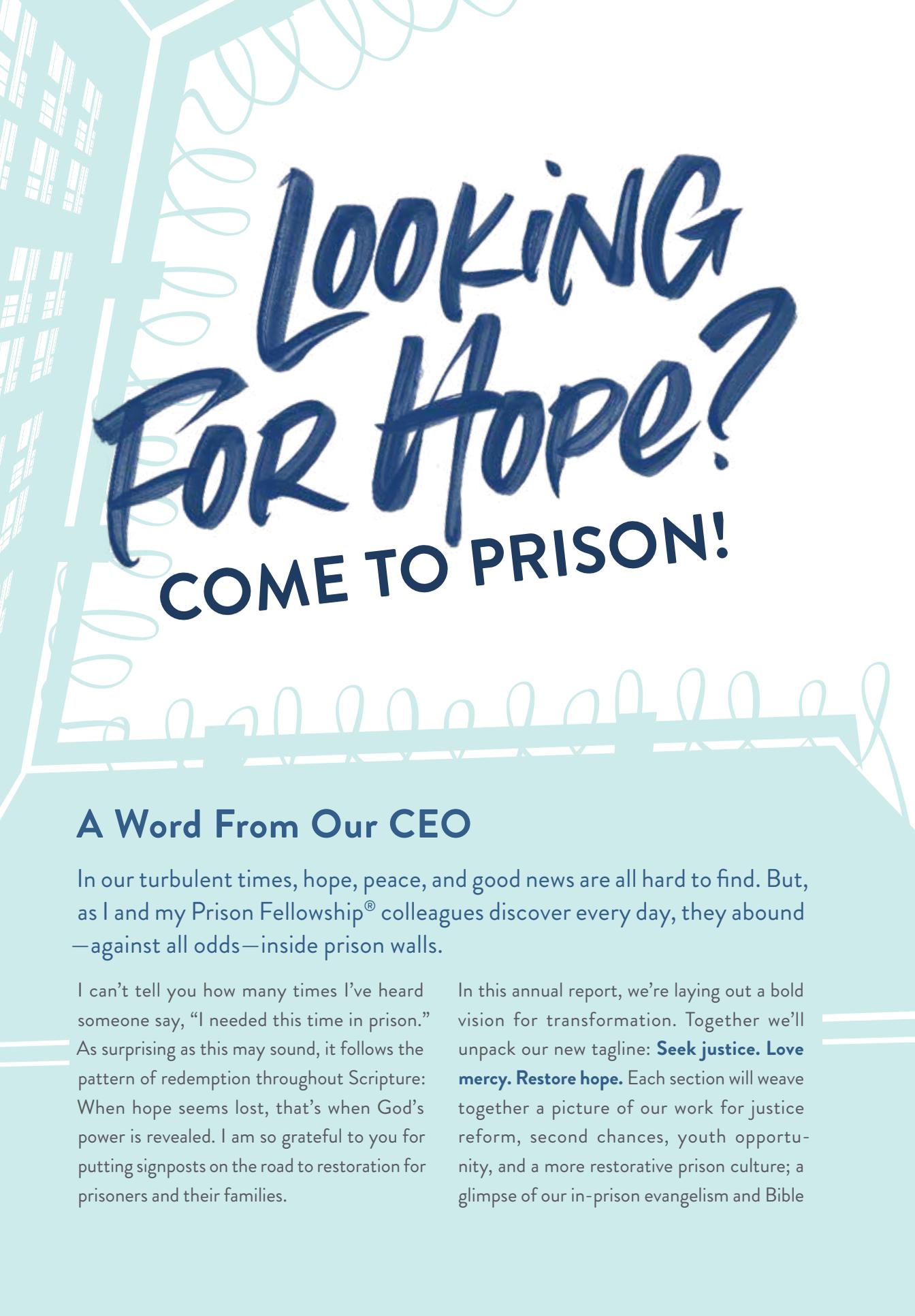


PRISON FELLOWSHIP  
Fiscal Year 2022  
Annual Report

# GATEWAY TO HOPE





# LOOKING FOR HOPE?

## COME TO PRISON!

### A Word From Our CEO

In our turbulent times, hope, peace, and good news are all hard to find. But, as I and my Prison Fellowship® colleagues discover every day, they abound—against all odds—inside prison walls.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard someone say, "I needed this time in prison." As surprising as this may sound, it follows the pattern of redemption throughout Scripture: When hope seems lost, that's when God's power is revealed. I am so grateful to you for putting signposts on the road to restoration for prisoners and their families.

