

Balancing Justice with Mercy Creating a Healing Community



The Annie E. Casey Foundation
November 2008

The Healing Communities Vision

- Engaging congregations in healing and restoration
- Supporting *their own members* -- individuals and their families affected by crime, incarceration and prisoner reentry



Healing Communities Build on Faith Communities' Unique Strengths

Acceptance

Relationship Building

Love

Personal Accountability

Mercy

Forgiveness

Reconciliation

Redemption

Restoration



“Healing Communities,” “Stations of Hope,” “Returning Citizens”

- New language
- New thinking
- New paradigms



Healing Communities

Goal:

Strengthening Individuals, Families and

Through: Communities

- Creating a sense of welcome and inclusion
- Reducing stigma and shame
- Fostering the transformation of hearts, minds & communities
- Facilitating acceptance of responsibility for actions and behavior
- Building networks of support



Healing Communities offer a ministry of *presence*

- They *walk* with the person
- They help him connect with faith
- They open their hearts to her
- They embrace him
- They provide understanding



Reach out *to*:



- The accused
- The family of the defendant / prisoner
- The crime victim
- The family of the crime victim
- Returning citizens and their families
- The community affected by crime

The *Timing* of Your Engagement

Whenever help is needed:



- At the time of arrest
- During the trial
- At sentencing
- While in prison
- Getting ready for reentry
- Throughout reintegration

What Healing Communities do **NOT** require

- Setting up a program
- Setting up a nonprofit
- Getting funding



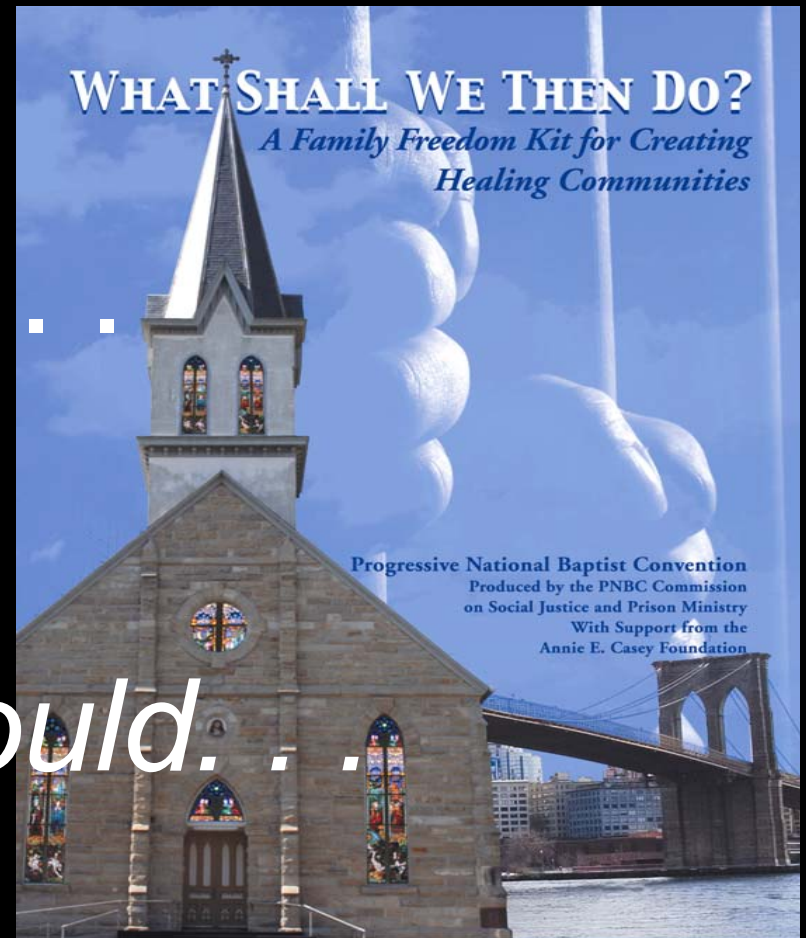
A Healing Community is more than a reentry or a prison ministry
program

PNBC slogan:

Any church can . . .

