Evaluation of Kairos Prison Ministry at California State Prison Sacramento: A Qualitative Case Study

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Evaluation of Kairos Prison Ministry at California State Prison Sacramento: A Qualitative Case Study

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Abstract

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This qualitative case study examined Kairos Prison Ministry to see whether this volunteer, faith-based program has any impact on the men who take part in it at California State Prison Sacramento. The problem stated in this research is as follows: The effectiveness of the Kairos Prison Ministry’s faith-based intervention program is not clearly understood in terms of how it impacts the behavior of its program graduates at California State Prison Sacramento in Folsom, California.

The research study was conducted as a qualitative case to collect and compare data among the inmates and staff of California State Prison Sacramento, as well as that of the members of the Kairos Advisory Council. The case study method provided the opportunity for triangulation of data from multiple sources of evidence, as this study utilized document collection, field observations and notes, semi-structured interviews, and two focus group interviews.

The research methodology resulted in four main findings of the study which are: 1) The participants’ troubled backgrounds, 2) The Kairos Program’s positive impact on participant inmates, 3) The Kairos Program’s visible impact on the people and the prison environment at California State Prison Sacramento, and 4) The Kairos Program provides a degree of structure. Nine recommendations emerged from the study with five of them being directed to Kairos Prison Ministry and four being dedicated to further research. Key among them were the need to maintain the existing Kairos Prison Ministry while expanding it to utilize all of its six components, and for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to make more use of volunteer programs like Kairos in light of declining budgets in California.
Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my dear father, Theodore Joseph Palacio, April 4, 1930 – September 3, 2012 who passed away three weeks before my completion. Uguchili, this work would never have been accomplished if you had not put in my mind at an early age that you were leaving the pursuit of doctoral studies to one of your children. This left me no choice but to take up the mantle. Throughout this doctoral journey whenever I faltered, I thought of you and your spirit of dedication, perseverance and high standards would keep me going. Thanks for sharing your love of teaching and learning as well as your passion for moral leadership with me. Even in your final transition, I have experienced your loving guidance as you brought me home to Barangu and provided the much needed space and peace of mind that accelerated my completion even under the adverse circumstances associated with the mourning of your passing.
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prepare myself to provide meaningful service to the world from there.

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Finally, to my best friend, life partner and wife, Gaynor Ferguson-Palacio, thank you for providing love, support, inspiration, compassion, encouragement and truly making our home a place where each of us can remain grounded while striving toward our dreams. I love you, always.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

Within the past 30 years, the prison population in the United States has grown from 300,000 to in excess of 2 million (Alexander, 2010; Birk, 2002; Davis, 2003; Pew Center on the States, 2008). In particular, the California prison population has been affected with the total California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) population being 286,000 on December 31, 2009. This is comprised of 168,000 adults, 1,400 juveniles, and 118,000 parolees (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation [CDCR], 2010). California is ranked as the state that has incarcerated the largest number of prisoners in the country. With annual spending of $8.92 billion it has a total of 33 adult state institutions that are very crowded and operate at approximately 200% above capacity (Petersilia, 2006).

Given the increasing rates of incarceration and the overcrowding at correctional facilities, examination of intervention programs is warranted. A need clearly exists to examine why this is the case. Even more important is the need to examine the type of intervention programs that may lead to improved inmate behavior. One such model that has been operating at California State Prison (CSP) Sacramento is Kairos Prison Ministry.

Studies have shown that faith-based intervention programs that work with people who experience difficulty can provide them with an additional asset and a higher degree of efficacy that other non-religious programs do not have. Kairos Prison Ministry International (KPMI) is a faith-based, lay-led, volunteer program that goes into more than 300 prisons throughout 33 states in the United States, in 480 communities, and in nine
countries including Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, Costa Rica, and South Africa. Primarily gang leaders participate in a 3.5-day course in Christianity. The goal of Kairos Prison Ministry is to bring the incarcerated closer to Christ, thereby allowing them to get insights into a different way of serving their time in prison (Burnside, 2006; Kairos, 2011).

Kairos, a Greek word, which means God’s special time or opportunity, is derived from a non-prison version of a short course in Christianity known as Cursillo which is a Catholic program that is undertaken by members of the Catholic Church who seek a deeper relationship with God. While Kairos has kept a lot of the Cursillo model there are many differences between the two.

Cursillo is designed for Christians coming from normal parish life and assumes a certain level of religious education (e.g. knowledge of the Lord’s Prayer). Kairos, by contrast, is designed for prisoners who are mostly not church members and indeed may be actively hostile to the church. It also takes account of prisoners’ general lack of religious knowledge. (Burnside, Loucks, & Adler, 2005, p. 37)

The mission of Kairos Prison Ministry is to share the transforming love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ to impact the hearts and lives of incarcerated men, women, and youth as well as their families, to help them become loving and productive citizens of their communities (Kairos, 2011).

It has been documented by several prisons that after only two to three years of a Kairos presence in a correctional facility, the level of violence found among the inmates, as well as between the inmates and the correctional staff, decreased significantly. As part of the documentation, it can be evidenced that when a higher percentage of gang leaders
attend a Kairos weekend, an even more noteworthy change takes place in the prison environment (Thompson, 2011).

The reason Kairos seeks to introduce inmates to Christ is two-fold. Firstly, it helps with their spiritual salvation and secondly, it brings about an encounter that begins to serve as a catalyst for the process of transformation from a criminal to a person with a pro-social attitude. This includes developing a more mature understanding of what it means to be a person, citizen, father, husband, employee, etc. The 3.5-day weekend is just a jumping-off point for the work of rehabilitation that begins to take place through the prayer and share accountability groups (Thompson, 2011).

At California State Prison Sacramento in excess of 300 people have graduated from Kairos Prison Ministry since the program was reintroduced to the prison five years ago.

This chapter is organized into six sections: a) the problem statement that is being researched; b) the purpose and significance of the problem; c) the research questions; d) the conceptual framework; e) the definition of terms; and f) the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

**Statement of the Problem to Be Researched**

The effectiveness of the Kairos Prison Ministry’s faith-based intervention program is not clearly understood in terms of how it impacts the behavior of its program graduates at California State Prison Sacramento (CSP Sacramento) in Folsom, California.

**Purpose and Significance of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of the Kairos Prison Ministry on the graduates of its program so as to better understand the role of this intervention
program as a part of the rehabilitation effort currently in place at CSP Sacramento and to examine its impact on the way the inmates serve their time.

**Significance**

Faith-based organizations and volunteers have proven themselves to be able to significantly reduce crime and help in the improvement of the criminal justice system. Johnson (2011) argued that individuals and organizations motivated by faith have proven that due to the transformative nature of faith, crime is reduced and the criminal justice system is improved. He outlined the way partnerships between law enforcement and religious communities have led to improved relationships between police and communities and have induced reductions in gang activity, violence by youth, and criminal activity.

With ongoing cutbacks in CSP Sacramento’s budget due to the current state of the economy, the staff has been forced to contend with keeping a level IV, maximum-security prison operational with less funding and manpower than before. Consequently, volunteer programs help change the prison environment significantly and help make it safer for both staff and volunteers. As attested to by an official of CSP Sacramento, volunteers have changed the prison environment and made it safer for both inmates and staff. Some of the programs that volunteer at CSP Sacramento include but are limited to Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Buddhist Meditation, Inside Circle Foundation, Arts and Corrections Book Club, Veterans Program, and Kairos Prison Ministry International.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations also provides, on a limited basis, in-prison rehabilitation programs to its offenders. These include academic
and vocational programs, substance abuse treatment, cognitive-based behavioral services
and employment programs. However, since the 2009-2010 fiscal year, reductions have
taken place due to budget restrictions and overcrowding (CDCR, 2012).

Kairos Prison Ministry started operating at CSP Sacramento approximately 20
years ago in 1992. After a year or two of operation, there was a hiatus for about 15 years,
when the program was not allowed in the prison. Then it was allowed back in the prison
in early 2006. Since that time, the program has graduated approximately 350 inmates of
which an average of 30 get together every two weeks to attend bi-weekly follow-up
Prayer and Share sessions. Since Kairos weekend retreats are held twice a year, this
number peaks to between 40 and 50 every six months immediately after a Kairos
weekend retreat, when new graduates emerge (Hoggard, personal communication,
September 26, 2011).

Kairos Prison Ministry’s 3.5-day spiritual retreat at the prison is a short course in
Christianity that serves approximately 36 inmate participants in the process of learning
more about their faith. Consequently, there is a need to look closely at the program to see
the impact it has had on the graduates. An analysis of the impact of faith-based programs
on male incarceration is very important for many reasons. A review of the literature
reveals that there has been little formal research done on Kairos Prison Ministry
International despite the fact that it has been in existence for 36 years and has served
approximately 250,000 inmates and their relatives in 300 prisons, 33 states, and nine
countries (Burnside, 2005; Thompson, 2011); hence, the researcher addressed this lack.
This study can be useful to inform faith-based organizations in general, as well as those
involved in the rehabilitation of prisoners. Also, there is a severe lack of research in this area so this study will help inform the scholarship associated with this field.

**Research Questions**

This study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the backgrounds and demographics of men incarcerated at CSP Sacramento who are participants in the Kairos program?
2. How does the Kairos program affect the way the men who have participated in the program serve their time?
3. What is the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the prison environment at CSP Sacramento?

**Conceptual Framework and Research Paradigm**

**Researcher’s Paradigm and Mental Models**

This research sought to evaluate the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the population it serves. It examined the research questions using a qualitative case study approach taking into consideration and consistent with my epistemological orientations and my paradigms as a researcher, which are primarily social constructivist with elements of advocacy/participatory, as well as pragmatism. As a social constructivist, I seek to understand the world in which I live and work (Creswell, 2007); consequently, it is particularly appropriate this study was conducted at a research site with which I have very close ties. This case study especially reflects my interest in working from the method in line with what I want to study in the world, the place where I volunteer, and the community in which I live.
“The goal of the research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation” (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). Primarily because of my stance as a social constructivist, I believe in making meaning of the impact Kairos has on the inmates from the particular perspectives and experiences of the inmates themselves because they are the ones who have the story to tell. Since the primary focus of the advocacy/participatory worldview is to provide a platform that may help reform the way participants live their lives, this is in direct correlation with the way I believe in conducting research that seeks to “provide a voice for these participants, raising their consciousness and improving their lives” (Creswell, 2007, pp. 21-22).

In conducting this research, it was my contention that perception of reality varies depending on the experiences of the research participants. I also maintained a deep appreciation of the way my values, including my personal biases, may have helped to shape the story of the participants. As a consequence, I did my best to safeguard against this by any means necessary. I was also mindful of the rhetorical stance in conducting inmate interviews to enhance communication due to the difference in the type of language used by the researcher and the researched as well as the willingness of the inmates to communicate freely as a result of the impact the prison and its code has had on them.

**Experiential Knowledge**

When I first entered CSP Sacramento in October of 2007 to attend my introductory Kairos retreat, I was struck by the fact that 90% of the inmates attending the retreat looked like me (since they were Black), while all the members of the team entering the prison gates along with me were Caucasians. My heart was moved with
empathy for the primarily African American women I met when going from the parking lot of the prison to the Visitor’s Center as they visited their incarcerated loved ones. This caused me to begin to ponder and delve into the question of who these men in prison were, what led to their being there, what might have prevented them from being in prison, and what impact was this program known as Kairos Prison Ministry having on them.

Since relocating to the United States from Belize in 2002, I have had close contact with individuals who have been involved in both the mental health system as well as the criminal justice system in California. Conversely, prior to coming to California, I did not meet anyone in the course of my daily existence who had been similarly involved in these systems.

In January 2006, a person close to me was admitted involuntarily to the Sutter Center for Psychiatry in Sacramento for two weeks of mental health treatment after having been placed on a 72-hour hold. The latter was eventually diagnosed with bipolar disorder and remained on treatment for a year before being weaned by the doctor. The fact that the individual remains medication-free today is considered rare because people typically remain on medication for life when they have been diagnosed with mental illness. In her book by the same name Campbell (2005) described the 72-hour hold as another form of slavery for African American men where they are written off or warehoused. Similarly, the evidence collected suggests a significant percentage of the men incarcerated in CSP Sacramento suffer from some kind of mental illness.