In this annual report, we're laying out a bold vision for transformation. Together we'll unpack our new tagline: **Seek justice. Love mercy. Restore hope.** Each section will weave together a picture of our work for justice reform, second chances, youth opportunity, and a more restorative prison culture; a glimpse of our in-prison evangelism and Bible

distribution nationwide; and impactful stories of individuals and families that have been transformed and redeemed by Jesus.

I'll also share about an incredible opportunity I had to visit prisons and refugee centers in war-torn Ukraine, where God is doing an amazing work in prisoners and their families through His people, including our brothers and sisters of Prison Fellowship Ukraine and Prison Fellowship Romania. Finally, don't miss the special section at the end of this report, where we will lay out a vision that you are making possible.

Changed lives, healed families, hope restored—each story reminds us that prison is a place of untapped potential and unrealized restorative power. Men and women who seem to be buried and forgotten in the prison system can actually be planted—prepared for a new life only God could have imagined.

I often think of my time at Prison Fellowship in that way, as something only God could have ordained. Serving this ministry in such pivotal times has been a great honor of my life. As a

CEO, I have specialized in leading organizations through times of significant growth and transition. Recently I have felt the Holy Spirit prompting me to look toward the future.

As you may have heard, we have embarked on a prayerful, orderly transition plan to name a new president and CEO by June 2024. The ministry's robust health and clear strategic vision make it the perfect time to bring in a new leader. As we look to Prison Fellowship's 50th anniversary on the horizon, our Board of Directors and senior-level leaders are supporting my transition and engaging in the discernment process to name a new leader to carry Chuck Colson's legacy forward.

It's only just the beginning of another incredible chapter for Prison Fellowship. Thank you for being a part of it all, for opening your hands to those who so often meet closed doors and raised fists. Like you, we believe the finality of prison is all a matter of perspective: What feels like the end may be just the beginning. Thank you for coming alongside us on this amazing, often unexpected journey.



*James J. Ackerman*

James J. Ackerman  
President and Chief Executive Officer



*RIGHTeousNESS*  
and *JUSTice* are the  
foundation of your throne; love  
and faithfulness go before you.