Every church *should*. . .

Become A STATION OF
HOPE



Contents of the Guide



- Story of inspiration
- Background on mass incarceration
- Role of faith leaders
- Role of members of the congregation
- Advocacy
- Resources for users (Appendices)

A True Story of Faith and Forgiveness

“A Justice that Heals”

- Murder of a son
- The pastor’s engagement
- Contrition of a killer
- Forgiveness by the parents
- “Adoption” of the killer
- Healing of the families
- Redemption and reconciliation



Why do we care?

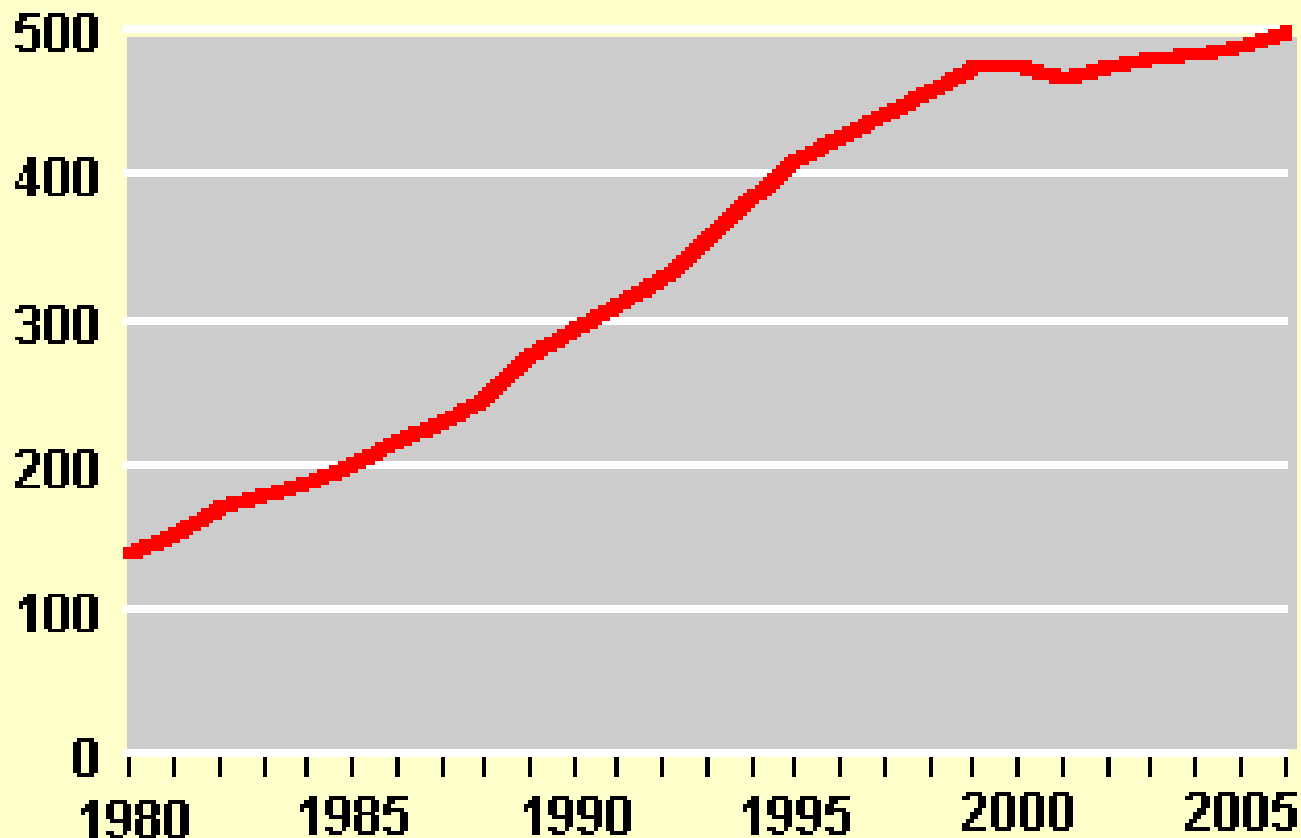
OVERWHELMING IMPACT OF MASS INCARCERATION