The law in California allows police and some mental health professionals to take a person into custody if they believe that individual may be a danger to himself or herself, a danger to others, and/or is unable to provide for him or herself due to a mental disorder.
This type of hold is also known as a 5150 based on section 5150 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code. There has been a decline by 40% in the amount of people held under this code in Sacramento County in the past two years due to dwindling resources (Reese & Hubert, 2010).

In addition to this, several people known to me have found themselves involved in the criminal justice system for various reasons ranging from a DUI to a three-year incarceration stint. Based on the foregoing, I can, therefore, understand and empathize with the situation of the incarcerated. Prior to conducting this research study, I wondered if the plight of my acquaintances were true of the majority of men in California or if there were some other underlying reason that increased the possibility of their incarceration such as their skin color (Alexander, 2010; Davis, 2003; Parenti, 1999) or their socioeconomic status (Wacquant, 2009).

My involvement with Kairos Prison Ministry began in October of 2007 when I was invited to serve on the Kairos team that was going into CSP Sacramento so as to lend some degree of diversity to the team. Since that time I have attended approximately 10 Kairos Weekend Retreats. I have performed the roles of Assistant Table Leader, Table Leader, Assistant (Observing) Weekend Leader, Weekend Leader, and Advising Weekend Leader. The men in CSP Sacramento remind me of my sons, brothers, and cousins, and my heart goes out to them every time I am there. Their story is my story, and I can use their words to give voice to it perhaps better than they can, since it is hard for people to lend credibility to felons.
Conceptual Framework for Research Streams

Three main research streams provide the conceptual framework for understanding why men end up in prison. This review examines: 1) Who are the incarcerated in California? 2) What are faith-based organizations in general and how do they make a difference in the lives of individuals? and 3) The effect of prison ministries on the way inmates serve their time. Figure 1 indicates the three streams of research in this study including some of the main authors of research in relation to each of the three streams.

Figure 1. Streams of research.

To ensure this study is as focused as possible, it is extremely important to understand who the people populating the prisons in California are and what the factors
that may have influenced their being there. Also, finding out their backgrounds and demographics will provide insights into why they behave the way they do and what could have been done differently to prevent their being there. The number of individuals incarcerated in both state and federal prisons in the United States has had a significant increase from approximately 200,000 in 1979 to 1,524,513 by 2009. With an additional 760,400 being held in jails, the total incarcerated is 2.3 million (Petersilia, 2006; West, Sabol, & Greenman, 2010). Consequently, this makes this country a world leader in the prison population while conversely lagging behind the rest of the world in high school graduation rates (Alexander, 2011; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], 2011).

Faith-based organizations are entities that have some connection to organized religion either through direct contact or because some people act due to their relationship to a religious organization, and not just because of their individual belief system (Smith & Sosin, 2001). There is both direct and indirect evidence that faith-based organizations have efficacy in helping people surmount the burdens of a social nature they face (Monsma, 2001). Additionally, studies have demonstrated that practice of and belief in religion show a positive correlation with social behaviors such as “lower illegitimacy rates, higher marital satisfaction, lower suicide rates, lower poverty rates, higher levels of self-esteem and more” (Monsma, 2001, p. 1).

Since 30% of prisoners take part in faith-based services and programs in this country, many volunteers have started to help the prison chaplains by volunteering in prisons because the latter find it difficult to take care of the spiritual needs of inmates from a variety of faiths (Tewksbury & Collins, 2005). Consequently, the participation of
prisoners in faith-based programs is having a significant effect on the inmates (Camp, Klein-Saffran, Kwon, Daggett, & Joseph, 2006). Based on the intuition of those involved in the program, there was a perception that the faith-based Kairos Prison Ministry program has been having an impact on its participants at CSP Sacramento. The goal of this study was to eliminate chance and provide evidence-based proof of that impact in the words of the participants.

**Definition of Terms**

Some key terminologies introduced in this study and requiring a common understanding are the following:

**Anti-social**

Antagonistic, hostile, or unfriendly toward others

**Convict**

An adult found guilty of a crime, an inmate of a jail or prison

**Faith-based Organizations**

A formal funding or administrative arrangement with a religious authority or authorities; a historical tie of this kind; a specific commitment to act within the dictates of a particular established faith; or a commitment to work together that stems from a common religion (Smith & Sosin, 2001, p. 652).

**Felon**

Defined as a person who has committed a felony

**Felony**

Defined as a crime punishable by incarceration, usually in a state or federal prison, for periods of one year or longer (Champion, 2005)
Focus Group

An interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the topic

Inmate

This term is used to refer to prisoners of a jail or prison. In this study, it is used interchangeably with prisoner.

Jail

A facility operated and financed by a city or county to contain offenders serving short sentences or awaiting further processing. Jails also house more serious prisoners from state or federal prisons through contracts to alleviate overcrowding as well as witnesses, juveniles, vagrants, and others (Champion, 2005).

Level 1 – IV Prison

Level I housing consists primarily of open dormitories with a low security perimeter. Level II housing consists primarily of open dormitories with a secure perimeter, may or may not be armed. Level III has housing units with cells adjacent to exterior walls. The perimeter is secure with armed coverage. Level IV facilities have a secure perimeter with internal and external armed coverage. Housing has cells either adjacent to or not adjacent to exterior walls. The perimeter is secure with internal and external armed coverage. Source: California Code of Regulations, Title 15- Crime Prevention and Corrections, Section 3377, p. 214.
Level IV Prison

This is the highest level of prison security in a four-tier ranking system that includes low (1), minimum (2), medium (3), and maximum (4). Inmates at this level are typically housed in cells, are on lockdown most of the time, and are usually the most violent or feared members of the population. To be housed at this level, the inmate must have performed an extremely violent crime (in or outside of prison). Level IV prisoners are often hardened inmates that need ongoing rehabilitation due to the serious nature of their crime.

Lockdown

A complete removal of inmate privileges and permanent confinement in cells that usually follows a prison riot or other serious prison disturbance (Champion, 2005).

Low-income

An individual whose family’s taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150% of the poverty level amount.

Mass Incarceration

The warehousing of growing numbers of Americans from 300,000 to more than 2 million (Alexander, 2010). The writer uses this term in a general sense as applying to all males. While women are also increasingly incarcerated, the writer focused on males.
Misdemeanor

A crime punishable by fines and/or imprisonment usually in a city or county jail for periods of less than one year (Champion, 2005).

Prayer and Share

These are bi-weekly prayer meeting follow-up sessions held at CSP Sacramento under the guidance of volunteers form Kairos Prison Ministry and conducted by the inmates.

Prison

A state or federally operated facility to house long-term offenders, usually designed to house inmates serving terms of one or more years (Champion, 2005). CSP Sacramento is categorized as one such level IV, maximum-security facility where the inmates are housed in cells and have little possibility of parole. Thus, it is one of the places difficult to survive in. Facility where the chapel housing Kairos Prison Ministry programs is held is considered to be one of the most violent yards in the entire prison.

Prisoner

The latter is defined as anyone held in a county or city jail, prison, or penitentiary (Champion, 2005). Different euphemisms have been used by members of Kairos to refer to prisoners including but not limited to “men in blue,” “inmates,” “gentlemen,” “guests” and “residents.” At the core, they are considered by the authorities to be prisoners.

Pro-social

Willing to associate with others
Qualitative Research

A type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner.

Recidivism

The return to criminality, including re-arrest, reconviction, and re-incarceration of previously convicted felons or misdemeanants (Champion, 2005).

Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The racial composition of the people found in the groups of which the researcher has been a part at CSP Sacramento has been to a large extent African American, a fact that cannot be ignored. Incarceration rates for Blacks and Latinos are now six times higher than that of Whites (Alexander, 2011; Davis, 2003; The JFA Institute, 2007). Being of minority background, I was extremely empathetic to the plight of those inmates. As a result, I tried to guard against that bias by getting a wide cross section of input so as to make the study as objective as possible.

Kairos Prison Ministry is a faith-based organization that strives to bring the incarcerated closer to Christ while at the same time teach them a different way to serve the rest of their term. It is ecumenical and open to people of all faiths. Prior to conducting this study, I had assumed that biweekly Prayer and Share sessions would be available for me to attend as a participant observer and take field notes during the foreseeable future as I did my research. That meant lockdowns at CSP Sacramento would be at a minimum since Prayer and Share sessions have reduced attendance while
the prison is on lockdown. This was not to be. C Yard at CSP Sacramento has been on lockdown since December 2011 and remained that way during the entire data collection phase of the research study. Hence, during the entire data collection phase of the research, access to the Blacks and the Hispanics (who normally make up the largest group of attendees of Kairos activities) was restricted since they could not leave their cells as a result of the lockdown. Consequently, an average of five people comprised primarily of Whites, attended Prayer and Share. This may have had some impact on the data collected.

Additionally, since I have been integrally involved in Kairos Prison Ministry for the past five years, I tried to safeguard against possible insider bias as I conducted my research to ensure the results were as objective, valid, and reliable as possible. Also it is assumed the participants of the study told the truth as they responded to the questions of the researcher.

Another limitation to this study is the fact that the population being researched is deemed sensitive by the Institutional Review Board because prisoners are considered a highly vulnerable population. Therefore, great care was exercised to ensure the study was ethical and above-board so as to protect the rights of the research participants. Level IV prisoners are housed in cells and are secured around the clock. That limits their access to Kairos, particularly if they have disciplinary issues. Consequently, the researcher’s access to some of the inmates that he wanted to interview was not possible due to issues pertaining to lock down etc. Indeed he had to interview three of the inmates at their cells because they had been on lockdown for six months.
The foremost limitation to the study proved to be the difficulty involved in getting permission to conduct this study in a California prison. Before the study could take place, three levels of permission needed to be secured, and each one was more involved than the previous one. Firstly, permission was requested from the Drexel Institutional Review Board on January 23, 2012. Permission was granted two months later on March 21, 2012. An application was made to the Office of Research at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in early February 2012. The latter reviewed the proposal and gave written support for the project on April 10, 2012. They also indicated that final approval would need to be granted by the California Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). The application was made and permission was obtained from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects on June 7, 2012. Hence, the data collection began on June 9, 2012.

Summary

Male incarceration in the United States has more than quadrupled within the past 20 years. CSP Sacramento is no exception. This study evaluated the impact of one volunteer program, Kairos Prison Ministry, on the population it serves at California State Prison Sacramento and to determine the degree of significance of the program.

This chapter examined the following six sections: a) the problem statement that is being researched; b) the purpose and significance of the problem; c) the research questions; d) the conceptual framework; e) the definition of terms; and f) the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study.
Chapter 2: The Literature Review

Introduction of the Problem

California incarcerates the largest number of people in this country, by state. With the rising rate of incarceration in California prisons, it is to be expected that California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation will need to focus its attention as much on rehabilitating its inmates as it does on disciplining and punishing. Each state in the union has some type of faith-based program within their prisons. Faith-based programs appear to have a significant effect on helping with the rehabilitation of those who take part in them. This signals the need to look closely at the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on its graduates. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry at California State Prison Sacramento through the lenses of the inmates, volunteers, and custody staff closely involved in the program.

Conceptual Framework

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the graduates of its program so as to better understand the role of this intervention program as a part of the rehabilitation effort currently in place at California State Prison Sacramento. However, despite the fact that Kairos Prison Ministry has been in existence for almost 40 years, there is a scarcity of research material addressing the program and its impact on its graduates.

This chapter provides a framework for those wishing to continue to explore the impact of faith-based programs in prison. This literature review situates this study by exploring the context, history, theories, and concepts associated with the area of faith-
based prison ministries. The review of the literature available may assist in the understanding of the research on the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on its graduates. The research streams discussed are: 1) Who are the incarcerated, 2) What are faith-based organizations in general and how do they make a difference in the lives of individuals, and 3) What is the effect of prison ministries on the way inmates serve their time?

Review of the Literature

Research Stream One: Who are the Incarcerated?

The number of inmates in state and federal prisons has multiplied by seven in the past four decades. It has been publicly acknowledged that the United States has 5% of the world’s population and 25% of the world’s prisoners (Davis, 2003; Pettaway, 2002). Ninety-three percent of prison inmates in the United States are male while 7% are female (West et al., 2010).

