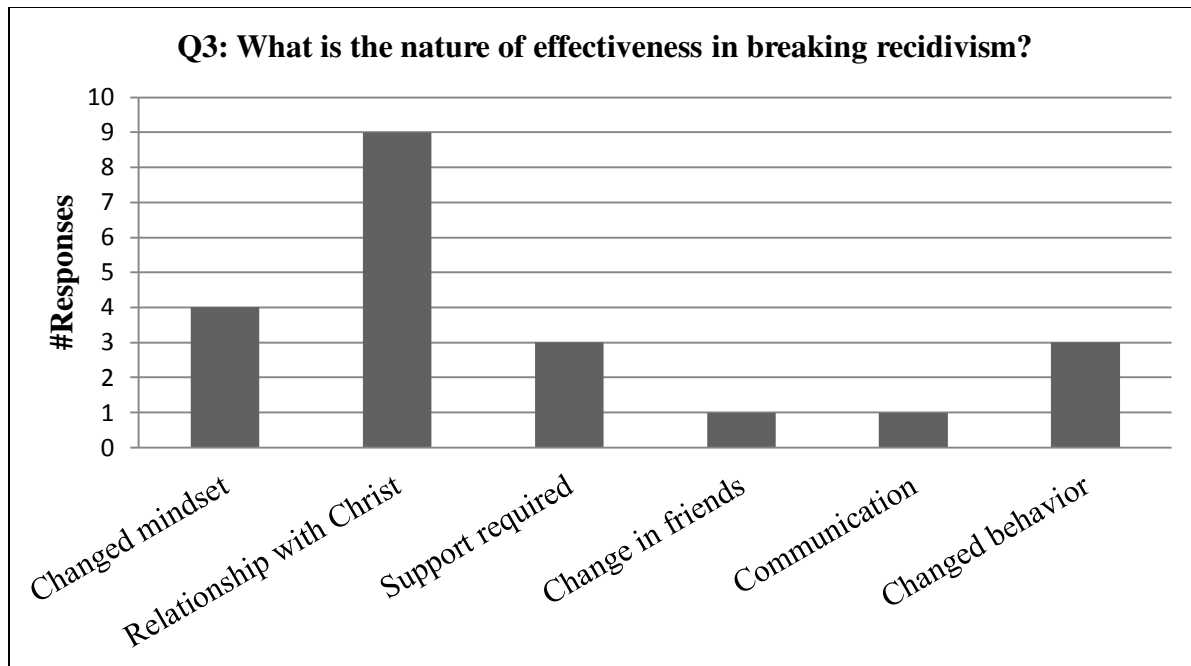
Figure 7. Factors contributing to breaking the cycle of recidivism

Mentors recognized that they must relate the truth continuously to inmates because learning is a never-ending process, and they must relate Scripture to offenders in a way they understand. Piaget's theory of cognitive development emphasized the learned ability to frame explicit judgments about the world (Russell, 1999, p. 248), and learning takes place as individuals interact with forces and things in their environment (Hearron & Hildebrand, 2010, p. 2). It was recognized by the participants that offenders need a sense of healing found in forgiveness. Scholarship supports the perceptions of these participants regarding forgiveness. A central value of Christianity is forgiveness and redemption (Wade, 2008, p. 358). For offenders who struggle with reconciling their past crimes to break the cycle of recidivism, the coping strategies that afford individuals through forgiveness and acceptance are significant (Willis, 2006, p. 211).

The individual interviews of 21 former mentors unanimously concluded that while the church in general had the answer to break the cycle of recidivism from Scripture, the churches

consisted of a complacent majority who refused to engage offenders either out of indifference or fear. Chuck Colson, a former offender and the late founder of Prison Fellowship, acknowledged, "The church is a visible presence on earth of the living although invisible Christ. But it's harder to tell inmates in prison about the living Christ when they find themselves confronted with locked doors, or rebuked and rejected by Christ's people ((Colson, 1985, p. 74). The 21 study participants acknowledge that only a minority of members in area evangelical churches had the knowledge and training to mentor, and participants felt many church members were at different levels of spiritual growth; thus many remained spiritually too immature to care for others. In contrast, the Bible calls on God's people to prepare others and show the way to salvation (Matthew 25:37-40 and Ephesians 4:11-12).

Participants reported many members of area Conservative Evangelical Protestant Churches were inwardly focused and uncaring because they failed to see the value in others. This was also a national problem, as noted in the literature review. This perception of inward focus is supported by previous research which reveals that conservative Protestant Churches are more inwardly focused than outwardly focused (Wuthnow 1999, p. 346). Many church members want to isolate themselves in fear and self-interest to mitigate potential risks. The risks of alienation and rejection are real, as Marjorie Proctor-Smith confirmed in her research, but she asserts they are worth it (Procter-Smith, 2008, p. 1).