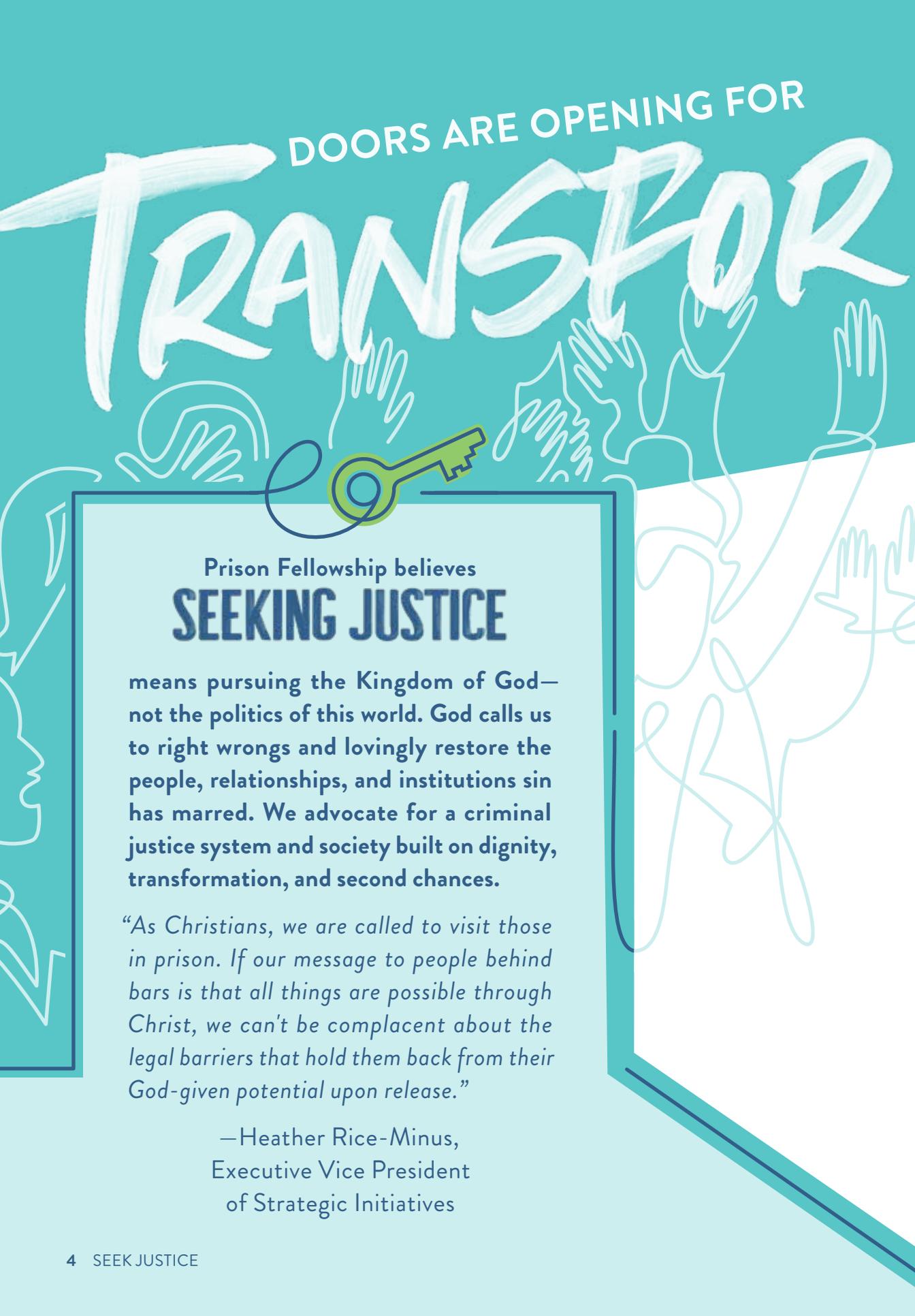
—Psalm 89:14



~~Seek  
Justice.~~

DOORS ARE OPENING FOR

# TRANSFORM



Prison Fellowship believes

## SEEKING JUSTICE

means pursuing the Kingdom of God—not the politics of this world. God calls us to right wrongs and lovingly restore the people, relationships, and institutions sin has marred. We advocate for a criminal justice system and society built on dignity, transformation, and second chances.

*“As Christians, we are called to visit those in prison. If our message to people behind bars is that all things are possible through Christ, we can’t be complacent about the legal barriers that hold them back from their God-given potential upon release.”*

—Heather Rice-Minus,  
Executive Vice President  
of Strategic Initiatives

# MATION



## JUSTICE ADVOCACY

**30,000+** Justice Advocates from all **50 states and Washington, D.C.**, called on their lawmakers to pursue justice that restores. **250+** people have been specially **trained as Justice Ambassadors**, including 7 graduates from a pilot track *elevating the voices of formerly incarcerated people.*

## REFRAMING CORRECTIONS

**89 prison leaders** representing **47 facilities** in **22 states** graduated from **Warden Exchange®**, Prison Fellowship's transformative training program that brings together wardens and other senior correctional staff to *reimagine the culture and outcomes of prison.*

## SECOND CHANCES

More than **700 organizations** signed on as **Second Chance® Partners** during the 6th annual celebration of Second Chance Month, *helping to remove some of the 44,000 barriers to success for 70 million Americans with a criminal record.* More than **25 jurisdictions** officially observed **April as Second Chance Month™** with declarations and events.

## BREAKING CYCLES

In November 2021, as part of a five-city nationwide pilot, Prison Fellowship **partnered with the Walmart.org Center for Racial Equity** to launch the **Opportunity Kids™** initiative, *an effort to help children in need move from vulnerable beginnings to victorious futures* through activities like college readiness training and free dental clinics. The launch was marked by a sports camp in Georgia benefitting more than 100 children.



# A Voice Unlocked



**“I FELT LIKE A SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN. I FELT LIKE I HAD BEEN THROWN AWAY LIKE A DIRTY DISHRAG,”** says Sheena Beasley of Greensboro, N.C., who served a five-year suspended sentence with probation for a nonviolent offense in the 1980s.