There are several factors that have led to the explosion of the incarceration of males in the United States within the past 40 years. These include, and are certainly not limited to, declining educational opportunities, the socioeconomic conditions of the population, involvement in the use and distribution of illegal drugs, as well as laws and policies that when violated, hasten the entry of males into the prison system.

Within the past 40 years, the prison population in the United States has grown from 200,000 to more than 2 million and exceeds that of oppressive regimes like China and Iran (Alexander, 2011; The JFA Institute, 2007; NAACP, 2011; Pew Center on the States, 2008). This makes the country a world leader in prisoners while conversely lagging behind the rest of the world in high school graduation rates (2011; Davis 2003; NAACP, 2011). Incarceration is found to a large extent among the nation’s males with
the incarceration affecting at least one-third before they attain adulthood (The JFA Institute, 2007).

For every 100 Americans, one can be found behind bars. This statistic is derived from the fact that 1,596,127 individuals are in prison and 723,131 are in jails throughout the nation. This brings the total incarcerated to 2,319,158. When the adult population in the United States of 229,786,080 is divided by 2,319,158 the result is that one in every 99.1 American adults is presently incarcerated (Pew Center on the States, 2008).

The state’s prisons are bursting at the seams, filled largely with dropouts and functionally illiterate young men who are the victims of the state’s declining investments in education in the years since a tax gap caused disinvestments in public education (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Davis (2003) also shared this sentiment and added,

And there is even more compelling evidence that the damage wrought by the expansion of the prison system in the schools located in poor communities of color that replicate the structures and regimes of prison. When children attend schools that place a greater value on discipline and security than on knowledge and intellectual development they are attending prep schools for prison. (Davis, 2003, p. 39)

National policies have worsened the nation’s problems with racial and social equality. The imprisonment rate for African Americans and Latinos is now six times more than that of Caucasians. Sixty percent of the nation’s prison population is African American or Latino with 8% of the African American men who are eligible to work being incarcerated while 21% of the latter between 25 and 44 have been imprisoned at some time in the past. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 39% of the persons in prison or jail in 2009 was Black, 21% were Hispanic, and 34% were White. At these
rates, 33% of all African American males, 15% of Latino males, and 1 out of every 17 Caucasians will be incarcerated in their lifetime (The JFA Institute, 2007).

Whites below the poverty line are also being incarcerated in more numbers than before as a result of the policies and laws pertaining to criminal justice. Whites are being incarcerated largely as a result of their involvement with methamphetamine. Since one out of every 10 Caucasian men who have not graduated from high school is likely to end up in prison, they are fast becoming a part of the criminal justice system (NAACP, 2011). According to NAACP, the nation’s prison population also includes “warehousing” people with mental health problems and drug problems. Davis (2003) cited Katherine Strapp as claiming, “there may be twice as many people who are in jails and prisons than there are in all psychiatric hospitals in the United States combined.” (p. 10)

Largely as a result of the War on Drugs – which includes police stops, arrests, and mandatory minimum sentences – more than half of all prison and jail inmates – including 56% of state prisoners, 45 percent of federal prisoners and 64% of local jail inmates – are now those with mental health and drug problems. (NAACP, 2011, p. 9)

The Bureau of Justice Statistics contends that from among the individuals imprisoned in state prisons in 2008, more than half (53.8%) the incarcerations were due to conviction for a violent offense, and a little less than half were there for drug or other offense (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011). They go on to say that 25% of jail inmates in 2002 were there for drug-related offenses, in comparison to 10% in 1983. Drug offenders also comprised almost 1/5 (18%) of state prison inmates in 2008 and 51% of the population of federal prisons in 2009 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011).

Forty years ago, in an attempt to put an end to the escalating drug violence, the United States’ policy War on Drugs was launched by President Nixon as he strove to
fight against drugs as a major enemy. The primary idea behind the policy was that threats of incarceration would serve as deterrents to the use of drugs. This policy has not been successful. Several countries have tried it and come to the same conclusion, finding out they have higher levels of drug use and related problems “than countries with more tolerant approaches. Similarly, countries that have introduced decriminalization or other forms of reduction in arrest or punishment have not seen the rise in drug use or dependence rates that had been feared” (Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2010, p. 10). Instead this and similar policies have led to the mass incarceration of tens of millions of people worldwide, resulting in the overcrowding of prisons and destroying of lives and families instead of reducing the accessibility of illegal drugs or the prevalence of the organized crime that surrounds such access (Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2010, p. 3).

Another policy that has had a significant impact on the incarceration rates of males is the California’s law of sentencing criminals known as Three Strikes and You’re Out, enacted as Proposition 184. The law, known as one of the strictest in the country imposes

a minimum sentence of 25 years to life for three-time repeat offenders with multiple prior serious or violent felony convictions. The Legislature and voters passed the Three Strikes Law after several high profile murders committed by ex-felons raised a concern that violent offenders were being released from prison only to commit new, often serious and violent, crimes in the community. (Brown & Jolivette, 2005, para. 1)

Due largely to the enactment of the Three Strikes law in 1994, in excess of 80,000 offenders charged with two violations and 7,500 offenders charged with three strikes have been imprisoned by the state. The racial composition of the strikers is comprised of
African Americans who, at 37%, are the largest group of second and third strikers followed by Hispanics (33%) and Whites (26%) (Brown & Jolivette, 2005). This is reflected in the groups participating in the Kairos retreats the researcher attended and who are on an average 75% Black, 20% Hispanic, and 5% White.

Parenti (1999) described a typical California prison as,

Not surprisingly, fist fights and stabbing were, and still are, epidemic within the system. Nortenos associated with La Nusetra Familia fight surenos, the soldiers of the “Eme” or Mexican Mafia. Surenos, in turn go after the African Americans who run with the gang called the Black Guerilla Family, or any of the various prison-stranded sets of Crips and Bloods. They, in turn, make war on the “white trash” and bikers who populate the ranks of the Aryan Brotherhood and the baggy pant clad Nazi Lowriders. The white convicts in turn make war on Blacks and nortenos. (Parentii, 1999, p. 172)

Another California law that has had an impact on the criminal justice system is the Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (1988). This law was enacted to serve as a deterrent to gang activity and violence. It makes it against the law for people to either become affiliated with or be members of gangs. Based on the estimates of the Legislature, the law was considered necessary because approximately 600 criminal gangs operated in the state of California, thereby adding to the increase in gang-related murders (GIlmore, 2007). The aforementioned laws have resulted in the overcrowding in California’s prisons, which had more recently received a ruling by the Supreme Court to release 40,000 plus inmates in California due to severe overcrowding. This has created the added concern of what to do with so many inmates coming out (Johnson, 2011).

Since prisons systems perpetuate themselves, 40% of the approximately 700,000 people released from prison every year go back to prison for parole violation or petty drug or property crime. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS; 2011):
Reported that the number of offenders under adult correctional supervision in the U.S. declined 1.3 percent in 2010, the second consecutive year of decline since BJS began reporting on this population in 1980. At yearend 2010, about 7.1 million people, or 1 in 33 adults, were under the supervision of adult correctional authorities in the U.S. (para. 1)

According to Unlocking America, this high recidivism rate is partly a consequence of policies that increase surveillance over the recently released and provide barriers to reintroducing them into their communities, as well as eradicate support systems that make transition back to society easier (The JFA Institute, 2007).

As of 1984, the state of California constructed 24 new prisons at an estimated cost of $280-350 million each. Prior to that, the state had only established 12 prisons between the period of 1852 and 1964. Except for a fraction that is privately run, these prisons are owned and operated by the state of California through the California Department of Corrections. As a result, the latter has become the largest agency in the state with a labor force of 54,000 (Gilmore, 2007).

The impact of incarceration is severe and long-lasting. In addition to loss of homes and jobs and becoming estranged from families and friends (Maruna, Wilson, & Curran, 2006), the impact includes being denied the rights to vote as well as being discriminated against in access to jobs, housing, public benefits, and jury service (Alexander, 2010). It can best be explained as follows:

My name is David Corbett Everidge. I am a convicted felon. I cannot vote. I cannot own a firearm. Having been adjudged guilty of a felony, I cannot hold public office. There are many career paths that are extremely difficult, if not impossible, for me to pursue. Society tends to look upon me with scorn and disdain. (Everidge, 2010, p. 3)

Despite the fact that many prisoners have committed heinous crimes, the ACLU handbook states that,
Prisoners have an absolute right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment; although it is an easy matter to state the basic right, it is more difficult to specify what is included in the definition (Rudovsky, Bronstein, Koren, & Cade, 1988, p. 1).

The handbook, however, leaves the definition of what constitutes cruel and unusual punishment to individual perception of human decency. This can vary depending on the individual and the circumstance.

In summation, the number of individuals incarcerated in both state and federal prisons in the United States has significantly increased from approximately 200,000 in 1979 to 1,524,513 by 2009. With an additional 760,400 being held in jails, the total incarcerated is 2.3 million (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011; Petersilia, 2006; West et al., 2010). Consequently, this makes this country a world leader in the prison population while conversely lagging behind the rest of the world in high school graduation rates (Alexander, 2011; Davis, 2003; NAACP, 2011).

**Research Stream Two: Faith-based Organizations**

Faith-related agencies can be seen as social service organizations that have any of the following:

A formal funding or administrative arrangement with a religious authority or authorities; a historical tie of this kind; a specific commitment to act within the dictates of a particular established faith; or a commitment to work together that stems from a common religion. (Smith & Sosin, 2001, p. 652)

Faith-based agencies assume that adherence to God or some other supreme being is one of the prime motivations behind the organizations impelling them to do what they do. In the Bible (the collection of writings comprised of an Old Testament and a New Testament considered sacred by Christians), the notion of God being with the incarcerated is found throughout the Scripture. Noteworthy among them is the story of
Joseph, who after being sold by his brothers into slavery, wound up in prison because of being falsely accused. He was eventually vindicated and restored by God to the most powerful position in Egypt next only to the Pharaoh. After a famine in the land, his family eventually ended up in Egypt, where he reconciled with them and set in motion the prelude to the book of Exodus, a major portion of the Jewish religion and history (Smarto, 1987).

The ministry of Jesus was described in the Bible as one that would provide hope and comfort to the indigent and the abandoned and, in particular, herald freedom for the incarcerated. He also advocated a meaningful ministry to those in prison. When he spoke of the judgment that was certain to come, Jesus was directly in favor of prison ministry by asserting, “I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matthew 23:36).

The literature traces the earliest form of prison ministry as being the Roman Catholic Order of Misericordia that began in 1488 with a focus on providing comfort to those about to be executed. Since that time, faith-based individuals have been known to bring God’s grace to prisoners. Prominent among them were the Quakers and, more recently, the Black Muslims. Noted among these has been Prison Fellowship Ministries, which provide counseling, education, mentorship, and aftercare to inmates. The participation of inmates has expanded greatly with the increase in volunteers to 60,000 and prison ministries to the thousands (Johnson, 2011; Zimmer, 2005).

The Quakers provided the groundwork for the prison system currently in place in America. The Quaker society in Pennsylvania took over the Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia and provided a setting where the incarcerated could consider their crimes in silence since crimes were against God’s laws and they had to repent for what they had
done. Consequently, the early prisons in America were called penitentiaries derived from the word penitence. Indeed, the majority of the terminology used to describe early prison life was religious and monastic in nature including terms like cell, penitentiary, and reformatory (Skotnicki, 2000). Needless to say, being alone and in silence did not necessarily have the desired result of repentance. As a result, the Quaker contribution and its successor, the Pennsylvania System credited to Dr. Benjamin Rush, member of the Congress and one of the persons who signed the Declaration of Independence proved to be a failure (Smarto, 1987).

Among the most renowned Quakers involved in early prison reform was Elizabeth Fry, who due to her work with the women prisoners in England in the 19th century, became known as the Angel of Prisons. She brought much needed attention to the deplorable conditions in the prison and the plight of incarcerated women and their children (Richards, 1916). She was instrumental in providing Bible studies and religious instruction as well as providing care upon release to the women (Smarto, 1987).

The model for today’s prison was a prison established in Auburn, New York in 1817 (Skotnicki, 2000). It commenced with a large solitary confinement section, which proved not to work and evolved into a facility that had individual cells for sleeping and provided space for inmates to come together for meals and work during the day. Most of these facilities remain in use today and a vast number of the other prisons use the design that consists of cells that open into a main hallway or cellblock (Smarto, 1987).