NEARLY 400% INCREASE IN INCARCERATION RATE OVER THE LAST 26 YEARS

Incarceration rate, 1980-2006

Number of offenders per 100,000 population





**1 IN 100
ADULTS IN
AMERICA ARE
BEHIND BARS**

AMERICAN MEN IN STATE AND FEDERAL PRISONS

	White Males	Hispanic Males	Black Males
Age 20-24	1 in 60	1 in 24	1 in 9
Age 25-29	1 in 59	1 in 26	1 in 9
Age 30-34	1 in 53	1 in 27	1 in 9



AND WOMEN IN PRISON?

The rate of growth for women is 1.5 times higher than for men.

The population of female prisoners has grown by **839%** since 1977

- 12,279 women prisoners in 1977
- 115,308 in 2006

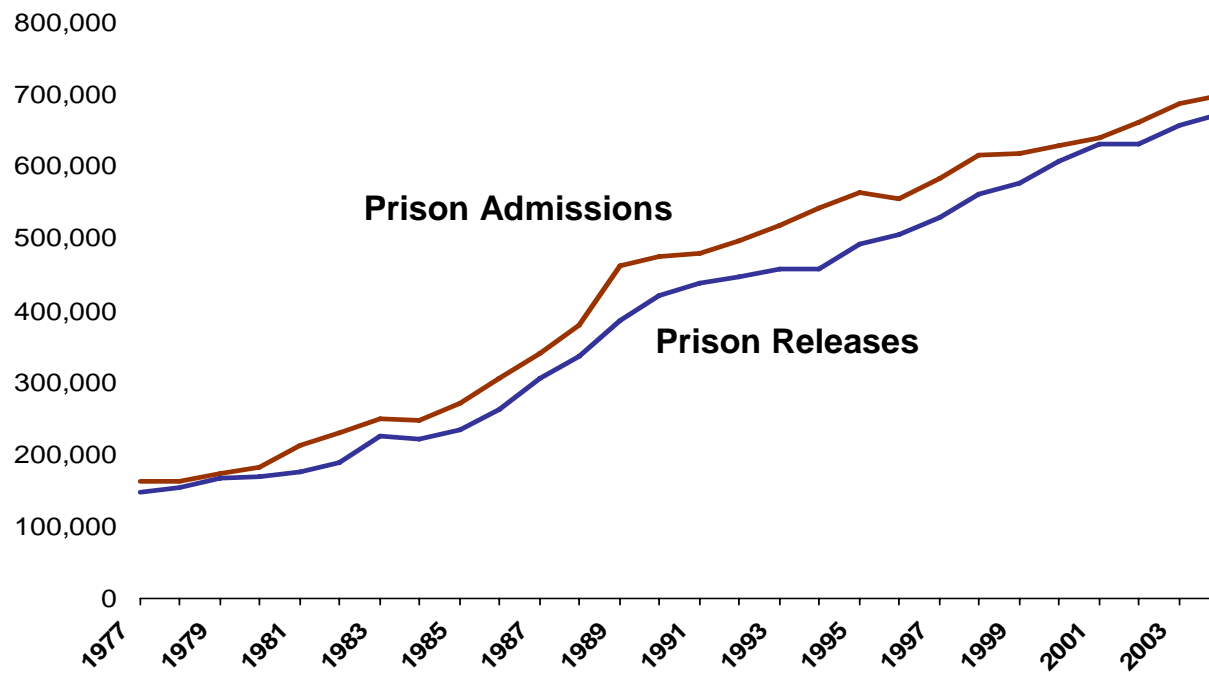


MORE PRISONERS...