Though no prison cell door ever clanged shut behind Sheena, other kinds of doors have slammed in her face. Landlords have denied her access to housing. An employer rescinded a job offer, telling her, “Ms. Beasley, we don’t hire felons.”

But today, Sheena’s past is opening doors for her and many others.

As a Prison Fellowship Justice Ambassador, Sheena wrote an op-ed encouraging Senator Thom Tillis, R-N.C., to support the EQUAL Act, which would end unjust sentencing disparities for crack and powder cocaine offenses.

After a newspaper ran the piece, Sheena got a call from Sen. Tillis’ office. They told her that she

had been instrumental in the senator’s decision to cosponsor the legislation. They invited her to talk to the senator face to face. Equipped by Prison Fellowship advocacy staff, Sheena continued to build rapport and advocate persuasively for justice that restores.

“Something I have learned about myself is that I can speak before people that I thought were beyond my reach,” says Sheena, who received the 2021 Chuck Colson Advocate of Hope Award from Prison Fellowship and has been part of a special Justice Ambassador cohort for

advocates with lived experience of the criminal justice system.

“My voice matters. Telling my story freed me from the guilt and shame that I was carrying, and it opened doors for me to make the public aware that we are commanded to remember those in prison, that God is a God of justice, and that’s what He wants us to be about as well.”

*My Voice MATTERS.*  
TELLING MY STORY FREED ME  
FROM THE GUILT AND SHAME  
THAT I WAS CARRYING,  
AND IT OPENED DOORS FOR ME...





*Ask and it will be given to you;  
seek and you will find;  
KNOCK AND THE DOOR  
WILL BE OPENED TO YOU.*

*For everyone who asks receives;  
the one who seeks finds; and to  
the one who knocks, the door  
will be opened.*

*—Matthew 7:7-8*



Love  
Mercy.

HEARTS ARE WIDE OPEN TO

# God's Me



Prison Fellowship believes  
**LOVING MERCY**

should be at the heart of everything we do. Having received forgiveness because of Christ, we know no life is beyond His reach. Through words of truth and acts of loving-kindness, we invite prisoners and their families to share in the joy of the Gospel.

*“There was no getting to me or reaching me. Ultimately, the only way that I was reached was by being ... put behind bars, and falling to the lowest point where the only option I have is to look up because I cannot fall any further. It was in that moment that the rescue mission started to unfold in my life.”*

—Richard Andrew,  
formerly incarcerated  
Hope Event performer



# RCM



## TRUTH THAT TRANSFORMS

122,852 copies of God's Word were distributed to men and women in prison and their families.