Individuals and organizations motivated by faith have proven that, due to the transformative nature of faith, crime is reduced and the criminal justice system is improved. This is manifested in the way partnerships between law and religious
communities have led to improved relationships between police and communities and have induced reductions in gang activity, violence by youth, and criminal activity. A notable example of this was “the Boston Miracle,” which took place in 1990 in Boston. There were in excess of 150 homicides in the city and, when one act of gang violence took place in a church, the leaders of the Black churches came together and agreed the violence had passed the limit. They went to the law enforcement authorities and offered their help, which led to the significant reduction in the overall crime rate (Johnson, 2011).

The children of prisoners can also be affected in a positive manner by adults who take on the role of a mentor, as spotlighted by an extremely successful Philadelphia-based project called Amachi. A preliminary evaluation of Inter-Change Freedom Initiative (IFI), a faith-based pre-release program of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and Prison Fellowship Ministries, was conducted over a five-year period from 1997 to 2002. “Anchored in biblical teaching, life-skills education, and group accountability IFI is a three-phased program involving prisoners in 16 to 24 months of in-prison programs and 16 to 12 months of aftercare following release from prison” (Johnson & Larson, 2008, p. 4). The evaluation showed a connection between the rehabilitation process and spiritual development. It showed a recidivism rate of 50% for those who took part in the full program after a two-year period of release (Johnson, 2011). Based on the evaluation of Inter-Change Freedom Initiative, fully 90% of the literature reviewed shows an inverse relationship where, as churches become more involved, crime goes down (Johnson, 2011; Kerley, Matthews, & Blanchard, 2005; Young et al., 1995). It is normal for these findings to be found only for those involved in the program since everyone was not usually surveyed, which can be construed as a form of selection bias (Camp et al., 2006).
In summation, faith-based organizations have been in existence since the beginning of prisons in the United States and continue to play an integral role in the programming and rehabilitation efforts found in today’s prisons. As mentioned before, the first penitentiaries were established based on such religious ideas as penitence. While exact data are not easy to come by, according to a survey of 44 states, it was found that faith-based services were provided by all the correctional institutions in the United States. These included prayer groups, personal development, meditation groups, marriage classes, “revivals, life skills, Bible study, family religious festivals, anger management, musical choirs and bands, prerelease mentoring, and several religion-specific programs such as Yokefellow or Kairos” (Mears, Roman, Wolff, & Buck, 2006, p. 353)

Of the 24 active programs found in CSP Sacramento, only one or two are not faith-based (see Appendix A). Most of them are held under the sponsorship of a group that serves the inmates by catering to their spiritual wellbeing. Since budgets have been slashed in California, these volunteer programs continue to change the prison environment and help to make it safer for staff and volunteers, as well as the inmate population. Johnson (2011) contended that when faith is allowed to emerge in prison rehabilitation can be a consequence as well as a reduction in recidivism. This is largely because in this type of programming Christian brothers break down the prison code of minding one’s own business and always having to defend oneself by holding each other accountable and treating each other with love. Faith also becomes a trigger that serves to help inmates confront that they have done something wrong, admit it, and begin the process of changing (Johnson, 2011).
Research Stream Three: The effect of prison ministries on the way inmates serve their time

Prisons are considered to be dark places where despite all efforts; things continue to happen daily to the incarcerated people there such as involvement in crimes, gambling, fighting, and illicit sexual behavior (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006). One out of every three persons incarcerated develops coping skills by becoming involved in faith-based activities’ like Kairos Prison Ministry. In an anonymous survey of prison ministry volunteers conducted by Richard Tewksbury and Sue Carter Collins in three prisons in Kentucky, it was revealed that little is known about the increasing number of men and women who volunteer in faith-based programs in prisons. Their research looked at prison chaplain volunteers in terms of who they were and how they became involved (Tewksbury & Collins, 2005). While the vast majority of correctional facilities have at least one prison chaplain, the latter is hard-pressed to provide all the services needed by inmates representing a variety of faiths and, in many instances, resort to recruiting, training, and using the help of volunteers. This is in direct correlation with the researcher’s experience with Kairos Prison Ministry, since each team that enters the CSP Sacramento to attend a 3.5-day retreat is comprised of a different group of volunteers, even though the core leadership group may remain the same. However, one major difference between the researcher’s experience and that of the Tewksbury and Collins (2005) study is the fact that the majority of the volunteers who participate in Kairos Prison Ministry are retired, elderly, middle-class White males instead of the White females found in the study.
The latter shared that despite the fact there have been an increasing number of prisoners in the United States, only 30% of those incarcerated take part in faith-based services and programs. Tewksbury and Collins (2005) spotlighted the individuals involved in prison ministries, highlighting who they were, what type of work they performed, the type of training they received, how they were recruited, and provided an idea of the personal experience of some volunteers. Additionally, it captured how correctional administrators can recruit and manage volunteers better. A survey with a 51% response rate was administered to prison volunteers. Generally, it was discovered that while the majority of the volunteers were middle-aged White females from a variety of religions, they were very committed to prison work and served for long periods of time, deriving a large amount of satisfaction from the work, perhaps because they perceived they were commissioned to volunteer by God. One recommendation that emerged from the study was the possibility of getting religion students from universities and seminaries to volunteer in prison ministry programs since approximately one-third of the people who volunteer are graduates from university and seminaries. Also, partnerships that could result in externships for potential chaplains with such institutions of higher learning was also something the people who run such programs need to consider (Tewksbury & Collins, 2005).

Another much cited study was conducted by Camp et al. (2006) entitled “An Exploration into Participation in a Faith-based Prison Program.” The latter examined the factors related to why people volunteer to serve in a faith-based program. This study was helpful to this research because it enhanced the understanding of the way volunteers were selected to participate in programs similar to Kairos. Camp et al. investigated the types
of prisoners who sign up to take part in the Federal Bureau of Prisons Life Connections Program. This was done so as to assist decision makers in understanding the typical inmate program participant and also to help investigators get a better handle on the issues related to the selection process. It emerged from the study that those who took part were trying to find their faith in prison as opposed to those who came into prison having already established a faith relationship. Findings revealed that those with no possibility of benefitting by way of a reduced sentence seemed more likely to want to change positively. The study concluded that those who sought to analyze religious faith-based programs needed to demand higher standards so the results can be more productive and results-oriented. Also, the approach to program evaluation needs to be tailored to suit the programs in prison (Camp et al., 2006).

Kerley et al.’s (2005) study entitled “Religiosity, Religious Participation, and Prison Negative Behaviors,” investigated how religiosity and religious programs impacted negative prisoner behavior. Since it is the goal of Kairos to help inmates serve their time differently, input from this study shed some light on ways this can be done. The study was conducted by analyzing survey data of prisoners at a major southeastern prison facility. This report joins the array of literature relating religion and behavior to examine the connection between religion and negative prison behavior such as arguing and fighting. It uses data from a survey to establish whether involvement in religiosity will show reduced inmate confrontations. The findings reveal that religion does in fact lessen antisocial behavior in a prison setting. The contention is that the effectiveness of faith-based programs for people in prison depends on the degree to which they can encourage fundamental pro-social behavior (Kerley et al., 2005).
Thomas and Zaitzow (2006) conducted a study that, by its name, speaks to one of the main concerns of correctional officers, “Conning or Conversation? The Role of Religion in Prison Coping.” They looked at how religion helps people cope as prisoners. Since this research stream examines the effect prison ministries have on how prison inmates serve their time, this study is very applicable. Thomas and Zaitzow examined how prisons can integrate the mission of safety and security involved in safeguarding increasing numbers of inmates with correctional programming and rehabilitation. For some prisoners, albeit a small but meaningful group, real conversion takes place as a result of their finding religion or spirituality. This seems more likely to take place in those who serve longer periods as opposed to those there for a relatively short period of time. The report provided a recap of religious programs in prison and their role in adjusting to the culture found in prison. It also discussed the present reawakening of faith-based activity in prison and concluded by providing reasons for augmenting programming as future research directions (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006).

Swanson (2009) conducted a study that examined faith and the moral development of prisoners in a faith-based program at a correctional facility. In her study, she analyzed the faith and moral development demonstrated by the participants of the Life Learning Program (LLP) established by the Good News Jail and Prison Ministry. In a qualitative case study, the researcher used a methodology including interviews, observations, document studies, and the analysis of a video tape to get an idea of the participants’ views of their development based on the program. The themes leading to faith and moral development included cognition, volition, and relationships. Based on the findings, all three must take place at the same time before faith and moral
development can happen. The primary recommendation of the study was that mentors were needed to give some measure of accountability to prisoners and help with reentry into society and, in particular, to a faith-based community (Swanson, 2009).

Sundt, Dammer, and Cullen (2002) traced the role of the prison chaplain rehabilitation effort presently taking place in the prisons in the US. From the earliest beginning of the prison system, prison chaplains have performed a vital part in ministering to prisoners. This research piece reviews the traditional as well as the current role of the prison chaplain in correctional guidance and the extent to which chaplains promote rehabilitation efforts as well as what is entailed in the counseling sessions conducted by chaplains. The findings indicate that chaplains are very much in favor of rehabilitation and spend an inordinate amount of time speaking with and guiding inmates. Additionally, it was revealed that chaplains see the rehabilitation and adjustment of inmates as the objective of counseling and normally use patterns of treatment that lead to reduced recidivism (Sundt et al., 2002).

However, Murphy (1956) questioned the loyalties of the prison chaplain. He contended that in a prison community, there are many roles that interact and that while some of them like Wardens, Guards, and Inmates are well defined, the role of the prison chaplain is not as clearly defined. This, therefore, brings into question the loyalty of the prison chaplain since the latter needs to demonstrate loyalty to the state, the society, the prison administration, God, and most importantly, the prison inmate. Needless to say some of these loyalties may come into conflict (Murphy, 1956).

Maruna et al. (2006), based on research conducted on 75 prisoners who claimed they were saved, argued that the narrative of conversion operates as both a shame
management and a coping skills strategy since it created a new identity replacing the prisoner label and providing purpose as well as meaning for the prisoner by transforming him into an agent of God. The latter is also given a framework for forgiveness, thereby getting more of a handle on an uncertain future (Maruna et al., 2006). Among the conclusions of the study is the notion that while religious narrative is dwindling in importance in the Western world, it provides a useful script for the replacement of a prisoner identity helping the prisoner to be seen as “a Godsend” when examining issues of existentialism (Maruna et al., 2006).

**Summary and Conclusions**

Several factors need to be taken into consideration in order to evaluate the impact of the Kairos Prison Ministry on the people who take part in it at CSP Sacramento. This study drew from the conceptual framework and the three streams of research. The reviewed literature examined the backgrounds and demographics of the men incarcerated in CSP Sacramento. The researcher also examined faith-based programs and what effect prison ministries have on the way inmates serve their time.

It is clear from the literature reviewed that while the prisons in California are overflowing with inmates, a lot of punishment is taking place that does not necessarily match the extent of the crime or address the situation of rehabilitation of the incarcerated individuals (Kleiman, 2009). Hence, the role of the criminal sanction needs to be seriously reexamined. A multifaceted approach is needed to provide special attention to the most vulnerable while at the same time focusing on the cases moving through the pipeline. The prison as the only alternative needs to be reconsidered and instead the introduction of problem-oriented policing needs to be considered. Also, the role of the
faith-based institutions that can provide assistance in the area of rehabilitation needs to be researched to see what is working and how it can be strengthened, improved, and replicated.

Some key pieces of legislation have had a significant impact on incarceration in the United States. These include President Nixon’s public enemy number one, War on Drugs, which has failed to serve as a deterrent (Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2011). Another one is Proposition 184, also known as Three Strikes and You’re Out law, which imposes a minimum sentence of 25 years to life to three-time repeat offenders with multiple prior sentences or violent felony convictions (Brown & Jolivette, 2005). The third is the Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act of 1988, which makes it against the law for individuals to become affiliated with or be members of gangs (Gilmore, 2007).