Through the support of the Jail Outreach, inmates found a way to change. The mentoring and their new faith guided offenders towards a new direction. The mentors were able to share their personal stories, which helped the inmates relate and feel a sense of hope. The mentors were able to make a connection with them because they have lived a common life and experienced the same temptations and emotions, even if they did not share the same responses

and criminal behavior. The former attorney general of Virginia and subsequent president of Prison Fellowship, Mark Earley, also expressed how relationships between mentors and offenders can make a positive difference (Earley, 2005, p. 59). Mentors met inmates where they were at, meaning they interacted with them on a personal level. This led to building authentic relationships where offenders realized genuine hope because they felt the power of God's love and acceptance from people who actually cared. In the process, offenders could grow in faith and transition into someone who cares about another person other than oneself.

Jail Outreach mentors worked together to provide a comprehensive approach between organizations and area churches to help offenders, especially upon their release from prison. The findings of other researchers indicated that more intense and comprehensive aftercare programs could lower recidivism rates (James et al. 2013, p. 264), especially if programs exceed 90 days compared to the current structure where programs end 30 days after release (Kurlycheck et al. 2011, p. 781). Individuals acquired new behaviors through the vicarious reinforcement mentors provided (Miller, 2011, p. 87). This aftercare typically includes moral, spiritual, and practical support including basic education, family support, and obtaining marketable skills, employment and housing (Wheeler & Patterson, 2008, p. 146).

Offenders found love and acceptance but also experienced accountability from the mentors. Other research also demonstrated adequate aftercare is accomplished within relationships that foster accountability with a sense of belonging, which diminishes anxiety while improving coping strategies (Johnsen & Herringer, 1993, p. 74).

The focus group meeting of experts affirmed the findings of the 21 mentors who participated in this study. The judge stated, "The top two causes of criminal behavior are: whom you associate with, and then secondly criminal thinking" which results in criminal behavior.

Independent research reveals the more time a parolee associates with former friends known from pre-incarceration days, the more likely the parolee would recidivate (Montoya, 2009, p. 154). A review of the literature also acknowledges that criminal thinking, defined as anti-social attitudes and beliefs, are a predictor of recidivism (Walter, 2006, p. 24). The focus group discussion further concurred that no one changes without there being a sense of hope that compels them. Concerning recidivism, the sheriff asserted, "We are not going to arrest our way out of this." Incarceration alone does not motivate repeat offenders to break the cycle of recidivism, but creative and transforming means of change must be considered (Hall, 2009, p. 66).

The focus group confirmed the mentors' assertion that offenders need hope and a reason to change. The judge stated, "Nobody changes for themselves. People change because they have a reason to change." Meaning and hope are established principles of the Christian faith founded in the biblical doctrine that that people have inherent value and are redeemable, and life has purpose in renewed relationships with God and others (Erickson, 1998, pp. 480, 493-494).

The focus group expressed their confirmation of the former mentor's assertion that it is important for offenders to make meaningful connections with family, surrogate family, and society. This is consistent with Bandura, who noted people do not live their lives in independent autonomy but that self-efficacy, which counteracts the effects of alienation and rejection, develops from relationships acquired through modeling (Bandura, 1994, p. 125). The group agreed that influences from outside the family can have a significant impact, whether good or bad, and thus the role of mentors was important. Each of the focus group participants concluded that there are no guarantees when attempting to reduce recidivism but that a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism was viable and effective. Mark Earley, former attorney general of Virginia and later president of Prison Fellowship, said that faith-based relationships can only be

formed and sustained by mentors "who believe the darkness can be overcome by light, evil by good, despair by hope, and addiction by freedom (Earley, 2005, p. 59). Increased engagement is easier when church remembers that all of God's children are equally undeserving, equally in need of divine redemption, and in Christ equally partakers in the new life (Kerley et al. 2010, p. 507).

The mentor participants and the focus group experts concurred that the offenders needed a sense of hope and that if the inmate did not believe they could change, there would be no change. Bandura's self-efficacy theory affirms it is not enough for individuals to have the necessary skills and ability to accomplish a goal unless they also perceive they are able and capable of doing it (Miller, 2011, p. 244). The participants stated the offenders had to want to change, and that required a sense of hope that they could change. Readiness to change was determined to be as important as the program designed to support change (Anstiss et al. 2011, p. 690). Meaning and hope are also principles established in the Christian faith based on the biblical belief that all people were created by God and are valuable, eternal, and could be redeemed through Christ (Erickson, 1998, pp. 480, 493-494).

