

PRISON EVANGELISM

Behind Bars in the United States: “The Hidden Harvest Field”

The economic, social and personal costs of imprisonment is huge. America’s large prison population is ripe for hearing the gospel—more than 2 million men and women who need to discover a purpose and power for their life through the good news of the true freedom found in Jesus Christ. Research has found that:

- The United States has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world.
- The number of people incarcerated has quadrupled since 1980.
- More than two million people are currently in prisons and jails.
- Around 11-12 million people are in and out of county jails each year.
- Between 600,000 and 700,000 enter state and federal prisons each year.
- There are around 2,100 prisons and jails nationwide today—217 of them in Texas.
- Women account for just seven percent of the prison population.
- The average inmate in the US is a 32-year-old male who grew up in a single-parent home.
- The average inmate in the US has two children at home within 100 miles of his incarceration.
- The average inmate in America has a seventh grade education and grew up fatherless.
- 70 percent of inmates will be incarcerated again.
- 70 percent of the prison population returns to prison within three years of release.
- The annual cost of incarceration and re-apprehension is around \$70 billion.
- The average annual cost of housing an inmate is around \$31,000.
- Considering the impact on affected families, the annual social cost of incarceration is more than \$1 trillion.
- One in three male inmates offered a copy of *How to Become a Child of God* accepts it.
- One in two female inmates offered a copy of *How to be a Child of God* accepts it.
- One in ten inmates who reads or receives *How to Become a Child of God* prays to receive and follow Christ.
- If one in three of the U.S. prison population accepted a copy of *How to Be a Child of God* and one in 10 of them accepted Christ as a result, not returning to prison, the incarceration saving costs would be around \$2 billion.



Sources include: *International Centre for Prison Studies, Prison Evangelism, Washington University*

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Prison Evangelism (www.prisonsevangalism.com) is a faith-based nonprofit committed to transforming and rehabilitating offenders through the distribution of "How to Be a Child of God" and other evangelistic and discipleship materials designed to help prisoners find new purpose and power in life through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

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