In the larger context of the evaluating the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the graduates of its program, the final research stream examines the effect of prison ministries on the way inmates serve their time. It began by looking at research related to who prison chaplain volunteers are and how they become involved. Second, it investigated the factors related to why people volunteer to serve in faith-based programs similar to Kairos. Third, it examined how religiosity and religious programs impact negative behavior. Fourth, it investigated how religion helps people to cope as prisoners. Fifth, it examined faith and the moral development of prisoners in a faith-based program at a correctional facility. Finally, it closed by tracing the role of prison chaplains in the rehabilitation effort presently taking place in the prisons in the United States.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

This purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of the Kairos Prison Ministry on the graduates of its program so as to better understand the role of this intervention program as a part of the rehabilitation effort currently in place at CSP Sacramento and examine its impact on the way the inmates serve their time. This chapter outlines the key issues in identifying the research site and population, as well as in negotiating access to the site. It takes a closer look at how the participants of the study were determined and at the permissions needed to interview these individuals. The research design and rationale, as well as the research methods used in the study, are described. A discussion of the ethical considerations of the research portrays the efforts made by the researcher to use the highest level of respect and integrity to protect the rights of the research study participants.

To evaluate the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the men it serves, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the backgrounds and demographics of men incarcerated at CSP Sacramento who are participants in the Kairos program?

2. How does the Kairos program affect the way the men who have participated in the program serve their time?

3. What is the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the prison environment at CSP Sacramento?
The research questions were answered by using a qualitative case study. As will be explained in the chapter, the study used the Kairos Prison Ministry as a case study, defined as an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009).

**Site and Population**

**Population Description**

The population of the study consisted of inmates of California State Prison (CSP), Sacramento. Fundamentally, the institution houses maximum-security inmates serving long sentences (for capital offenses for life without parole such as murder) or those who have proved to be management problems at other institutions. The institution also serves as a medical hub for Northern California with a Psychiatric Services Unit (PSU), Enhanced Outpatient (EOP), and EOP Administrative Segregation levels of Healthcare. The institution currently has an Outpatient Housing Unit and a Correctional Treatment Center, which was licensed in February 2003 (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation [CDCR], 2010).

The Kairos program at CSP Sacramento takes place in the Chapel found in C Facility, and the population is comprised mainly of inmates housed in that yard with the majority being African Americans, followed by Hispanics, Caucasians, and Native Americans. Since the program is non-denominational, on any given Retreat Weekend, the participants may be Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Atheist. However, in accepting inmates of other faiths, it is made clear to them that Kairos is primarily a Christian program (Montoya, personal communication, November 15, 2011).

CSP Sacramento was designed to hold 2030 inmates, but that number has been consistently exceeded, resulting in an overpopulation of this and other prisons within the
state of California. As a result, until quite recently the gymnasium in the C Yard served as a housing unit for several less dangerous inmates. Approximately four years ago, the opportunity to ship level IV inmates to other, less crowded prisons in other states was turned down by the governor of California (Montoya, personal communication, November 15, 2011).

As of August 31, 2012, California State Prison Sacramento had a general population of 2,666 (145.8 capacity) inmates and 2,836 (155.1 capacity) for 2011 (CDCR, 2012). This population is a microcosm of the general population of California consisting of Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics (divided into nortenos and surenos, Northern Hispanics and Southern Hispanics), Native Americans, and a wide variety of the races represented in California.

Additionally, there are gangs housed within the prison who are not allowed to mix with each other. For example, the Northern Hispanics are not allowed onto the same yard as the Southern Hispanics because each group, as a part of their code, must kill members of the other group on sight. Consequently, they are not allowed to be on the same yard or in any other prison facility such as the library, clothing room, or chapel, at the same time. The same rule applies to the Cripps and the Bloods. According to one prison official, prison is a very racial society where prejudice and discrimination thrives.

The target population of the study was incarcerated males from California State Prison Sacramento who had participated in Kairos Prison Ministry’s program. More specifically, it included men who had graduated from the Kairos Prison Ministry Program held twice a year at CSP Sacramento and are continuing to attend the follow-up Prayer and Share meetings held in the chapel every second and fourth Thursday of the month.
The population in the study was comprised of one graduate from the earlier Kairos sessions held in 1992 as well as nine of the more recent graduates since 2006. Also, surveyed in a focus group were seven Kairos team leaders and volunteers and four employees of CSP Sacramento.

The codes to represent the individuals in the study are as follows:

- PI001 – PI0010: Prisoners Interviewed for the study
- K Int20 – K Int28: Kairos Inmate Participants/Graduates consulted
- FGKAC1 – FGKAC7: Kairos Advisory Council Focus Group Members
- FGPO1 – FGPO4: CSP Sacramento Focus Group Members
- CSPC001: CSP Sacramento Official Interviewed
- FPO1: Folsom Prison Official Interviewed

**Site Description**

The site of the research is California State Prison Sacramento, located in Folsom, California, and approximately a 30-minute drive from Sacramento. CSP Sacramento is located adjacent to Folsom State Prison, also known as Old Folsom Prison. When it first opened in 1986, the prison was administered by the Folsom warden and was called New Folsom. In October 1992, its name was changed to California State Prison Sacramento and became administered as a separate prison with its own warden (CDCR, 2010). It is now designated as a level IV prison that houses maximum-security inmates. The prison has three facilities, A Facility, B Facility, and C Facility, each of which is almost like a separate prison and has different population and programs. A Facility is a minimum-support facility housing those serving time for less than three years for crimes such as robbery. It contains a Psychiatric Housing Unit, an Enhanced Outpatient Program, and General Population, or inmates who have no restraints. B Facility contains an Enhanced Outpatient Program, a Mental Health Treatment Center, and General Population. C
Facility has many more programs than the other two facilities. It also has many fewer inmates suffering from mental health.

Each Facility has eight housing units that hold 150 inmates. The units are built in a 180-degree design for increased security and controlled escorting. Inmates can be seen on both levels by guards. Also, the doors to the cell blocks open electronically and are controlled from a central location, precluding the opening and closing of every single door. This enables the containment of incidents by section, thereby reducing the escalation of violence. Each section also has Prison Industry Authority (PIA) Laundry, Food Service, and Warehouse.

Old Folsom, the second oldest prison in the state, is now a level III prison. CSP Sacramento was constructed to hold inmates in a more secure facility, hence the level III and lower-level inmates were left at Old Folsom because it was not a very secure prison in which to house level IV inmates (Montoya, personal communication, November 15, 2011). The latter has been in existence since July 26, 1880 “providing protection for the citizens of California by ensuring that inmates remain incarcerated in a manner that is safe for staff and imposed by courts” (Brown, 2008, p. 7). It houses inmates from throughout the state of California many of whom are serving life sentences with no possibility of parole. Folsom prisoners have been used as laborers from its inception. They were known to work at an enormous rock quarry, the rocks from which were used to build much of the prison. Additionally, many inmates were used in the construction of the Yosemite Highway, as well as in laying railroad tracks (Smarto, 1987). It also houses, under the Prison Industry Authority, a Roller Coating factory, a Machinery Maintenance Shop, a Print Shop, a Sign Shop, a Metal Fabrication Shop, a Paint Shop, a
Welding Shop, and a License Plate Factory that manufactures all the license plates for all the vehicles in the state of California.

**Site Access**

To gain access to the participants of the research, permission was obtained from the Warden of CSP Sacramento through the Community Resource Manager who is in charge of all volunteer programs at CSP Sacramento. Permission was also received from the Catholic Chaplain in charge of the chapel, the venue for Kairos events. The latter even provided escort for the researcher while he interviewed three of the inmates on lock down who had to be interviewed in their cells. Additionally, permission had to be received from each of the 10 individual participants interviewed. The Advisory Council of Kairos Prison Ministry in Sacramento, together with Kairos Prison Ministry International headquartered in Florida, also sanctioned the study, since it was using their bounded program as a case study.

Three levels of permission needed to be secured and each one was more involved than the previous one. Firstly, permission was requested from the Drexel Institutional Review Board on January 23, 2012. Permission was granted two months later on March 21, 2012. Another application was made to the Office of Research at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in early February 2012. The latter reviewed the proposal and gave written support for the project on April 10, 2012. They also indicated final approval would need to be granted by the California Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). The application was made and permission was obtained from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects on June 7, 2012. Hence, the data collection began June 9, 2012.
The researcher had been volunteering at CSP Sacramento for the previous five years; therefore, difficulty was not anticipated in accessing the institution. The researcher had the status of volunteer Catholic chaplain at the institution and had a state-issued identification card (brown card) enabling him to attend prayer and share sessions at the institution every two weeks.

**Research Design and Rationale**

A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context, especially when
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009).

This research study was based on the stories of men who became part of the population at CSP Sacramento. It sought to evaluate the impact of one volunteer program on how its graduates served their time. Based on the foregoing definition, it was the belief of the researcher that a case study design was exactly what would do justice to the data.

The study was primarily a qualitative case study because it examined “the shared patterns of behaviors, beliefs and language that this culture sharing group adopts over time” (Creswell, 2007, p. 68). This group refers to the graduates of the Kairos Prison Ministry at CSP Sacramento who, having participated in a 3.5-day Weekend Retreat, meet every two weeks for Prayer and Share (if the prison is not on lockdown) to pray, bond, and reflect on their spiritual growth. The case study was conducted by examining
the impact of the program on the participants and graduates to see how they perceived the program and the difference the program had made in the way they served their time at CSP Sacramento.

More specifically, the study was an instrumental case study because it focused on an issue or concern and then selected one bounded case to illustrate this issue (Creswell, 2007, p. 473). Kairos Prison Ministry is that issue or concern and the bounded event takes place once every six months in October and March for 3.5 days at the CSP Sacramento Chapel with approximately 36 new participants each time. The case study method is applicable as an “in-depth exploration of a bounded system” (Creswell, 2007, p. 476). Through the use of the case study, the researcher was able to make meaning of the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry by recording, studying, and analyzing the issues raised by this particular group.

**Research Methods**

**Introduction**

There were four data collection methods/strategies adapted from the works of Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), Creswell (2009), Saldana (2009), and Yin (2009). They included the following:

- Participant interview surveys
- Focus group interview sessions
- Field notes and observations
- Artifacts
Stages of Data Collection

**Participant interviews.** Interviews were the primary and most valuable source of information in the case study (Yin, 2009). The interviews were conducted by using semi-structured interviews and an identical interview protocol (see Appendix B). The interviews were designed to elicit from the participants their perceptions and experiences making use of their subjective responses (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

**Instrument description.** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each inmate with the use of the same 14-question interview protocol. The interviews were approximately one hour each. The 10 completed interviews ranged from 20 to 60 minutes. The interview protocol was designed to be a fixed line of investigation to direct the interview and was used in a pliable and fluid manner during the interviews (Yin, 2009). The protocol was administered to 10 inmates of CSP Sacramento, three of whom were interviewed in their cells, thereby providing for a naturalistic observation (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). The other seven were interviewed in the volunteer chaplain’s office inside the chapel in C Yard.

**Participant selection.** The participants for the study were selected by means of purposeful sampling with the help of the chair of the Kairos Advisory Council and the Catholic Chaplain of CSP Sacramento. The first six were identified at a leadership meeting to discuss the restructuring of the Kairos Program held in early December 2011. Since the researcher was present at the meeting along with the six inmate leaders of Kairos, he was able to verbally discuss the idea with them at that time. The other four emerged through snowball sampling once the data collection was under way.
Identification and invitation. Once identified in the manner described above, each participant was individually spoken with and invited by the researcher to participate in an on-site interview to be held sometime in the future at a date to be determined. Once the permission was obtained to begin the data collection, the researcher advised each participant of the voluntary nature of their participation as well as their option to withdraw at any time. To that effect an informed consent form along with a copy of the semi-structured questionnaire was sent to each participant through the Catholic Chaplain at least 24 hours before the interview session. Hence, they could read and sign it prior to conducting the interview (see Appendix C).

Data collection. The data collection for the study was conducted with the use of the semi-structured questionnaire from an interview protocol. Prior to the interview, each participant returned the previously read and signed informed consent form along with the completed questionnaire to the researcher. Since bringing audio equipment into the prison was not permitted, each interview was captured by means of handwritten notes and transcribed as soon as the researcher was able to get to his computer so as to present what was shared as accurately as possible. Reflective case study notes were also completed at the time of each interview (Creswell, 2007).