More prisoners coming home to our communities

672,000 People Released from Prisons in 2004

Sentenced Prisoners Admitted and Released from Federal and State Prison, 1977-2004

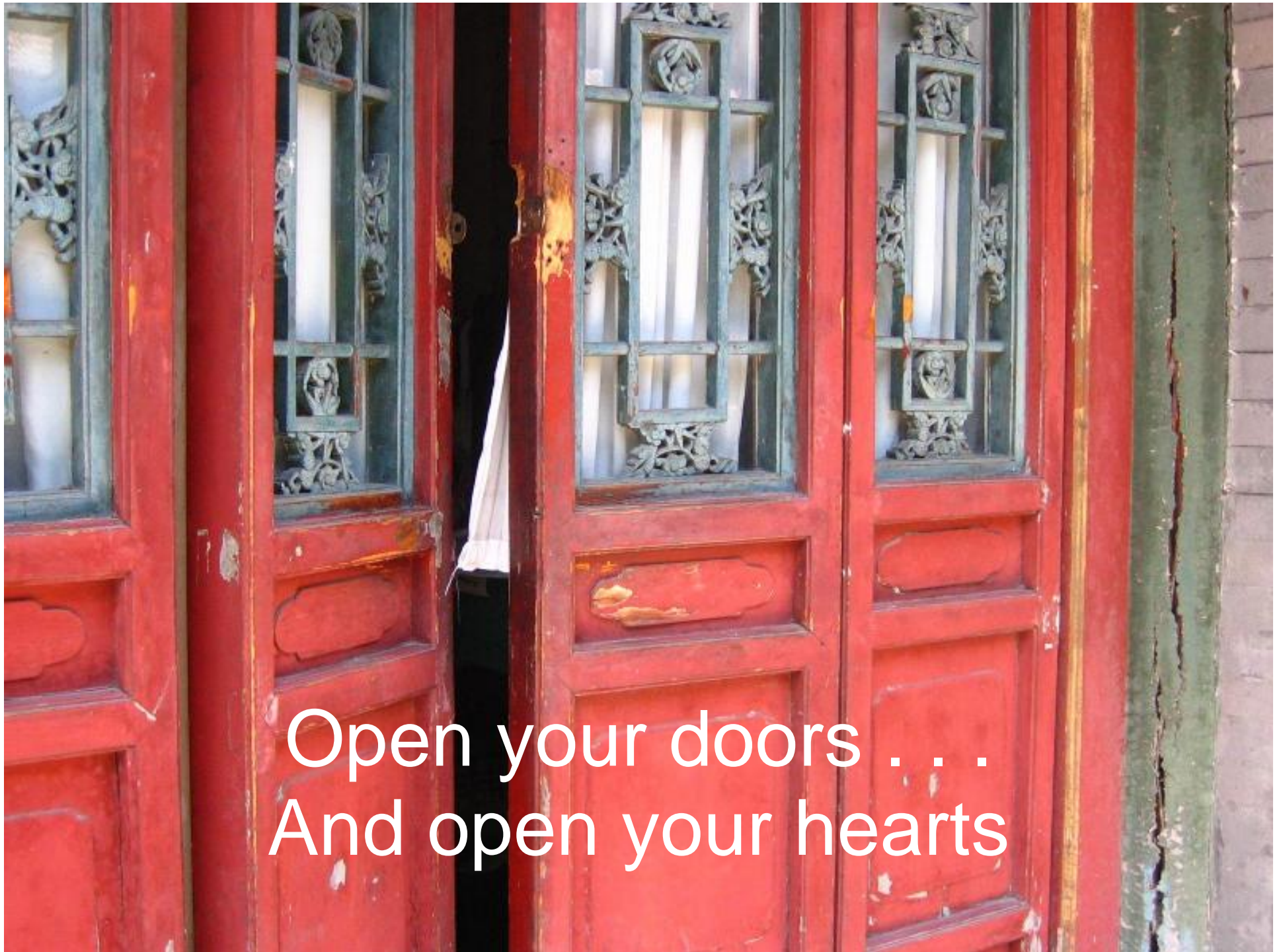


Source: The Urban Institute, 2007. Based on BJS National Prisoner Statistics.