## SHINING LIGHT

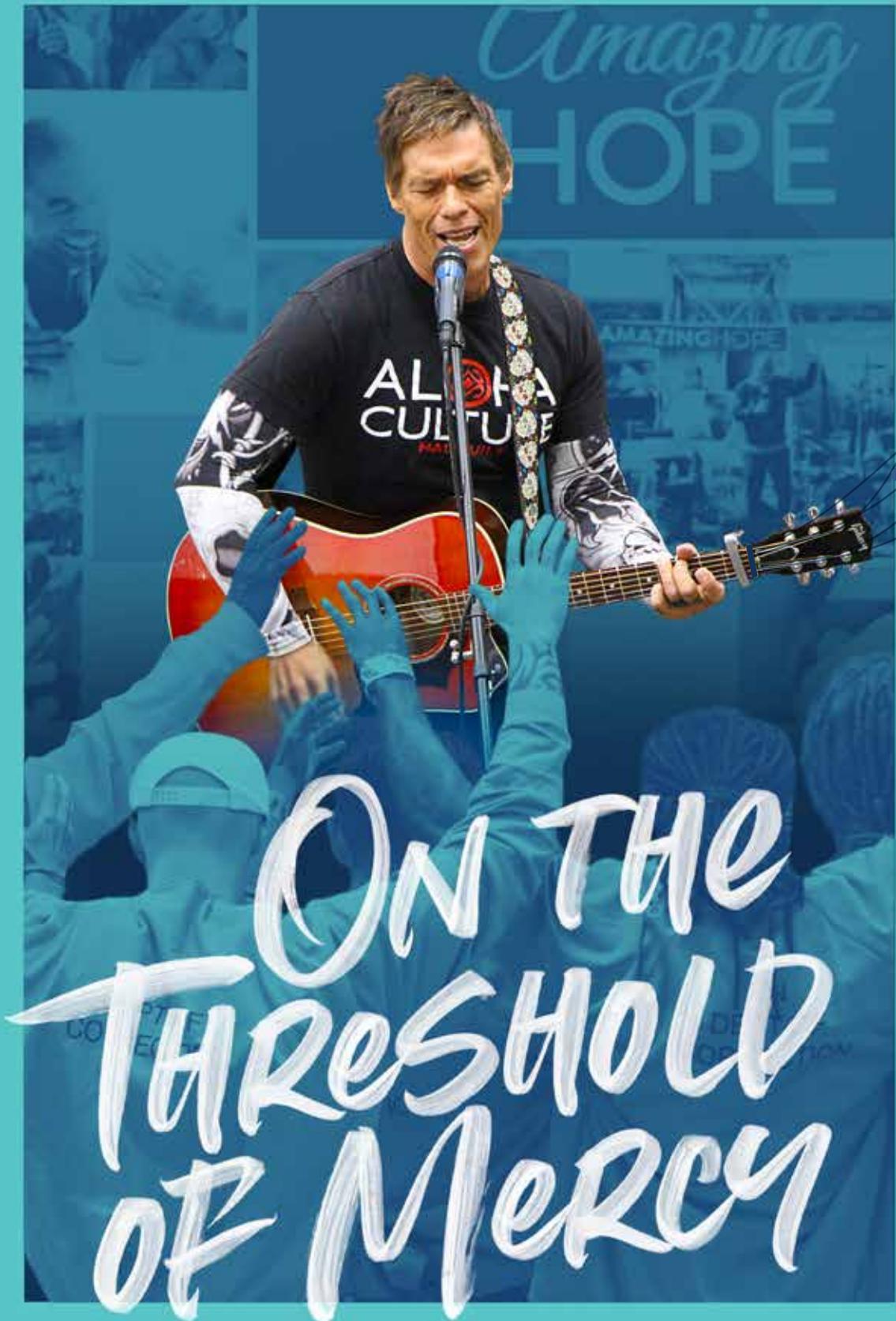
560,000+ prisoners in 49 states had access to Christian content through Floodlight®, Prison Fellowship's in-prison digital platform.

## INSPIRED INSIDE

More than 1 million copies of Inside Journal®, Prison Fellowship's quarterly newspaper, offered inspiration to prisoners through men's, women's, and Spanish editions.

## GOSPEL HOPE

183 Hope Events shared the Gospel with 21,200+ prisoners nationwide, and 2,699 made decisions for Christ.



**“I WAS A WILD KID THAT JUST DIDN'T CARE. I WOULD JUST DO WHATEVER I WANTED, WHENEVER I WANTED,”** remembers Rodney Pieres, a Christian hard rock musician from Arizona.

After tumbling headlong into a ceaseless cycle of alcohol abuse, drugs, trauma, detox, and relapse, Rodney found himself in prison in 2013. But when the gates slammed shut behind him, true freedom was finally in sight.

“When you're incarcerated,” he explains, “you're really at a good place, believe it or not. You're actually humbled by the experience, and you start to listen to things you wouldn't have listened to before.”

One day, walking past the chapel, he heard hopeful music playing. He went inside and met the members of the prison worship band, who led him to faith in Jesus Christ.

Not long after, Rodney attended his first Prison Fellowship Hope Event®. The transparency, faith, and joy of the musical artists left a lasting impres-

sion. He realized God was calling him to do the same thing after he was released from prison.

During Easter weekend 2022, Rodney went back into prison as a Prison Fellowship Hope Event performer at a women's prison, bearing the message that “no matter what you've done, no matter how far down you've gone, Jesus will meet you where you're at.”

**HOPE NEVER  
DISAPPOINTS.  
AND IF YOU GIVE PRISONERS  
THAT HOPE AND THEY GRAB ONTO IT,  
THEY WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.**

After he came down from the event stage, Rodney and his wife Carrie prayed with Mary (name changed for privacy), a middle-aged woman who came to prison after being abused, traumatized, and trafficked

for decades. Rodney and the other volunteers connected Mary with other Christians within the prison, placed a Bible in her hands, circled the words of God's promises, and urged her, “Read this every day.”