The focus group chose to add an additional theme, accountability, to the seven themes derived from the interviews with 21 participants who were former mentors of the Jail Outreach. While the idea of accountability was implicit in this study, it was considered too important not to be emphasized as an eighth theme. Accountability is important, and the review of the literature revealed mistrust and duplicitous thought processes had actually helped offenders cope while incarcerated but later negatively impacted their ability to break the cycle of recidivism (Montoya, 2009, p. 154). Accountability and engagement by mentors contributed to breaking that mindset. Since government agencies are overwhelmed by staffing and financial limitations, the focus

group pointed out that reliance on government to solve the problem and provide accountability is not realistic, which affirmed the need for volunteer mentors.

Implications

The study findings complemented other research efforts by understanding how mentors from the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach non-profit organization perceived the inmates' ability to change with the help of Outreach programs. It also identified challenges to effective mentoring and offers recommendations for stakeholders, including church leaders, community leaders, and policy makers.

Beliefs must change before thought processes change, and ultimately this changes behavior. The changed beliefs resulted in replacing skewed perceptions with a new sense of seeing the value within themselves and others. Rokeach's belief system theory considers the relationship between beliefs and behavior as both interrelated and predictive (Grube et al.,1994, p. 154). Individuals acquire new behaviors through the vicarious reinforcement mentors provide (Miller, 2011, p. 87). Consequently, the recommendation of the focus group meeting of experts should be implemented concerning increased cooperation between community leaders, volunteer mentors, mental health professionals, and civil authority to engage inmates and released offenders toward seamless reentry into society.

The mentoring process provided a model for offenders to relate to, learn from, and be influenced by. Piaget's theory of cognitive development emphasized the learned ability to frame explicit judgments about the world, which derives from relationships (Russell, 1999, p. 248). This finding is also consistent with Bandura, who noted that people do not live in independent autonomy, but self-efficacy develops through relationships (Bandura, 1994, p. 125). Mark Earley, a former attorney general of Virginia and subsequent president of Prison Fellowship,

likewise stated that relationships between mentors and offenders can make a positive difference (Earley, 2005, p. 59).

The structure of the mentors' relationships with offenders was articulated as based on mutual trust, caring, and intense and comprehensive engagement that provided a sense of belonging while instilling accountability. Other research concurs with the findings that effective aftercare includes moral, spiritual, and practical support including basic education, family support, and obtaining marketable skills, employment and housing (Wheeler & Patterson, 2008, p. 146). Intense and comprehensive aftercare programs were more likely to reduce recidivism rates (James et al. 2013, p. 264).

Study findings showed that inmates return to prison because churches do not have the parishioner involvement required to engage released offenders. The participants stated that this failure is often because of the lack of spiritual maturity on the part of many church members, exemplified by indifference for or fear of offenders. Other research confirms that there are risks inherent in caring for offenders, but asserts the risk are worth the cost (Procter-Smith, 2008, p. 1). The participants believed that the cause of this problem was that church members and even church leaders are themselves in the process of their own spiritual growth, and might continue to struggle in their journey. That is also confirmed by other research which concluded the need for forgiveness and restoration is not just an inmate problem but is a human condition, and the church must remember that all people are equally in need of redemption (Kerley et al. 2010, p. 507).

As inmates return to an environment that contributed to their incarceration, without the needed support of after- care programs, offenders return to a life of crime both because it is where they think they belong and as their means of survival. This problem identified by the

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participants of this study is not just a local phenomenon. Even after becoming spiritually mature Christians, many former offenders have been rejected by churches (Reighard, 2009, p. 5). Not only is this unbiblical but it is also a hindrance to reducing recidivism. The late Chuck Colson acknowledged that it is difficult to tell offenders about the living Christ when they are rejected by Christ's people (Colson, 1985, p. 74). To address and correct this problem of a reluctance of many within the churches to engage offenders, the participants recommended an emphasis on teaching that specifically focused on the biblical mandate to engage those outside the church. Further, the focus group also stated that it was necessary to teach and educate the churches about the need and calling to care for offenders, and their ability to make a lasting difference.

The focus group experts, consisting of a circuit court judge, a state representative, a county sheriff, a director of a national non-profit, and a university professor, reviewed this study. The focus group concurred with the participant themes, and recommended increased use of treatment courts that focused on reducing repeat offense rather than just traditional punishment. The focus group acknowledged that such programs work and are based upon similar concepts associated with the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach approach of engaging offenders. Other research concurs that merely incarcerating repeat offenders does not break the cycle of recidivism (Hall, 2009, p. 66).

The focus group also recommended that a greater degree of community engagement be encouraged, such as an annual regional symposium that included political, civic, church, mental health, and community representatives. Broad-based community engagement both increases the likelihood of success and is increasingly necessary as a cost-effective means of addressing recidivism (Persky, 2011, p. 21). This comprehensive community interaction is needed to

increase awareness about the problems and solutions concerning public safety and recidivism, and could improve the network of support needed to reduce recidivism.

