

## Fact Sheet: Prison Fellowship

### WHO

Founded by former Nixon aide Chuck Colson in 1976, Prison Fellowship is the nation's largest outreach to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families.

Prison Fellowship has:

- A presence in more than 1,400 correctional facilities, reaching some 200,000 prisoners in all 50 states.
- Partnerships with some 8,000 churches in the U.S.
- Some 7,400 volunteers throughout the U.S.

### WHAT

To restore lives and communities affected by crime and incarceration, Prison Fellowship equips and inspires churches, communities, and individuals—both inside and outside the prison walls—to help transform the lives of prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families. It also works to bring attention to the problem of incarceration and the cycle of crime and advocates for a criminal justice system that truly restores, so that victims are respected, those who have committed crimes are transformed and safe communities can flourish.

By working together, governments, communities and churches can:

- **Curb the cycle of crime**
- **Help restore shattered lives and families**
- **Reduce the staggering costs of crime to society**
- **Make communities, inside and outside of prison, safer**

### HOW

In this effort, **Prison Fellowship provides ongoing support, recruitment, research, training and resources to some 8,000 churches throughout the United States** that are involved in organized prison ministry. It also works with thousands more individual volunteers who are active in an outreach to the prison population and inmate families, or in advocating for restorative justice values.

Prison Fellowship volunteers:

- Minister to prisoners
- Assist families
- Help ex-prisoners transition back into society
- Advocate for criminal justice reform

### NEED

Crime not only breaks laws, it also shatters lives and fractures communities. Approximately 2.2 million people are serving time in America's prisons. Because 95 percent will be released, some 600,000 prisoners are returning back into our communities each year.

Studies show that two-thirds of those released will be re-arrested within three years and more than 50 percent will return to prison unless we help. This means more crime, more victims.

We believe there is a better way. The key to reforming our nation's corrections system is taking an approach to crime and punishment that advocates for restorative justice principles found in the Bible. At the heart of restorative justice is the respect for human dignity, or the inherent God-given value of all people. We believe that policies and legislation should respect victims and support the transformation of those who have committed crimes so that communities can flourish.