Data analysis. The data was analyzed with the help of Creswell (2007) who stated qualitative research analysis is a data analysis spiral in which “one enters (this spiral) with the data of text or images…and exists with an account or a narrative” (p. 150). In that regard, the experience undertaken by the researcher and the participants was spiral and moved in a circular fashion instead of being linear. This approach proved helpful to the researcher in this study. The interviews were captured and transcribed by
the researcher so he could become as immersed in the data as possible. The transcripts, field notes, and artifacts were read several times with In vivo codes being written in the margins (Saldana, 2009). Memos were written as ideas occurred to the researcher. Based on the techniques, emerging themes supporting the rich description were developed. Themes were broken into three categories based on the three key research questions the study sought to answer.

**Focus groups.** Focus groups are an important method to use to develop rich data from a specific group of people (Merriam, 2009). Two focus groups were conducted with two different groups of individuals. The first one was conducted with seven members of the Kairos Advisory Council and the second one was conducted with four officials employed at CSP Sacramento. Prior to taking part in the focus group, each participant was invited by email and by telephone. Additionally, a consent form was read and signed by each participant explaining that their participation was completely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time.

**Instrument description.** Each focus group was conducted utilizing the Focus Group Protocol (see Appendix D). The instrument used was developed to include Brief Opening Remarks, Purpose for the Focus Group, Overview of Kairos Prison Ministry, Questions, Room for Comments and Questions from Participants, and Closure. The protocol was used as a guide to the focus group conversation, which became a relaxed free flow of inputs, banter, and purposeful communication.

**Participant selection.** The participants of the first focus group, held with the members of the Kairos Advisory Council, were selected through purposeful sampling by virtue of the emailed invitation to all members of the Advisory Council who had been
familiar with the research project for the past three years and had offered full support throughout the process. The emailed invitation was followed by a telephone call to each member three days prior to the event to determine who was going to attend. Getting attendance and input was relatively easy since the relationship between the researcher and the participants was one of mutual respect and friendship. The participants of the second focus group, held with the officials of CSP Sacramento, were selected with the support and advice of the Catholic Chaplain and the Community Partnership Manager as well as through a degree of snowball sampling.

**Identification and invitation.** Once selected and invited to attend, the persons who showed up for the first focus group were comprised of individuals who were passionate about Kairos and had been involved for a combined total of 85 years. Among them were the chair of the Advisory Council and other elected members as well as the lead volunteer in charge of the bi-weekly Prayer and Share sessions. Once the members of the second focus group were identified, emailed invitations were sent by the Catholic Chaplain followed by phone calls by the researcher. Despite all efforts to invite members of the custody staff, of the four employees who participated, two were teachers at the prison and the other two were the Catholic Chaplain and the Community Partnership Manager.

**Data collection.** The data was collected for the focus group sessions by means of a focus group protocol developed and administered (see Appendix D). The focus group session with the members of the Kairos Advisory Council was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim personally by the researcher to acquire greater intimacy with the data. This was possible since the session was held at a coffee shop in Roseville,
California. The researcher also took key notes of the process as well as reflective notes of the focus group interaction. The latter was recorded immediately upon completion of the focus group session. The focus group session for the prison officials was held at the Chapel at C Yard. As a result, no recording equipment was to be used. Hence, all data was captured through handwritten notes taken by the researcher and transcribed on the computer by the researcher immediately after the session was held.

**Data analysis.** The data was analyzed with the help of Creswell’s (2007) ideas stating qualitative research analysis is a data analysis spiral in which “one enters (this spiral) with the data of text or images…and exists with an account or a narrative” (p. 150). In that regard, the experience undertaken by the researcher and the participants was spiral and moved in a circular fashion instead of being linear. This approach proved helpful to the researcher in this study. The interviews were captured and transcribed by the researcher so he could become as immersed in the data as possible. The focus group transcripts along with field notes and artifacts were read and reviewed several times with In vivo codes being written in the margins (Saldana, 2009). Memos were then written as ideas occurred to the researcher. Based on the techniques, emerging themes supporting the rich thick description were developed. Themes were broken into three categories based on the three key research questions the study sought to answer.

**Field notes and observations.** The researcher used field notes taken from observations and site visits as a major source of data for this research study. The field notes were then used to triangulate information with interviews, focus groups, and artifacts. Observations were made primarily during the Prayer and Share sessions. The researcher attended them and functioned as a participant observer for three months of the
research period. The field notes taken provided documentation of observations, reflections, and key learning. During the course of the research, field notes of mandatory security training sessions conducted at CSP Sacramento were also captured by the researcher. Minutes of meetings as well as notes from the closing ceremonies of five Kairos Weekend Retreats were also reviewed and analyzed.

**Instrument description.** The field notes were captured by means of a research journal for this purpose by the researcher throughout the research study.

**Data collection.** The researcher made sure to take notes throughout the research phase capturing the data in written form by means of a journal during the study and taking note of each key activity that took place during that time.

**Data analysis.** Data from the field notes were coded for key ideas, patterns, and repeating ideas. These were divided into emerging themes that were compared and contrasted to the themes found in the participant interviews and focus groups for the purpose of developing overlapping themes and patterns or any other potential themes.

**Artifacts.** Artifacts were compiled during the research and included all documents distributed at several Kairos Weekend Retreats, documents distributed at meetings of the Kairos Advisory Council, as well as, documentation compiled from a variety of closing ceremonies of five Kairos Weekend Retreats. The latter included comments delivered by inmates during the open mic portion of the closing ceremonies that reflected the participants’ views of the spiritual condition they were in when they came to the retreat, what they found there, and what they were taking with them from there. Yin (2009) contended the right artifacts could provide information in addition to what may be gotten by means of observation.
Data collection. The artifacts received from the volunteers, the participants, at the prison, or from the Kairos events were filed both manually and in the computer.

Data analysis. Data from the artifacts were coded for key ideas, patterns, and repeating ideas. These were divided into emerging themes that were compared and contrasted to the themes found in the participant interviews and focus groups to develop overlapping themes and patterns or any other potential themes. This data was triangulated and cross checked to generate thick, rich data.

Ethical Considerations

The rights of the participants of this research study are of paramount importance and must be protected at all costs. This especially applied to the incarcerated interviewees because they are in an extremely vulnerable situation. One of the main types of research requiring full IRB review, according to Drexel University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), is “studies involving vulnerable populations such as prisoners, pregnant women and fetuses, children, emotionally challenged or deficient students and those who are decisionally impaired.” As a result this research study was subjected to full IRB review to examine possible physical or emotional risk.

According to the report Ethical Considerations for Research Involving Prisoners, research with prisoners should only be conducted if there are greater benefits than risks to the prisoners. And the standard should be to conduct meaningful and responsible research that improves the lives of the prisoners while protecting their rights. Based on the fact that the purpose of this research study was to evaluate the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the graduates of its program so as to better understand the role of the intervention program and to examine its effect on the way the inmates served their time,
it is justifiable this study would produce more benefits than risks to its population and to the prison environment as a whole.

The way this researcher ensured the rights of the prisoners were not violated was by taking the following measures:

1. Ensured the input of all the relevant stakeholders was included in the research from the design stage to the implementation stage. This included ex-prisoners, Kairos leaders and volunteers, the Catholic Chaplain, and the Community Partnership Coordinator of CSP Sacramento. The goal of this open collaboration was to enhance respect and prevent conditions that could potentially lead to exploitation. All contact with the prison and prisoners was done with the permission and approval and at times accompanied by the Catholic Chaplain.

2. All previous knowledge of CSP Sacramento was used by the researcher to tailor the research to the specific conditions at CSP Sacramento and to ensure that any conditions that may lead to unethical behavior were avoided.

3. Consent forms were signed and collected from each of the participants who agreed to participate in the study.

4. Completed semi-structured questionnaires were collected from each participant of the research study.

This chapter examined the key issues in identifying the research site and population of this research study. It discussed the manner in which access to the site was negotiated. It also outlined the research design and rationale, as well as the research
methods used in the study. It ended with a look at the importance of ethics in this type of research and an examination of the ethical considerations utilized to protect the rights of the participants of the research study.
Chapter 4: Finding, Results, and Interpretations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to evaluate the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the graduates of the program. It was to better understand the role of this intervention program as a part of the rehabilitation effort currently in place at California State Prison (CSP) Sacramento and to examine its impact on the way the inmates served their time. The study was framed by the following research questions:

- What are the backgrounds and demographics of men incarcerated at CSP Sacramento who are participants in the Kairos program?
- How does the Kairos program affect the way the men who have participated in the program serve their time?
- What is the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the prison environment at CSP Sacramento?

It is important to revisit the conceptual framework described in Chapter 2 prior to considering the findings of the study. Today, in the United States, in excess of 7 million people are either in jail, on parole, or on probation (Sullivan, 2009). With an estimated population of 133,540, California is the state with the highest incarceration rates in the United States. California State Prison Sacramento, a level IV, maximum-security prison, houses 2,666 of California’s inmates. Who are the people populating the CSP Sacramento and what are the factors that may have influenced their being there? While there, how does Kairos help to make a difference in the way its graduates serve their time? Evidence from the literature suggests that faith-based organizations have efficacy
in helping people surmount the burdens of a social nature they face (Monsma, 2001). The findings of this study mirrored text contained in the literature review regarding graduates of the Kairos program, how they serve their time, and what impact the Kairos program has had on the prison environment at CSP Sacramento.

By using the qualitative case study approach, thick rich descriptive data responding to the research questions were compiled directly from those individuals incarcerated in CSP Sacramento, as well as from those working along with them both at the prison and through the Kairos Prison Ministry. In collecting the data for this research study, a total of 21 participants were interviewed. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with 10 inmates of CSP Sacramento, and 11 participants were interviewed in two focus group sessions. Focus group participants included seven officials of Kairos Prison Ministry and four employees of CSP Sacramento. The data was analyzed in a manner consistent with the purpose as well as the methods of the research. Every effort was taken to ensure the inmates interviewed were treated with dignity and respect and were protected from all possible risk.

This chapter opens with an overview of the background and demographics of the study participants and a documented description of how Prayer and Share is conducted at CSP Sacramento. The findings reflecting the researcher’s understandings of the data, organized by the four overarching themes, are then presented. Meanings of the findings are offered in the “Results and Interpretations” section. The chapter concludes with a summary allowing for a critical review of the data in terms of how the literature and the researcher’s observations support the argument posited in the problem statement and research questions.
Overview of Background and Demographics

Ten inmates who were graduates of the Kairos Ministry retreat were interviewed by the researcher at California State Prison Sacramento, a level IV, maximum-security prison. Inmate participants consisted of six Whites, two Hispanics, one Black, and one Pacific Islander. Their ages varied widely, ranging from 33 to 60 with the mean age of the inmates interviewed being 42.5. The average age at the time of incarceration was 33. The length of time spent in prison by the interviewees ranged from 4 to 28 years with the 10 of them having spent a combined total of 125 years behind bars. The average length of the sentence that had been served by the participants was 14.9 years. Nine of the ten made their Kairos retreat within the past five years, and one made his retreat in 1992, when Kairos Prison Ministry was first introduced to CSP Sacramento. Of those interviewed, at least two were raised by the state after having spent the majority of their lives in a number of state-run institutions. Fifty-five percent had little or no relationship with their children. All the participants learned about Kairos Prison Ministry from either a cellmate or someone who had previously participated in the program. Two participants learned of Kairos from the chapel clerks (also inmates) and two were enticed by the food. Table 1 summarizes the demographics of the 10 inmates interviewed and includes their pseudonym, ethnicity, age at incarceration, and the length of time they had been incarcerated at CSP Sacramento.
Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Incarceration Age</th>
<th>Years in CSP Sacramento</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI001</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI002</td>
<td>Black (lockdown)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI003</td>
<td>Hispanic (lockdown)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI004</td>
<td>Hispanic (lockdown)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI005</td>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI006</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI007</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI008</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI009</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1010</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Int20</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Int21</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Int22</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Int23</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Int26</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Int27</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Int28</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In looking at the physical characteristics between the Kairos volunteers and the men who participate in Kairos programs at CSP Sacramento, there is a disparity between
the age and the race of the two groups. For example, field notes revealed that Kairos 5 consisted of 24 volunteers and the average age was 60. Conversely, the average age of the participants was between 25 and 35 years old. Also, 21 of the volunteers were White, one was Hispanic, and two were Black. Of the 36 participants, 30 were Black, four were White, one was Hispanic, and one was Pacific Islander. It is also noteworthy that the average age of the volunteers attending the bi-weekly Prayer and Share was 76.5 years compared to the average age of the participants of 42.