Intervention strategies employed after the offender's release from prison could emphasize and reveal the experiences or situations viewed as effective or ineffective strategies promoting change. The findings from this study improved social change by creating a culture that allowed offenders to gain knowledge and form relationships aimed to reduce recidivism.

Limitations

This study examined the experiences of mentors of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, a small non-profit organization that serves communities located near two rural county jails. The demographics consist of predominantly White/Caucasian men and women of European lineage. The Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach is a small non-profit organization with approximately 45 volunteer mentors located in a rural setting in northeast Wisconsin and the western upper peninsula of Michigan. The mentors represent a cross-section of Christians and come from 15 different churches and nine different denominations. The non-profit Jail Outreach works with offenders from two small-to-medium sized county jails, and with offenders who are released from prison. The Marinette County (Wisconsin) Jail has an average inmate population of 120 and the Menominee County (Michigan) Jail has an average population of 50 inmates. These demographic factors made the results difficult to generalize to a large metropolitan area or one with diverse ethnicity.

Limitations are the shortcomings, influences or conditions that cannot be controlled by the researcher and place restrictions on methodology and conclusions. The degree of participation by both mentors and individual offenders is a limitation. Some offenders participated in multiple components and programs offered while others only participated in one,

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and some offenders worked daily with mentors while some were engaged less frequent. Generalizing results to metropolitan areas and more diverse social constructs are difficult. Another limitation of this study is that many, but not all, offenders self-select, which may reflect that they were more motivated than their peers who choose not to participate in a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach.

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher that describe the parameters set for the study, including what literature is not reviewed, what populations are not studied, what methodological procedures are not used, and why. For the purpose of this study, neither mentors nor offenders were juveniles. Only adult jail and prison offenders age 18 or older were included in reference to mentor's interaction, and all juveniles were eliminated from inclusion. This study included mentors who engaged offenders through participation in some form of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc. This included one or more of the following components of the non-profit's engagement of offenders: individual weekly mentoring meetings in jail, a 6 week *Stinking Thinking* course taught to small classrooms of inmates in jail, support group meetings for released offenders and individual aftercare mentoring of released offenders.

The non-randomized selection of participants allowed for the analysis of the perception of mentors who actually experienced the dynamics of this faith-based approach to reducing recidivism. Only former Jail Outreach mentors and those on sabbatical were included as participants, to avoid the remote potential of interrupting on-going operations within the Jail Outreach.

The focus and scope of the study was limited to determine what worked and what did not work from the mentors' perspectives of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism used by

the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach for offenders in this geographic area. The sole interest was the perceptions of mentors regarding the impact of the faith-based approach to reducing recidivism.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Recommendations for Further Research</h3>

The aspects that most influenced the behavior for reincarcerated offenders were the lack of positive role models, absent fathers, and divorced parents. These conditions shaped the inmates' belief systems, since their background did not meet their emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical needs. Some family members were self-absorbed and worried only about themselves instead of focusing on their children. Figure 8 shows the cycle of recidivism pertaining to environmental influences.

Binswanger et al. (2012) conducted a qualitative case study interviewing 29 former inmates to explore why offenders returned to drugs after their release from prison. The researchers suggested after the inmates' were released, their environment and lack of support were key factors causing their drug relapse. Binswagener et al. suggested that formal intervention therapies could reduce triggers which cause recidivism. Future research could study how certain factors contribute to or detract from the offenders' ability to change, including their

parents' demands, such as work, school, number of children, or financial problems.
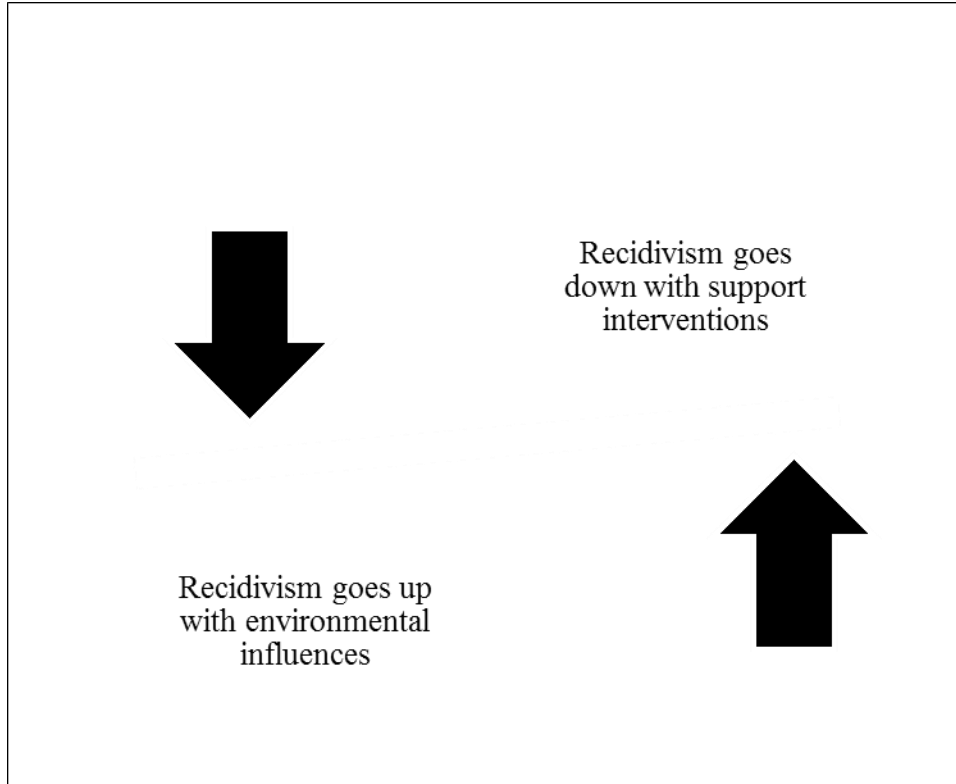
Figure 8. Influences of change.