Rodney continues to appear at Hope Events every time he gets a chance. “Hope never disappoints,” he says. “And if you give prisoners that hope and they grab onto it, they won't be disappointed.”



*I will ... transform the  
Valley of Trouble into a  
GATEWAY OF HOPE ...*

—Hosea 2:15, NLT



Restore  
Hope.

GOD PUTS PATHS TO HOPE IN

# Unexpected



Prison Fellowship believes  
**RESTORING HOPE**

is our destiny as God's children. The deeper the darkness, the brighter hope shines. To those in prison we hold up the promise of renewed purpose in Christ. To families we offer compassionate bridges to restoration. To all affected by incarceration, we show paths to new beginnings. With Jesus, there is always hope.

*"In the darkest times, I was coming to camp. Camp is really what made me feel good about myself. ... Camp is what started my relationship with God."*

—Amber, Angel Tree® camper



# PLACES



## LIFTING UP KIDS

Last year **707 children** were lifted up at an **Angel Tree sports camp**, and **3,898** experienced the love of God in the great outdoors at an **Angel Tree summer camp**. **856 children and caregivers** made commitments to Christ.



## BRIGHTER FUTURES

25 years after the program first launched, **3,170 prisoners** changed their lives in the supportive community of the Prison Fellowship Academy® at **146 sites** in **35 states**. **61 new Academy sites** were launched for the very first time.



## THE GIFT OF RELATIONSHIP

**236,965** Angel Tree **children** were assigned to **5,700+ churches and organizations** across the country to receive a Christmas gift and the Gospel in the name of their incarcerated parent. **179 Angel Tree Parent Day** events **equipped 18,154 men and women** in prison to be positive forces in their children's lives.

## THE ART OF HEALING

**200+ women** found a safe place to explore life's hurts and find healing through **Create: New Beginnings®**, a restorative art program created by Prison Fellowship.





**LOOKING FOR QUARTERS TO GO TO THE ARCADE, 9-YEAR-OLD TORRANCE WILSON FOUND HIS MOTHER'S CRACK PIPES INSTEAD. Brokenhearted, he began to cry. His mother saw his distress and told him the drug paraphernalia belonged to a friend. But he knew it was a lie.**

After his father walked out the door, Torrance, then 13, unraveled. Desperate to escape poverty, he took a \$20 bill to deliver cocaine for a drug dealer. His life of crime had begun.

For years, he cycled in and out of state custody. Finally, crying tears of surrender behind a cell door, he prayed, "Lord, I'm facing 25 years to life in prison. I don't care what happens with that. I just want to trust You with the rest of my life."

Soon Torrance requested to be transferred to the Prison Fellowship Academy at the Carol Vance Unit near Houston.

*GOD HAS USED  
MY WALK*

**AND MY STORY TO OPEN  
THE DOOR FOR OTHERS.**

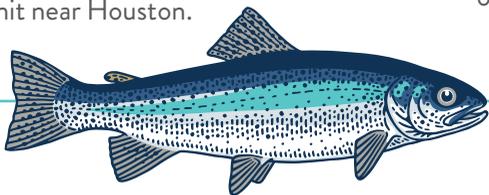
"The Academy experience was huge," says Torrance. "That was exactly what I needed—discipleship in my life." Torrance received counsel that challenged his old mindset. He reoriented himself toward new goals, like becoming an entrepreneur and being present for his family. And he learned to forgive his parents for falling short while embracing his heavenly Father's love.

Torrance also signed up his three young children to receive a Christmas gift in his name through Prison Fellowship Angel Tree.

"It took away the pain of Dad not being there," says Torrance. "That was super empowering." Angel Tree also

helped Torrance reflect on what he had missed through his actions over the years. "That's when I knew I never wanted to go back to prison again."

Since his release, Torrance has gotten married, started a business, and helped other former prisoners find belonging in the community. He marvels, "God has used my walk and my story to open the door for others."