Table 2

*Focus Group Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th># of years involved with Kairos/Corrections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FGKAC1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGKAC2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGKAC3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGKAC4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGKAC5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGKAC6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGKAC7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th># of years involved with Kairos/Corrections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group CSP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGPO1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGPO2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGPO3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGPO4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Officials Interviewed</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPC0001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPO1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all the participants had a very good discipline record with one of them having had only one write-up in 22 years and another having one infraction in 12 years. PI010 had four write-ups from his time at CMF Vacaville but none since his Kairos retreat; he had also received a commendation from the “PIA for expert lead man position.” PI006 had such a good record that he had been in the same job for 14 years and was considered by staff as a programmer – eligible to participate in programs. The remainder had no record of discipline issues.

All the participants of the study except two attended the biweekly Prayer and Share as often as they could. The only thing causing some to not attend was mandatory lockdown, illness, mental/spiritual exhaustion and the guards not coming to get them
when it was time for them to attend. PI006 did not attend Prayer and Share because he had never attended a Kairos retreat. PI001 stopped attending, seeing it as being childish and lacking in leadership. It is noteworthy that the latter was the only participant who made his Kairos retreat in 1991, when Kairos operated at CSP Sacramento for the first time. All the others made their Kairos retreat within the past five years.

Three of the participants were on mandatory lockdown (the Blacks and the Hispanics at CSP Sacramento had been on lockdown since December of 2011 due to a race-related riot that took place on C yard) and had to be visited in their cells and interviewed at the door of their cell. As a result of this lockdown, the Black and Hispanic prisoners had not attended the biweekly Prayer and Share sessions for the past eight months, limiting the active participants to five.

The background and demographics of the prisoners who participated in the study were slightly different from the population of the prison since seven of them were White, two of them were Black, and one was Pacific Islander, while the majority of the prison population at CSP Sacramento is Black and Hispanic. The reason for this, as found in the data, is because of the previously mentioned ongoing lockdown of Blacks and Hispanics on the C Yard of CSP Sacramento.

**Prayer and Share at CSP Sacramento**

Field data paints a picture of the process involved in visiting CSP Sacramento and attending the bi-weekly Prayer and Share as often as possible for three months from June 9 to August 31, 2011. The processes involved in operating the Prayer and Share sessions are described to establish the context for findings about the visible impact on the prison environment the people of CSP Sacramento.
Evidence from the field notes indicate Prayer and Share is only one element of the entire Kairos program, comprised of six components. The first component includes 36 hours of training or Team Formation the volunteer team undergoes in preparation for the Kairos weekend retreat. The second component is the 3.5-day Kairos Weekend retreat experience with the inmates in the prison. This normally involves a 1:1 ratio of Kairos volunteers to prisoners with 36 members of each group. The third component is a one-day Instructional Reunion during which the team returns to the institution as soon as possible after the retreat weekend to teach the newest members how to form Prayer and Share Groups. The fourth component is the bi-weekly Prayer and Share group fellowship, the heart of the Kairos Program because it keeps it going and acts as an accountability group. There are significantly fewer Kairos volunteers at Prayer and Share which normally has an average of three to five. The fifth component is a Monthly Reunion during which time three or more participants are selected to discuss the impact Jesus is having on their lives in an effort to create an environment that enhances participation and spiritual growth in the lives of the participants. The final component is a two-day Retreat held approximately three months after each Kairos weekend and is open to all inmates that have attended a Kairos Weekend. Based on the research data, it is evident that at CSP Sacramento only 50% of the full Kairos program is presently implemented, namely, Team Formation, Kairos Weekend and Prayer and Share. The other components are yet to be fully endorsed by the California State Prison Sacramento.

Prayer and Share at CSP Sacramento takes place every second and fourth Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. This involved getting to the prison no later than 4:30 p.m. and waiting at the main entrance to the prison for the arrival of the four other
volunteers. At 4:45 p.m., upon presentation of their identification card to the Correctional Officer at the main entrance to the prison compound and signing in specifying their affiliation, their destination, and their time of entry, the volunteers are allowed to proceed past the administration building and past the minimum security A yard to AB sally port. This is manned by a Correctional Officer in a 50-foot tower. Another Correctional Officer in an air-conditioned booth down below adjacent to the entryway through which everyone passes ensures the security of the main entrance to the prison yard. The volunteers are asked to empty their pockets, take off their belts and shoes, and pass through an electronic monitoring device, after which they trade their driver’s license for their state issued volunteer chaplain identification card (brown card). They also sign in providing the same information as before.

The 20-foot barbed wire gate is then opened by the Correctional Officer in the tower and the volunteers are allowed into the yard. This is then followed by a 15-minute walk past B yard to the entrance of C yard where, after presenting their volunteer chaplain identification cards to the Correctional Officer and signing in one more time, one of the volunteers is issued an alarm and keys to C Chapel in exchange for two chits. The clanging of one door shutting before the other door is opened signifies the volunteers are finally at the entrance to the level IV, 180-degree, maximum-security prison. After walking through a corridor past two cells often occupied by inmates who are under observation, the volunteers are able to enter C yard.

The Kairos volunteers check in at the watch office and register their presence with the watch officer, ask for a copy of the ducat list for Kairos and proceed 100 yards to C Chapel. They let themselves into the locked Chapel with the key and arrange the chairs
in a circle in preparation for the arrival of the inmates. At 5:45, they call to the watch office for the inmates to be released from their cells. When the inmates arrive, accompanied by a Correctional Officer, they are searched at the entrance of the chapel before being allowed to enter.

At 6:00 p.m., Prayer and Share begins under the leadership of an inmate with an opening prayer and a brief devotion or scripture reading. This is followed by small-group discussion of the reading and question posed by the leader. It normally concludes with a closing prayer. Prayer and Share is the heart of Kairos where the faith community prays and fellowships together on a regular basis, nurturing each other in their faith journey and providing accountability to one another. It is run by the inmates under the sponsorship of the five Kairos volunteers who normally participate in the sessions like any other participants.

Upon conclusion of the session at 7:30, the Watch Office is called for the Correctional Officers to come and take the men back to their cells. As they exit the chapel, the inmates are searched before they are escorted back to their cells. The volunteers then lock the chapel and walk back to the watch office to tell the Correctional Officer in charge they are finished and return following the previously mentioned procedures in reverse order.

During a Kairos retreat a base camp is established at a nearby church where the entire team gathers before going into the prison for the day. Members of the team who come from as far away as the Bay Area are able to sleep there after the sessions. At the camp, the women volunteers prepare all meals for the volunteers as well as package the food, snacks, and cookies taken into prison each day by a courier. They also sing
farewell to the men typically to the tune of “O When the Saints Go Marching In” and are there to greet them upon their return from the prison. During the retreat, while the men are at the prison, the women, under the direction of a Spiritual Director, also participate in the Kairos retreat by reading all the meditations and talks presented in prison at the same time and in the same order the men are doing it in prison. This often has a profound and dramatic effect on the women as well.

The Kairos program is a highly structured program designed to provide a short course in Christianity in 3.5 days to persons who may never have experienced anything remotely resembling a faith experience. The program typically begins on a Thursday evening with a two-hour introduction to the Kairos under the theme of “Encountering Kairos.” The objective of this is to reduce the anxiety of both the participants and the team by means of introductions, ice breakers, and opening meditations. Day 2 of the program is held under the theme of encountering self with all the talks and activities centered on getting the participants to understand themselves and their standings with God. Day 3 of the program is held under the theme of encountering Christ. On this day, the participants examine their relationships with Christ and others and the role of forgiveness in those relationships. Day 4 concludes with the theme of encountering others and focuses on preparing the participants to grow in faith and community with others after the retreat experience has ended. While this is going on, a 72-hour prayer wheel is put up on the chapel wall outlining the name/locations of the individuals praying every hour the retreat is in session.
Findings

An epistemological approach framed the search for answers to the research questions by listening to the voices and stories of those who were directly involved in living and feeling the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the people it serves. Based on the data compiled and analyzed, the following four key themes emerged:

1. The Participants’ Troubled Backgrounds
2. The Kairos Program’s Positive Impacts on Participant Inmates
3. The Kairos Program’s Visible Impacts on the People and the Prison Environment at CSPS
4. Kairos Provides a Degree of Structure

Finding One: The Participants’ Troubled Backgrounds

A granular look at the population of men incarcerated at CSP Sacramento is necessary in order to understand the themes that emerged regarding the troubled backgrounds of the men. Before presentation of data on their backgrounds, the emergent themes are noted:

- A Life of Poverty
- An Absence of Positive Parental Guidance
- The Consequences of Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- A Life Within Juvenile Systems

The inmate population at CSP Sacramento on August 31, 2012 was 2,666. The vast majority is in the 25-35 age range and is largely African American or Hispanic. There is an inverse relationship between the demographics of these groups in the state of
California and the demographics of the men incarcerated in CSP Sacramento. Additionally, a large percentage was incarcerated for drug offenses as well as for more serious offenses. Many did not achieve above an elementary school education and a large number suffer from some form of mental illness including, but not limited to, posttraumatic stress disorder.

**A life of poverty.** The first subtheme, as revealed by the findings from the interviews and the field notes, was one of a life of poverty. Inmates, prison officials, and Kairos volunteers all commented on the causal impact of poverty on the likelihood of incarceration.

PI001 spoke of his upbringing while highlighting the theme of poverty:

> I, like most of the men in here, was born poor and in a socially dysfunctional environment. My best hope while growing up without much education was a less than mediocre existence. Role models such as lawyers, bankers, educators were absent from my world. Instead of working for the man at McDonald’s for minimum wage, I grew up wanting mine and was willing to do anything to get it. As a result, I rebelled to compensate against society. I have spent a lot of time in hostile environments and was not used to that kind of interaction [found in Kairos]. (PI001)

FP01, an employee of neighboring Old Folsom Prison, which houses 3400 prisoners in a minimum security prison, contended that people who live in poverty and are receiving welfare typically have children who also become welfare recipients. The hopelessness of the situation in which those living in poverty find themselves when confronted with the law was summarized by FGPO2, a Prison Official Focus Group participant, in the following manner: “People with the least money have no alternative but to go to prison.” He further explained that this is because they are not able pay for adequate legal defense.
FGKAC6, a focus group participant from the Kairos Advisory Council, in particular, viewed poverty as the number one reason men ended up in prison in California, attesting to the fact that many of the inmates came from poor neighborhoods throughout California:

They come from South Central LA, inner city Oakland, certain poor valley locations outside of Los Angeles, Compton, Richmond, South Sacramento, the majority of them extremely poor neighborhoods; poverty driven high density populations with very little hope. (FGKAC6)

**An absence of positive parental guidance.** The absence of positive parental guidance manifested itself as a subtheme from all three groups interviewed. The participants felt strongly that the absence of role models in the early lives of the inmates affected them negatively. If they had had more supportive guidance from their parents, their lives would have turned out differently. K Int. 20 explained the lack of parental guidance:

My mom did not have a father. Her mother was adopted and she did not know her parents. This was ordained for me too; I started rebelling at an early age. I made up my mind that I love myself and no one else. I cut myself off from everyone both good and bad; closed self; loss of direction; lack of love; love was never expressed to me at a young age. I became confused when my mom did not show love. (K Int. 20)

PI010 also spoke about lack of parental guidance as well as abuse and neglect, “Born out of wedlock, I lived with my mother until I was five and with my two siblings, often suffered from physical abuse and neglect. We were finally relinquished for adoption.” This was echoed by PI001 who shared that as a result of the absence of parental guidance, “all dysfunctional adults around will abuse him and he has to become feral to survive and give up civilization and its rules.”
K Int. 26, a member of the Kairos community, who was also an ex-inmate, shared that when he was 13, he saw his uncle attack his grandmother, so he stoned his uncle with an ashtray and his uncle ran. This taught him that violence worked, brought him respect, and could get him whatever he wanted. This caused him to steal, lie, cheat, and, eventually, land in reform school and prison. “I was poor and black and wanted more than life was offering me.”

FP01 of neighboring Old Folsom Prison explained incarcerated men often lacked parental guidance. Many of their parents were alcoholics and drug addicts themselves. They made wrong choices because they did not have the skills to make better life choices. “Once a tree starts to grow up slanted you can’t fix it without uprooting it and replanting.”