Another potential recommendation is for researchers to conduct a study design similar to that used for this research. The data could show how other outreach organizations in the United States and other countries helped offenders reenter society after their incarceration. The finding could indicate success rates of programs where inmates were successful in breaking the cycle of recidivism by expanding the scope of the investigation across religious, ethnic, and geographic boundaries.

The final recommendation for further study includes the examination of governance responses to the problem of recidivism in other states and at the federal level. Investigators could employ a quantitative approach to their investigation using the findings of this study to develop survey questions. The aim of their research could examine how a vast field of government

leaders across the U.S. scores survey questions designed to characterize the problem of reoffending.

Summary

This study confirmed and revealed several important points of discussion. First, there are no guarantees to breaking the cycle of recidivism because people are complex and motivations are compelling. There are approaches that are more successful than others, but each individual offender is autonomous and there are many factors that contribute to an individual's success or failure to break the cycle of recidivism.

The participants confirmed what was revealed in the review of the literature, that intense and long-term aftercare of released offenders was important to breaking the cycle of recidivism. Effective aftercare was demonstrated by a personal engagement of offenders in relationships that were restorative in nature and which reinforced that they were cared for on multiple levels as valuable and redeemable people. This required interactive and personal relationships, much like as surrogate family, characterized by deep and abiding friendship which included both a sense of belonging and a degree of accountability. New relationships replaced old, dysfunctional relationships that had contributed to incarceration. These new relationships often resulted in changed perspectives toward lifestyle, values, employment, and involvement in drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs.

All 21 participants indicated that the 15 churches and eight denominations they represented had committed members like themselves who practices the faith and were willing to engage and care for offenders. The participants considered this significant and a strength because they believed the church had the answer to breaking recidivism, that the Bible held the truth that sets people free, and that the church was, in fact, able to see lives changed. Yet each of the

participants, to varying degrees, identified a common problem; that the majority within the churches were unwilling or unable to care for offenders, either because of indifference or fear. In this matter, ironically, the churches were much like the offenders, in need of seeing the truth and embracing what is proclaimed from Scripture. The complacent majority within the churches needed the very thing they recognize the offenders needed. The church can and should maintain without compromise the truth established in the Bible, yet must do so without rejecting offenders and refusing to engage them. This admonition was shared by the participants, not to condemn the church of which they were integral and committed members, but to emphasize the need for many within the church to come into agreement with the sound biblical teachings that some in the church have strayed from.

I am not apologetic for including the Bible in this scholarly study nor embarrassed by referring to the necessity for Christ to change lives. This is the truth borne out not only in the review of the literature, but in the research interviews. Ultimately, changed lives are evidence. Truth is by definition scholarly, and thus this was incorporated into the study along with the theoretical framework of Bandura and Piaget. Jesus said "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32, New King James Version). The truth still sets people free today. No one should be embarrassed about what sets people free, whether he or she are criminal offenders or the general public. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16a, New King James Version).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Timeline and Budget

July, 2013 - Complete EDUC 919 and take EDUC 970 comprehensive exam ($4,000)

October, 2013 – Complete last course elective class for Ed.D. coursework

December, 2013 – Convene dissertation committee and register for dissertation courses ($3000)

March, 2014 – Defend dissertation proposal ($700)

April, 2014 – Submit research plan to the Institutional Review Board for approval ($50)

April, 2014 – Request site(s) approval for the research study

May, 2014-July, 2014 – Conduct a research study ($2,100)

July, 2014-August, 2014 – Develop dissertation manuscript ($500)

August, 2014 – Editing of manuscript by specified editor(s) ($2,000)

October, 2014 – Defend dissertation ($1,000)

October, 2014 – Edit as necessary and obtain final approval of the dissertation

November, 2014 – Publish dissertation

December, 2014 – Graduate ($1,000)

Total Cost= $14,350

Appendix B: Survey

This survey was developed to identify participant's demographic factors and potential influences in the study. Personal identity was protected and confidentiality assured when including survey information into the study.