# GOD'S LOVE FOR PRISONERS DOESN'T STOP AT OUR THRESHOLD

*In FY22 the work of Prison Fellowship extended to the support of life-changing prison ministry abroad.*



## UKRAINE

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and in response to the harrowing testimonies of the leaders of **Prison Fellowship Ukraine** and **Prison Fellowship Romania**, the Prison Fellowship Board of Directors approved a **\$1 million grant out of the proceeds of our building sale to support Ukrainian prisoners and their families through the Hope Bearer Foundation**, to whom we were connected by Prison Fellowship International. Lifesaving supplies like **food and medicine**—along with a van to transport them—were purchased and driven into the country for distribution to those in desperate circumstances.

In the summer of 2022, Prison Fellowship President and **CEO James Ackerman** had the unique **opportunity to travel to Ukraine** personally. There he visited correctional facilities, shared God's Word behind bars, prayed over prisoners, and discovered how our Prison Fellowship brothers and sisters overseas are rising to meet this grave crisis. As the situation evolves, Prison Fellowship will continue to look for opportunities to **support the "brave and faithful men and women who thought nothing of driving into an active war zone to serve refugees, prisoners, their children, addicts, and the Church in Ukraine,"** says James.



## UNITED KINGDOM & AUSTRALIA

This fiscal year **three international Warden Exchange participants**—two from the United Kingdom and one from Australia—explored with us **how to make prisons in their home countries into places of transformation.**

## CANADA, MEXICO, & GUYANA

**3,164 Bibles were sent** to give hope to prisoners in Canada, Mexico, and Guyana. Additionally, **300 copies of Inside Journal were distributed** to remote prisons in Saskatchewan and the Yukon Territory.

***Publish His glorious deeds among the nations.  
Tell everyone about the amazing things He does.***

**—Psalm 96:3, NLT**



# OPENING DOORS

The past year has been tremendous. In light of all God has done, we wait in eager anticipation for all He will do in the years to come. More doors will open for hope, mercy, and justice. **With your help, we'll be ready to stride boldly through them.**

From our founding in 1976, the Prison Fellowship story has been one of doors opened through God's power at work. Reflecting on the earliest days of ministry, Chuck said, *"Obeying Christ's call to those in prison is no easy task. Historically it has been difficult, often impossible, for outsiders to gain access to work with inmates. But God is miraculously opening the barred gate."*

When the ministry began, Chuck believed it would have two main thrusts: First, Prison Fellowship would energize and equip Christ's Body to serve those behind bars as an expression of the Gospel; secondly, men and women in prison, following Jesus in community, would become agents of His grace, leaders in the Church, and ambassadors of His Kingdom to

the broader culture. Remarkably, these same elements are the hallmarks of Prison Fellowship's future vision.

In the years to come, we will be increasingly focused on equipping the Church for its call to serve those in prison and their families. We believe the love of God, shown by His people, is the answer to the most pressing problems facing the prison system and our society. As Chuck told the director of the Bureau of Prisons decades ago, *"One Person can make a difference: Jesus Christ. His love and power to remake lives is the answer."* Unshaken in that conviction, we will mobilize churches to walk with prisoners, their families, and returning citizens and seek justice in their communities.



## The Seed WAS NOT BURIED BUT PLANTED

Every year, thousands of prisoners across the country are part of the Prison Fellowship Academy. Prison Fellowship is welcoming many of them into the Prison Fellowship Pathways™ program, a network focused on the empowerment and engagement of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated men and women committed to living the biblically based Values of Good Citizenship™. In fulfillment of Chuck's original vision for effective leaders coming out of prison, these groups will work together to transform prison culture and impact their communities for good. Pathways is now being piloted in five prisons in three states—plus a chapter outside prison for returning citizens. It's our ambitious goal to start 55 chapters in 22 states by 2025.

## THANK YOU!

You will hear more about these bold initiatives and Prison Fellowship's ongoing work to restore all those affected by incarceration. As we walk through these open doors, we invite you to pray and walk with us as stewards of God's call to those in prison.

When a seed is placed in the ground, it might at first appear to be buried. But over time, as rain falls and sun shines, a new leaf emerges, and the truth becomes clear: The seed was not buried but planted.

