

# We Need to Extend The Christian Reach into Prison to Help Men Learn to Read.

**Matthew 9:36-38** We, like Paul, need to have the compassion of Christ for those who are lost. God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

**1 Timothy.2:3-4** The man who is really saved he will have a concern and desire and burden for the salvation of others. He will see others as lost men and women who desperately need Christ. He will share in the desire God to turn men around.

We thank you for attending our discussion.

We realize giving up a Saturday just to hear someone talk is a great sacrifice. So we thank you.

We have one goal today and that is to get your help in our quest to teach **men** in prison to read in order to improve their thinking and problem solving skills and to help them further release their creativity in defining their reality and to become parents.

To demonstrate the importance of reading and how reading can shape a man or woman's life we present information regarding the type of men in prison and the effect of imprisonment on children. We have prayed that you will not only see the value of ministering to men in prison through reading but will also be persuaded to help.

We would like for you to do several things to support our efforts toward total literacy for the country.

- **Firstly, please shall this notice with every members of your church.**
- **Secondly**, please ask members of your church to go to Youtube.com and search and watch the video, Touched By The Light Wall Project 2015. Once they watch the video ask them to ask their friend, family and coworker to also watch the video. The video is 90 minutes long so it can be watched in several sittings. We also would like everyone to visit our website [www.touchedbythelight.us](http://www.touchedbythelight.us) and watch a second video **and read the letters from prisoners** regarding our books they received in prison. The videos and letters are very revealing.
- **Third**, we would like for you to take information back to your congregation and ask them to purchase a set of books for every male prisoners in the Macomb Correctional Facility. These books were written to **stop the flow of men** into prisons leaving their children behind. **These books will change the way you think.** No child should have to visit his or her father in prison.
- **Fourth**, we ask that you ask all members of your church to begin a **FAMILY READING CAMPAIGN**. **Why?** Two-thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of the 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare or prostituting on the street – males and females. The fourth grade is the watershed year. Parents must make certain their child can read competently by the fourth grade. If your child is struggling cut out the cigarettes, donuts at work or getting your nails done save this money and enroll your child in a reading program. If you are low on funds find the smartest child in class ask his or her parents can their child teach your child to read. Pay the child \$5.00 per hour. You will be surprised at the results. Children learn from one another. Children can learn bad habits from one another and children can learn good habits from one another. Go to the local library and see if there are retired teachers volunteering to teach reading. Do something! Drug use is not the answer. If your child does not know how to read by age 10 he is well on his way to prison or becoming a prostitute. Ask any counselor at a state youth facility. They will tell you boys enter their facilities at the age 11 for robbery, breaking and entering, purse snatching etc. Once the violent pattern has been establish it is hard to break, therefore it is worth the effort to have a violence prevention program for your son, which means teaching him to read. Male children have a much harder time learning to read without the proper encouragement because their attention is directed elsewhere. Sports are a high priority;

social competition and male dominance enters into the picture. Consequently, great emphasis must be placed on setting aside time for males to learn to read and to continue to read throughout adolescence. "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." Frederick Douglass They must read read read; why because millions of parents do not allow their children to play video games or to run after a ball. These parents command their children to study for hours every day of the week. These parents enroll their children in after school learning activities that encourage learning e.g. forensics. These will be the children your child will be competing with for positions in college and for jobs. How well do you think your child will be able to compete against a child that reads for hours seven day a week? There is a direct corollary between prostitution men in prison and reading. A man can teach himself to fish if he knows how to read. Control what your child watches on television. Playing video games should be a reward after the school work is done and a book is read. Proper sleep and nutrition age important in learning. No late night television during school nights. Do not forget **you** are the example. **What your child sees you do is what he or she will consider doing good or bad.** If you want your child to read you must have books all over your home. The books must be in the breakfast nook, on the couch in the basement in your bedroom on the coffee table and in the closet. Your child must see you read. He or she should see your face reading the evening paper. There should be books in the car. Young children should be given a book even if he or she cannot read. Give them the book and tell them to read it. What they will do is look at the pictures and describe what they think is happening in the story. Your interaction with their story telling is critical because you are confirming their ability to read. As the young child continues to story tell he or she will learn the appreciation of reading. While you are driving your child to and from day care or school give them a book to read in the car. Tell them your job is to go to work to earn money to provide for the family and their job is to go to school and learn. Tell them they are going to school so they can learn to read so they can make money where they will have a good future. Over and over again you must repeat this instruction.

- We request your help in providing comfort and support to children and their parents in prison. There are innocent men incarcerated in our nation's prisons. We as Christians should provide comfort to these people.

**Why Learn to Read Early?** As a child learns to read, self-esteem and confidence increase and grades improve--even in other subjects such as math and science. We must foster the success of your child and adolescents, both at home and in the community; **your life Starts Now** as soon as you pick up that book and read it. Did you know that two-thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of the 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare? Here are some literacy statistics with respect to America

## LITERACY STATISTICS AND JUVENILE COURT

- 85 percent of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate.
- More than 60 percent of all prison inmates are functionally illiterate.
- Penal institution records show that inmates have a 16% chance of returning to prison if they receive literacy help, as opposed to 70% who receive no help. This equates to taxpayer costs of \$25,000 per year per inmate and nearly double that amount for juvenile offenders.
- Illiteracy and crime are closely related. The Department of Justice states, "The link between academic failure and delinquency, violence, and crime is *welded to reading failure*." Over 70% of inmates in America's prisons cannot read above a fourth grade level.