1. Gender: Male or Female.

2. Ethnic group: White, Black, Hispanic, Native American, or _____

3. Age:

4. Highest education grade level obtained: _____

5. Time as mentor in membership: _____

6. Frequency of meeting with offenders: _____

7. Did you develop supporting relationships with offenders? _____

8. What aspect of mentoring was effective? _____

9. What is the nature of effectiveness in breaking the cycle of recidivism? _____

_____

10. What was the offender's idea of the value of other people when offenders were arrested?

_____

11. What was the offender's idea of the value of other people after you mentored them?

_____

12. How have offender beliefs changed?

_____

13.   Why have offender beliefs changed?

_____

14.   How has offender's life changed?

Appendix C: Interview Questions

All interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

Mentor Interviews:

Each mentor will be asked ten open-ended questions.

1. What factors do you believe impacted the behavior for which offenders were arrested?

2. When you first met the offenders before addressing a faith-based approach, what factors do you believe were hindering their change for the better?

3. While meeting with members of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, what factors do you believe continued to hinder offender's change for the better?

4. What factors do you believe impacted or facilitated a positive change in offenders' lives?

5. What factors do you believe reduce an offender's likelihood of re-arrest?

6. Leading up to the offender's arrest, what were their significant relationships? How would you characterize the nature of their relationships?

7. Today, what are the significant relationships for offenders who are successful? How would you characterize their new relationships?

8. What, if anything, changed in the beliefs, thoughts and behavior of offenders?

9. What are the strengths and weaknesses of area churches and the faith community in contributing to reducing recidivism?

10. How can the weaknesses noted above in question nine be improved?

Appendix D: Focus Group Procedures

The researcher will organize a focus group meeting, to be held for 90 minutes with a small group of experts on recidivism. The purpose of the focus group will be to review the findings of the research and solicit the group's opinions about the meaning of the data, in particular the themes that emerged from the 21 interviews with former mentors, and obtain their recommendations for future research.

The focus group includes a circuit court judge, an elected county sheriff, an elected state representative, a representative of a national non-profit committed to reducing recidivism, and a university professor. Thus, the focus group is represented by members from the judiciary, law enforcement, the legislature, an involved citizen group, and academia. None of the members of this focus group was ever members of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach.

Ground rules will be established and reviewed to maintain participant confidentiality and ensure respect for all present. A confidential consent form will be signed.

General, open-ended questions will be provided as a source for the initiating conversation:

1. How did the themes derive from the interviews of 21 former mentors adequately address or fail to address the scope of a faith-based approach to reducing recidivism?

2. What is the meaning of this data, from your perspective?

3. What do you believe led to success or failed to lead to success with offenders?

4. Are there any important themes that are missing and, if so, what are they?

5. With 67% recidivism, what are weaknesses of mentoring programs and how can they be improved?

6. What are your recommendations for future studies?

The researcher will observe participant's behavior, conversations, and interactions during the focus group meeting, and direct the topic of conversation only as needed. The discussion will be documented through audio recording and transcription, but confidentiality of participants will be protected and the transcription will remove identifying characteristics.

The researcher will document the participants by pseudonyms without any further reference to his or her identification. Context and a brief overview of the discussion will be made. All quotes will be identified, and pseudonyms will be used to identify participants or those they refer to.

CONSENT FORM
Former Mentors' Perceptions of the Faith-Based Approach to Reducing Recidivism
Implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc.
James D. Langteau
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be a part of a research study focusing on mentors who participated with inmates/released offenders concerning the effectiveness of faith and values-based approach to repeat criminal arrests, also known as recidivism. You have been selected to participate in the survey and interview because of your involvement with the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc. The five focus group participants have been asked to participate because you have not been involved as members of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc, but are considered experts on recidivism representing the judiciary, the legislature, law-enforcement/corrections, a national non-profit, and academia. I ask that you read this entire form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study will be conducted by James Langteau in the School of Education at Liberty University, in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of the causes of recidivism and improve the success in reducing those recidivism rates and helping former offenders to successfully become productive members of society.

Procedures:
If you agree to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do one or more of the following: Complete a survey for approximately 30 minutes regarding cognitive change and a values-based approach to reducing recidivism; participate in a confidential interview for approximately 45 minutes with the researcher to discuss the causes of repeat criminal offenses and what impacts the breaking of that cycle; or participate in a focus group for approximately 90 minutes with other peers who are experts in the field of recidivism to review findings and make suggestions.