The Role of Faith Leaders

- Set the tone of welcome and inclusion
- Learn about the issues
- Demonstrate leadership
- Identify who is in need
- Identify volunteers
- Identify partner faith leader
- Create a prayer circle
- Study holy text
- Study and preach the story





Open your doors . . .
And open your hearts

Role of Volunteers in the Congregation

Create a Climate of Inclusion

- Be present and listen.
- Visit families experiencing pain and shame.
- Welcome returning citizens.



Things Volunteers Can Do

- Create formal and informal networks of support
- Learn about the criminal justice system and mass incarceration
- Identify partners, e.g., other churches, corrections agencies, nonprofits
- Identify resources, e.g., reentry, housing, job training



Support the families



- Mentor the family and children (Amachi model)
- Assist with transportation to the prison
- Help the children stay in touch with the parent in prison
- Identify material needs

Help crime victims and their families

- Understand the anger
- Understand the grief
- Help in healing
- Move toward reconciliation and restoration



Expand the healing to the community: Public Policy Advocacy

- Stemming prison growth
- Addressing conditions of confinement
- Stopping gun violence
- Improving rehabilitation in prisons
- Developing reentry strategies and solutions
- Mitigating lifetime consequences of a record



Next Steps?



How do we get started?

Step one:



- Stand and commit to creating a Healing Community
- Read the Guide
- Become informed about the Healing Communities model
- Become informed about the challenges of incarceration and reentry

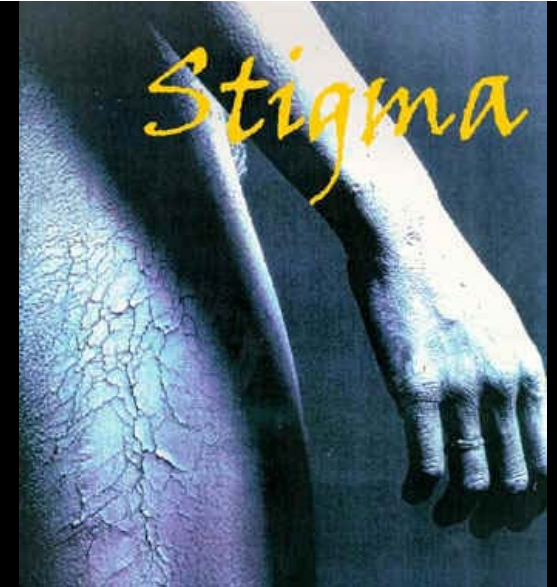
Step Two:

Introduce the Healing Communities vision to your congregation



- Preach and teach:
 - The stories of forgiveness and reconciliation.
 - Impact of the criminal justice system on your community and the members of your congregation.
- Create a climate of inclusion and support.
- **Show by example:** If you have a family member or friend who has been arrested, incarcerated or is reintegrating, say so.

Step Three: Go Deeper



- Build a partnership for learning and sharing with other faith leaders.
- Examine and talk about attitudes that both hinder and foster the embrace of people affected by the criminal justice system.
- **Address stigma and shame.**
- Develop resources for study, preaching and prayer.