Likewise, a prison might seem like a place where lives have come to a dead end. In fact **prisons are full of people with boundless worth in God's sight, awaiting the sunshine and rain of His redeeming love, transformative truth, and restoring power to be raised to new purpose.**

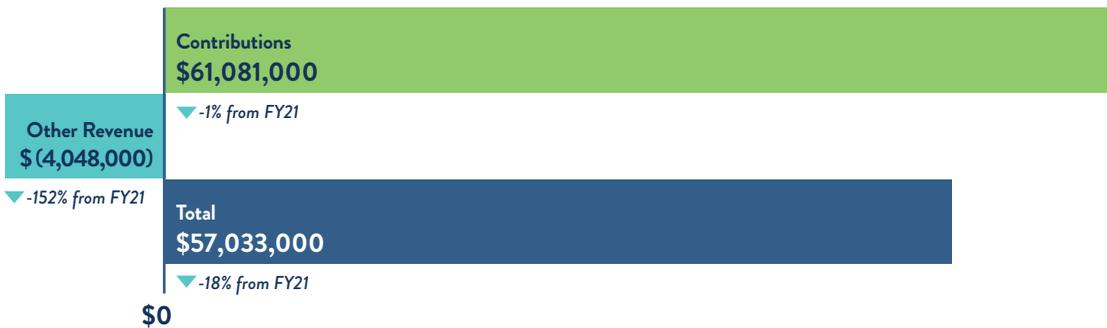
Prison Fellowship supporters like you are unique because you have the vision and faith to realize that prison is a place of untapped potential and preparation for future leaders. You know Jesus is present and active in the darkest cell, and you have decided to invest in that potential. You have opened your heart and your hands to those who so often meet with closed doors and raised fists.

We are so grateful to supporters like you, who believe wholeheartedly in the power of the Gospel. God is using your generosity to put signposts on this narrow road that leads to life for prisoners and their families—and ultimately for all of us.

**We are deeply grateful for all the doors your support has unlocked this past year and will unlock in the years to come.**

# FINANCIALS

## TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE



### OTHER REVENUE INCLUDES

Investment Loss  
**\$(4,070,000)**

Miscellaneous Revenue  
**\$113,000**

Gain on Sale of Assets  
**\$(91,000)**

### FY22 NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions  
**\$25,510,000**

With Donor Restrictions  
**\$22,026,000**

Total  
**\$47,536,000**

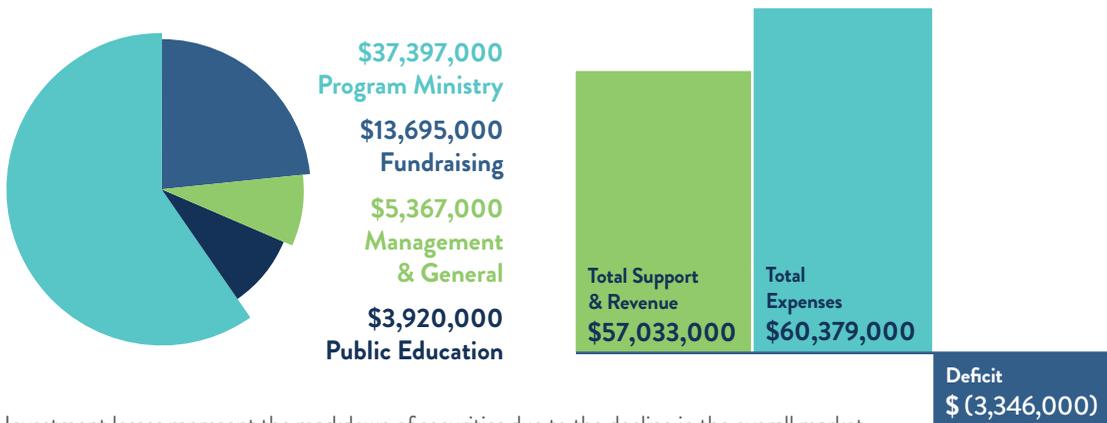
### CONTRIBUTION STATS

Largest Giving Month  
**DECEMBER**

Largest Gift From Single Donor  
**\$1.15MM**

Number of Gifts ≥ \$5,000  
**1,200**

## TOTAL EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



Investment losses represent the markdown of securities due to the decline in the overall market during the fiscal year. Prison Fellowship's investments had a gain of \$3.6MM in FY21. To see complete audited financials, go to [prisonfellowship.org/resources/financials](https://prisonfellowship.org/resources/financials).

# Our Board

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*Seek justice. Love mercy. Restore hope.*

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