These engagements will occur at a location convenient to you and a time mutually agreed upon. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed, subsequently reviewed with you for accuracy, and used to help understand this phenomenon of recidivism.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
The personal risks in this study are not anticipated to be anything more than what occurs in day-to-day life, and which occurs in routine interaction as members of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach.

There is no direct benefit to participation. The societal benefits to participation in this study include a better understanding of one's own personal life, and also contributing to the overall improvement of anti-recidivism programs.

Compensation:
There will be no monetary compensation for participation in this study.

Confidentiality:
All interviews and transcriptions of conversations will remain in the researcher's possession. In the event that any report is published, no information will be disclosed that will make identification of participants possible. All sensitive material will remain in a secured location at the school or research facility and securely stored during the study. All sensitive materials will be shredded 3 years after completion of the study. All video-taped and recorded information will be erased 3 years after the completion of the study. Confidentiality of those participating in the focus group cannot be ensured due to the nature of the group meeting, but confidentiality will be encouraged.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect any other party whether private or public. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so at any time.

How to Withdraw
You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation, by contacting the researcher at jlangteau@liberty.edu or by calling the researcher at 906-290-2100. Upon notification of withdrawal, all written documents will be shredded and all recordings will be erased within 24 hours of receiving notification.

Contact Information:
The researcher conducting this study is James Langteau. You may address any questions to him at 906-290-2100 or via email at jlangteau@liberty.edu. The faculty advisor is Dr. Kenneth Gossett, Committee Chairman, and he can contact at 216-509-1412 or at kdgossett@liberty.edu

If you would like to speak to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1972 University Blvd., Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the contents of this consent and understand that all interviews will be kept confidential, transcribed and reviewed by me for accuracy, and hereby give permission to be video-taped/recorded for the purpose of this study.

_____ I agree to have my conversations video-taped/recorded and transcribed for the purpose of this study, with the above stipulation that my identity will be protected and my confidentiality will be maintained.

I have read and understood the information in this consent. I have asked any questions I might have, and received clarification from James Langteau regarding any concerns. I freely consent to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant: _____Date:_____

Signature of Researcher: _____Date:_____
       James D. Langteau

You will receive a copy of this document for your records.

Appendix F: Recruitment Script

I will contact potential participants verbally by phone stating the following:

I am James Langteau and am conducting scholarly research through Liberty University as part of the requirement for completing a doctoral degree. You are invited to be a part of a research study focusing on former mentors of the non-profit Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach. You have been selected because of your previous involvement with the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc. Focus group participants have been selected because of your expertise on recidivism. This study seeks to learn from those who participated with inmates/released offenders concerning the effectiveness of faith and values-based approach to reducing repeat criminal arrests, also known as recidivism. The purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of the causes of recidivism and improve the success in reducing recidivism rates and helping former offenders to successfully become productive members of society.

You will be provided with an informed consent form for your review and signature, which you are required to read completely and sign if you decide to participate.

If you agree to be a part of this study, you will be asked to do the following: complete a survey for approximately 30 minutes regarding cognitive change and a values-based approach to reducing recidivism; participate in a confidential interview with the researcher for approximately 45 minutes; and participate in a focus group with your peers for approximately 90 minutes about the causes of repeat criminal offenses and what impacts the breaking of that cycle.

These engagements will occur at a location convenient to you and a time mutually agreed upon. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed, subsequently reviewed with you for accuracy, and used to help understand this phenomenon of recidivism. The personal risks in this study are not anticipated to be anything more than what occurs in day-to-day life, and which occurred in routine interaction as members of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach.

There are no direct benefits to participation. The societal benefits to participation in this study include a better understanding of one's own personal life, and also contributing to the overall improvement of anti-recidivism programs.

There will be no monetary compensation for participation in this study.

You have the right to confidentiality. All interviews and transcriptions of conversations will remain in the researcher's possession. In the event that any report is published, no information will be disclosed that will make identification of participants possible. All data collected must be stored for a minimum of 3 years, per federal regulations. All sensitive material will remain in a secured location at the school or research facility and securely stored during the study. All sensitive documents will be shredded 3 years after completion of the study. All video-taped and recorded information will be erased 3 years after the completion of the study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect any relationships with any other party whether private or public - since your confidentiality is protected. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so at any time.

Appendix G: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 1, 2014

James Langteau
IRB Approval 1857.050114: Former Mentors' Perceptions of the Faith-Based Approach to Reducing Recidivism Implemented by the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc.

Dear James,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for 1 year. If data collection proceeds past 1 year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the Requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair **Counseling**

(434) 592-4054

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Curriculum Vitae

VITA   Summer, 2014

James Drake Langteau

617 14th Ave,
Menominee, MI 49858
(517) 431-5060
Email: langteaufamily@aol.com

EDUCATION

Ed.D. doctoral program, Liberty University Graduate School of Education, Lynchburg, VA, 2011 – 2014.