## MANY OF THE USA ILLS ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO ILLITERACY FEW STATISTICS:

- Literacy is learned. Illiteracy is passed along by parents who cannot read or write.
- One child in four grows up not knowing how to read.
- 43% of adults at *Level 1* literacy skills live in poverty compared to only 4% of those at *Level 5*
- 3 out of 4 food stamp recipients perform in the lowest 2 literacy levels
- 90% of welfare recipients are high school dropouts
- 16 to 19 year old girls at the poverty level and below, with below average skills, are 6 times more likely to have out-of-wedlock children than their reading counterparts.

- Low literary costs \$73 million per year in terms of direct health care costs. A recent study by Pfizer put the cost much higher.

# The Effect of a Parent's Incarceration on a Child

by Sara Ipatenco, studioD



Children need their parents to provide a home, clothing, food and other basic needs. Parents also supply love and support, which children need for proper growth and development. When a parent is incarcerated, it can have a negative impact on normal development, as well as a child's mental health. Approximately 1.7 million children in the United States have at least one parent in prison, according to the Justice Strategies website. If you have a child in your life that has a parent in prison, knowing what effect this has will allow you to seek out the appropriate intervention to help support him through this time, as well as encourage normal development and overall happiness.

## Developmental Delays

When a child is separated from a parent, it negatively impacts proper development because the child is more focused on the absence of a parent than learning and growing. According to Michigan Family Impact Seminars, children with an incarcerated parent are less likely to learn self-control, independence and productivity. They are also more likely to display clinginess, academic deficiencies, language development delays, social withdrawal and regression behaviors, such as bed-wetting in potty-trained children, according to a 2007 article published in "Pediatrics."

## Poor Mental Health

When children have a parent in prison, it negatively impacts their feelings of happiness and well-being. In addition to missing that parent, children with an incarcerated parent are more likely to show symptoms of depression, according to "Pediatrics." Children with a parent in prison are also more likely to experience ridicule by peers and social isolation, which can take an enormous toll on their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. Older children who are depressed or looking for attention are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as using drugs and alcohol or having unprotected sex, according to Justice Strategies.

## Bonding and Attachment

When a parent goes to prison, both the parent and the child miss out on key bonding and attachment time. In order to form a positive and close relationship with a parent, a child must have daily contact with his mom or dad. Having a parent in prison prevents a child from getting that one-on-one time. Over time, that can cause a child to have difficulties forming relationships with others, including other adult caregivers and peers. Without at least one caring and responsible parent, many children experience low self-esteem and lack of an adequate support system to help them navigate the challenges of the growing up years. According to a 2002 report from the Department of Health and Human Services, not having an attachment to at least one parent can also lead to poor academic achievement, increased aggression and higher levels of anxiety.

## **Additional Effects**

Children with a parent in prison often experience regular nightmares, particularly if they watched their parent get arrested or witnessed the crime that led to the incarceration. Incarceration also forces children to grow up too fast because they're often left to take care of themselves and they're also exposed to adult issues that they shouldn't know anything about, according to Justice Strategies. This often includes a heavy load of chores, such as cleaning and cooking, when children should be focusing on school and getting plenty of play time. Children with an incarcerated parent are also more likely to live in poverty or abusive homes, as well.

## **Scope of the Problem**

Who is incarcerated and how many of those incarcerated are parents? According to recent estimates (Mumola, 2000), nearly 3.6 million parents are under some form of correctional supervision, including parole. Of these parents, almost 1.1 million are incarcerated in federal, state, or local jails. These parents have an estimated 2.3 million children. Alarming, the rate of parental incarceration has gone up sharply in the last decade. In 1991, there were 452,500 parents in state and federal prisons, with 936,500 minor children. By 2000, the number of parents in prisons had nearly doubled to 737,400, and the number of children affected rose by over a third to 1,531,500 (Mumola, 2001). Although the absolute numbers have increased, however, the percentage of state and federal prisoners with minor children has not changed over this time period. In 1991, 57% of prisoners had minor children; in 2000, 56% were in the same situation. Moreover, the increase in parents who became prisoners (63%) was similar to the rate of growth for non-parental prisoners (69%) a finding that suggests that being a parent is not necessarily a protective factor in reducing the chances of incarceration.

We thank you for your time and consideration. As you can see there are great consequences to people reading. Lives are improve or destroyed because of the ability to read. Join us in our campaign to help the men in prison change their lives by learning to read. If you are a poor reader or you are not proud of your reading skills go to your local library ask for help and begin reading something every day. You can find several interesting essays on our website [www.touchedbythelight.us](http://www.touchedbythelight.us) . Give us a read – believe me the essays will help you through the day. email us for more information [yithril11@netzero.net](mailto:yithril11@netzero.net) **If you are seeking an outside activity email us – we meet once a month- we need new people and new ideas.**

**UNICEF says that nearly a billion people will enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century unable to read a book or sign their name and two thirds of them are women. We need your help we can do something to reduce these statistics.** We thank you in advance for your participation. When you read for knowledge you can look forward to a better life.