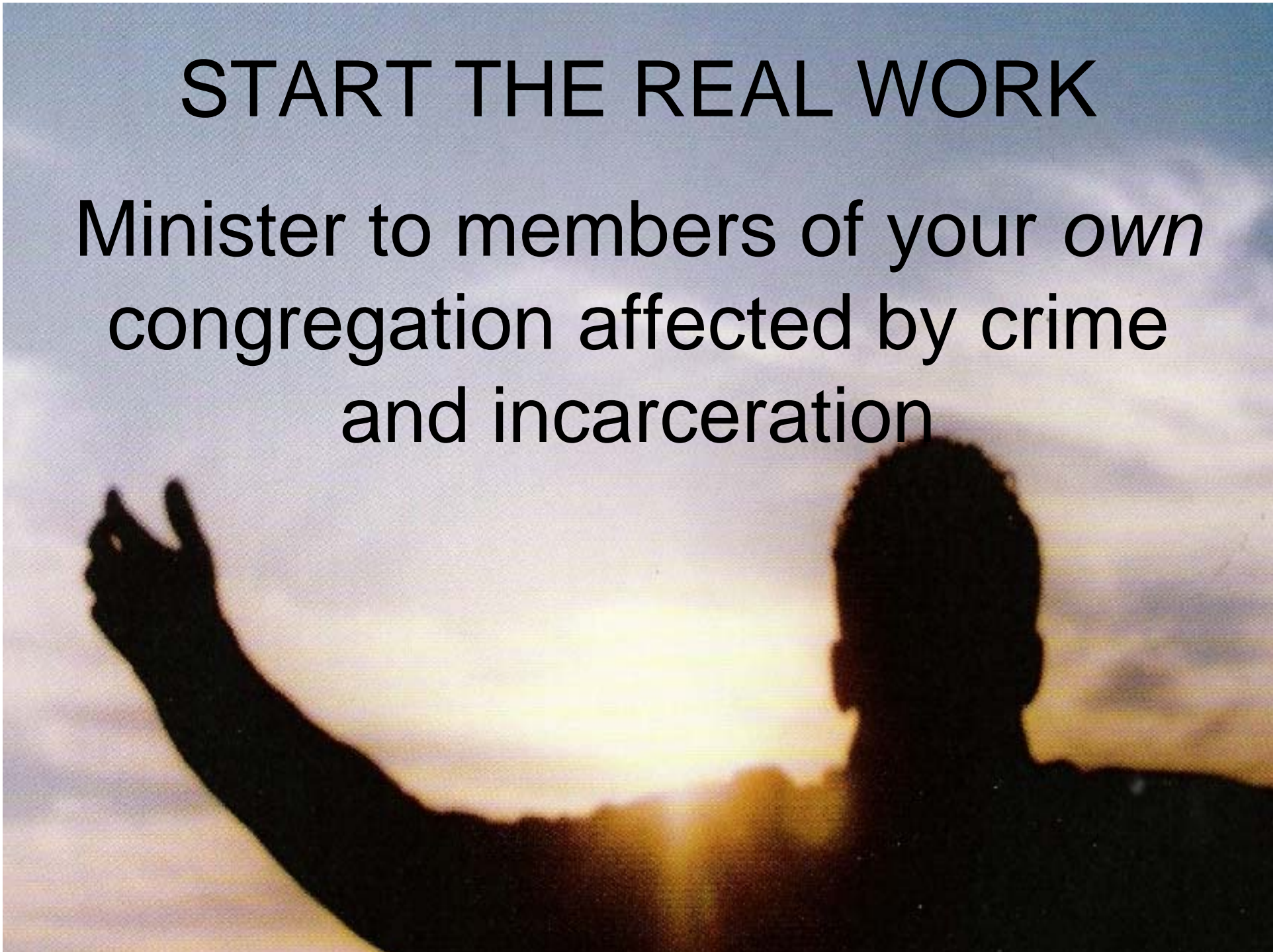
Step Four: Build the Ministry

- Identify Volunteers:
People in the congregation who want to lead and support this work.
- Identify individuals and families in need of this ministry.



START THE REAL WORK

Minister to members of your *own*
congregation affected by crime
and incarceration



Thank you

- For more information go to www.capaassociation.org.
- To comment on the Healing Communities framework, ask questions or make suggestions, write to info@capaassociation.org.