MA in Discipleship Ministries, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA. Professional specialization: Discipleship Ministries. Graduated with honors, Magna Cum Laude, September, 2010.

BA in Social Science, Regents College/Excelsior College, Albany, NY. Concentration: International Relations. Graduated September, 1989.

Air Traffic Control Certification, FAA Academy, Oklahoma City, OK. Graduated: May, 1992.

PRESENTATIONS

Langteau, J. (June, 2012). In-service: Behavior Management and Mentoring of Inmates. A presentation to professors and graduate students in behavior management at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA.

Langteau, J. (Sep, 2010), Aftercare for Released Inmates. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc, held that year at Faith Baptist Church, Peshtigo, WI.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

American Correctional Association, Washington, D.C.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Menominee County Sheriff's Office, January 2013 – Present.
831 10th Ave, Menominee, MI 49858.
Sworn reserve deputy chaplain. Critical Incident/Stress Management (CISM) certified. Engaged first responders to assist them in dealing with the stress of their professions. In addition, served as a training officer for chaplains. Assisted deputies in death notifications, and conducted associated grief counseling for the public. Also, visited inmates to help them address the causes of their incarceration and break the cycle of recidivism.

US Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration. January 1992 – September 2013.
Green Bay Air Traffic Control Tower and Radar Approach Control, 2077 Airport Drive, Green Bay, WI. 54313.
Air traffic controller responsible for the safe, orderly and expeditious control of air traffic on radar over northeast Wisconsin and a portion of the upper peninsula of Michigan. Also was periodically responsible as Controller in Charge of the shift for coordinating the efforts of the controllers on duty.

Marinette-Menominee Jail Outreach, Inc. Founder. March, 2004 – April 1, 2012.
PO Box 892, Menominee, MI 49858. **Website: www.JailOutreach.com.**
Founded and served two terms as the first elected Executive Director of this Christian non-profit. Initiated dialogue with jails to gain original access, and recruited first members. Implement team-building to establish relationships necessary for developing a broad-based organization to counsel and assist inmates and released offenders in an effort to reduce recidivism. Led the development of a constitution which provides for elected board positions, operations, growth, and conflict resolution with an eight-point statement of faith. Designed and initiated infrastructure which is still used today, including: a board of directors, sub-committees, a confidential weekly jail report for continuity among all members, quarterly and annual training meetings for members, weekly meetings in jails with inmates, support groups for released offenders, recruitment of new members, annual presentations at area churches and civic organizations, a food pantry, and planting of new outreaches including one in Oconto, WI in 2008. This infrastructure provided for internal growth and external expansion, and the non-profit grew substantially each year both in numbers of members but also in scope and impact. Modeled servant-leadership whereby each member was embraced, valued, and empower to care and sacrifice for others. Developed procedures to facilitate members' weekly meetings in jails, resulting in 1,000 annual meetings with individual inmates, each for 30 minutes. Facilitated the 6 week Cognitive Thinking course taught in jail classrooms. Designed and implemented 2 weekly support groups to assist in offender transition upon release. Created the annual Regional Symposium for community dialogue between the judiciary, the legislature, law-enforcement/corrections, the public, and various non-profits. Oversaw the development of brochures, business cards, and a website. Prior to completing a second term, presided over new elections with over forty members from 15 churches and nine denominations.

Oconto County Jail Outreach, Inc. January, 2008 – April 2012.
PO Box 393, Oconto, WI 54153. TransformOconto@Gmail.com

Conducted team-building and coordinated with community leaders in Oconto, WI, and with the Oconto Jail to establish this new Outreach. Served on their board of directors upon inception as a Liaison Delegate. Assisted their board in developing this new Outreach and helped them become autonomous as they address a previously unmet need in Oconto County, WI. Upon stepping down from both boards on April 1, 2012, they had 15 members and growing, and conducted over 400 inmate meetings annually.

Harmony by the Bay annual Christian Music Festival. 2005 - 2011.
Co-founded this free annual Christian music festival and chaired it for the first 6 years. Hosted dozens of local and national music groups from 11am through 9pm, drawing crowds of up to 3,000 people. Organized a committee that oversaw scheduling, stage management, advertising and public relations, grounds coordination, and organization of vendors and group booths. Gifted in 2010 by turning the management of it over to Bethesda Christian Broadcasting.

Community Career Day (Founder and Chairperson). 2004 - 2009.
Established, coordinated and conducted a Career Day activity for the Menominee Public Schools and the Peshtigo Public Schools, providing between 32 and 38 career speakers each year for an annual Career Day event. The morning-long event incurred no cost to the schools or tax-payers while providing each of the 300 Junior High School students the opportunity to sign up to learn about various careers.