**The consequences of drug and alcohol abuse.** Another subtheme revealed in the data was that of the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse. Data from the National Institute of Justice Drug Use Forecasting revealed that in 1995, between 51% and 83% of people arrested in 23 cities had evidence of drug use in their urine (U.S. Department of Justice, 1996). Similar data were shared by surveyed participants.

K. Int. 21, a participant from Kairos 8 who grew up in South Central Los Angeles, shared how his early childhood was affected by drugs:

My childhood was good until I left Belize and came to the US with my mom at age 7. Until that time I’d lived with both of my parents. I came because my mom brought me. It was good at first but my mom got involved with drugs so things became bad. However, she got pregnant with my younger sister and got into church. (K. Int. 21)
This was echoed by PI010 who revealed, “both of my parents were addicted to drugs and alcohol and lived a very violent and dysfunctional lifestyle.” Consequently, he attributed his lifelong addiction to drugs to the type of role modeling he received from his parents.

FGKAC2, a Kairos Advisory Council focus group member who had been involved as a drug counselor with Alcoholic Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous at Old Folsom Prison for the past 10 years, explained it in this manner. “Seventy-two percent of the people who are incarcerated were under the influence when they committed their crime. Another 10% were in the process of trying to get enough to get high.”

A life within juvenile systems. In the findings, it was evident that at least two of the inmates interviewed had become involved in the juvenile system from an early age. PI002 shared that as a minor he was in juvenile hall until he was 18 and after that, made two or three trips to a California Youth Authority Camp, which he found to be a really brutal experience. Since that time, he has been in CSP Sacramento for 12 years.

PI010 recounted what happened after he was put up for adoption when his care was taken over by the system:

From 1970 until I turned 14, I was raised in a series of county owned foster homes and behavior modification group homes. Some of these homes were from good families, but most of them were as violent as my infancy, with abusers, power freaks, and child molesters. I got angry and I started to lash out. I was killing animals, starting fires and running away from every home that I was living in. I was eventually placed in Juvenile Hall and then the Boy’s Ranch. It was 1979 and I was age 14 when I went to the Boy’s Ranch… After many failed attempts at juvenile psychotherapy, the County decided to send me to a juvenile prison system called, California Youth Authority. I was charged with habitual runaway and juvenile delinquency. There I remained until I was 18. (PI010)
Since then, PI010 served time in at least three prisons including CMF Vacaville, Corcoran, and CSP Sacramento. The data reveal that when juveniles are not provided with the care and attention of a loving and nurturing environment, they are often forced “to become feral to survive and give up civilization and its rules” as shared by PI001. He went on to say that the same child growing up in Beverly Hills has a better chance of growing up than one who grew up within the juvenile system.

The above themes of poverty, lack of positive parental guidance, drug and alcohol abuse, and growing up within the juvenile system found in the data can be best seen as issues that affected the inmate population that participated in this study.

**Finding Two: The Kairos Program’s Positive Impacts on Participant Inmates**

A second major theme revealed by the evidence presented was that the Kairos program has a meaningful impact on the individual inmate as well as on the community as a whole. Overall, 100% of the participants found Kairos to be a positive experience using adjectives like “great, surprising, disbelieving, sincere, exhilarating, edifying, fascinating, unforgettable, challenging, real, powerful, spirit-filled, uplifting, mind blowing, fresh, and innovative” to describe their retreat experience.

FGKAC3, one of the participants of the focus group held for the members of the Kairos Advisory Council, really found Kairos to be a very good experience in that it ignited his interest in the program. He made his Kairos retreat in 1991 as a prisoner, continued to participate in other Kairos activities as a server, became a lead server, and attended Prayer and Share while incarcerated. It also helped him after he was released. He believes Kairos was a key element leading to his success since getting out of prison. As soon as he was released from parole, he searched for Kairos online and became
involved with the Sacramento Kairos Advisory Council. He had this to say about Kairos,

“But Kairos I like. I am definitely passionate for it because I lived it. Not only here on the outside but as well on the inside so yeah Kairos is a marvelous program.”

The key subthemes that emerged from the data included the following:

- The improvement of quality of life in prison
- The engenderment of accountability and responsibility
- A reduction of prejudice against other races
- The creation of personal bonds among participants
- The creation of a forgiving environment, and the enhancement of trust, vulnerability, and authenticity

**The improvement of quality of life in the prison.** The evidence presented in the data collected from the participants of the interviews, as well as from the two focus groups, portrayed that Kairos helps the men to serve their time in a different, perhaps better, way.

PI002 reflected on the improvement that Kairos has had on the quality of life of the men in prison thusly:

The Kairos program was a good one in which men were just allowed to be men. It was a peaceful program; more tolerance; more unity; more fellowship; more friendships. It has changed the temperature of the yard. Before that men did not have that in their repertoire to talk about. Men look at each other differently if you were in Kairos; Kairos provides an opportunity for us to come together. (P1002)

FGKAC2, one of the focus group participants from the Kairos Advisory Council stressed that Kairos helped with the quality of the inmates’ lives wherever they ended up:

But we have to admit that at CSP Sacramento that there are a lot of lifers and I’ve seen men that is not when I get out. And mortality… I’ve seen that a lot more at
level 1, 2, 3 kinds of prisons. But it is quality of life wherever you end up.
Whatever desert island you’re on or whatever prison you’re in or something like that. (FGKAC2)

What stood out from the interview data was the fact that Kairos helps open the
door to other programs and makes the inmates receptive to participating in whatever can
make a difference in their lives. PI001 said, “After Kairos, I took part in whatever would
make me better.”

FGKAC3, another Focus Group participant from the Kairos Advisory Council,
believes that only after the prisoner stops feeling sorry for himself and owns up to his part
of getting into prison can he begin to take part in the various programs available in
prison.

It’s when the person finally stops and starts to realize my boohooing ain’t doing
nothing for me. What’s out there that can do something for me? Well they hear
about programs, they get involved with the prayer and share. They get involved
with whatever programs they can at the chapel if that’s what they want to do
otherwise they become recluse where they are living in a dorm or a cell or
wherever it may be or they get involved with the gangs and become a family there
to some extent. Or they come to the chapel, they get involved with the programs
there like Kairos for example. But people are hungry and when they see it they
gravitate fast. (FGKAC3)

The engenderment of accountability and responsibility. Another key finding
that came from the surveyed participants was that Kairos helps to engender accountability
and responsibility especially through its “table family” setting and the biweekly Prayer
and Share attended by the inmates. PI001 maintained:

It teaches me to create a forgiving environment to be aware and receptive of
another person when they are willing to own their own behavior – which Kairos
calls repentance – I hate that word. I do a fair amount of helping others with this.
(PI001)
Kairos helps its graduates become more accountable to each other. They become a part of a Christian table family while attending the retreat enabling them to treat each other like siblings even after the retreat. Men who take part in the biweekly Prayer and Share sessions attest to the fact that it keeps them surrounded by people who think positively like them. Consequently, they can turn to them for advice and support when they go through pain, grief, and suffering and face issues of hopelessness.

PI002 had this to say on the issue of accountability:

Every chance I get bi-monthly (every second and fourth Thursday). P&S has allowed me to keep the fire burning instead of just every Sunday at church. It provides more time to fellowship. I find it helpful to see men dedicated to do the Lord’s work and hold me accountable even more. I have no excuse not to go if men from the outside come all the way here to share with us. (P1002)

However, one possible drawback to the accountability and responsibility found in the Kairos program was pointed out by CSPCO001, a custody officer who shared that it is only through self-help groups like Kairos the inmates can come out of their cells and meet with other inmates and could potentially use that time to coordinate things that could be against prison policy.

A reduction in prejudice against other races. The research field notes indicate that at Kairos retreats, six men who do not know each other and come from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and gang affiliation are divided into table families of Luke, Matthew, Mark, John, Paul, and Peter. For 3.5 days, they eat together, listen to talks, discuss each talk as a group, create posters depicting the group’s interpretation of each talk, sing, and pray with one another. By the end of that time together, prejudice and racial differences among the different groups is reduced, and they begin to see each other as normal human beings. Their treatment of each other as siblings spills over to the yard
and they are often in a position to help each other, sometimes preventing confrontations in the yard.

One of the concrete effects of Kairos mentioned by several of the participants, who seemed to find it difficult to believe, was the fact that “there were no political or racial lines,” during the Kairos retreat. This point was underscored by CSPCO001, an official employed by CSP Sacramento:

Prison is a very racial society because it thrives there. The Blacks do not interact with the Whites nor do either of them interact with the Hispanics who are divided into Northerners and Southerners who in turn do not get along and have had 45 years of violence. (CSPCO001)

He also said that the higher the level of the prison, the tighter the politics found among the inmates. Since CSP Sacramento is a level IV, maximum-security prison, it is a very dangerous place, and 75% of the inmates are never leaving. Therefore, there is little deterrent to keep inmates from becoming involved in gang wars and racial strife.

FGKAC6, one of the Kairos Advisory Council focus group members who had been involved with Kairos for five years expressed it in this manner:

There’s a huge reduction in prejudice because of Kairos. Meaning that people who would not normally mix are mixing more and are more understanding. I’ve even had gangsters and this has been repeated to me over several times. Well I’m part of gang x, let’s just say, this guy was in my space from gang y but I had met him in Kairos and I decided not to kill him. I decided not…

*Tim:* You’ve heard that?

FGKAC6: Yes, several times.

*Tim:* Oh my goodness!

FGKAC6: And I even heard that even from ohm, some of the southerners say that about the northerners. That they had caught northerners in their space and they let them go and vice versa. Yes, I’ve heard these stories and I hear them every single time and, and I’ve heard guys say there must have been certain Kairos I was in the wrong person’s space and I should have been in trouble and they let it go. So,
there’s a huge, if anything, a huge reduction in prejudice and uh, you know, I believe if you can find it there’s gotta be some scientific numbers there cause I bet there’s a reduction in violence that’s at least caused by racism, you know, and prejudice. I could be wrong but…

Tim: No, that’s your experience and your experience is …

FGKAC6: and and, and this has been relayed to me every time I hear this from these guys. So I believe if there’s an actual effect, it seems as if Kairos has a way to put different groups of people together that normally would not mix inside prison and they cause a reduction in prejudice and I believe it makes it, it’s gotta make it somehow safer. Again I don’t know if the numbers are there but I really believe a reduction of prejudice.

Tim: So, what one concrete result stands out in your mind or concrete impact that you’ve seen. What one story stands out in your mind about the impact of Kairos?

FGKAC6: Again it’s just helping the… its giving another alternative for these people besides just belonging to their own gang that they’re allowing them to baby step a little bit out of their small gang, socioeconomic groups and, and mixing a little bit with others. And they even talk about sometimes they’ll talk to some people in the yard that they would normally not talk to. So, so, yeah, I mean one of the times a southerner talked about how he let a northerner that he shouldn’t have because they have these stupid rules about killing each other and uh, he let him go. And I’ve heard this other…I’ve heard that the black gangs have let some of the skinheads go that they could have had him trapped and they could have actually hurt him and they decided just to look the other way and let it go, you know, because actually it got to know some of these people or knew someone that knew these people. And, and so there’s just more of a mixing of groups that normally would not mix. And that is a concrete thing and I believe that ultimately, it makes it a little bit more humane inside the prison. (FGKAC6)

FGKAC3, a member of the Kairos Advisory Council, also believes there has been a significant impact:

I’ve also seen uh gang members who were very angry and involved in their gang. Uh, put that aside after doing a Kairos weekend and continuing to be involved in prayer and share and really finding a different way. Peace to do their time in prison. Um, a friend of mine, who passed away last November. He was at a gas station one day and some guy came up to him and accosted him and said I know you. And my friend did not recognize him. But he said you’re from Kairos aren’t you? And he said yes, I am and he started to share with him that he was incarcerated at one time and he went to a weekend where my friend was serving and he was out now and he just wanted to thank him for being there. And that had
help turned him around and that was helping him on the outside to make sure that he doesn’t have to come back. That was very chance happening. (FGKAC3)

The creation of personal bonds among participants. The previously mentioned table family experience also creates a context where people of different ethnicities and individuals from rival gangs do everything together over the course of 3.5 days. Typical bonding activities during the table family time (other than those previously mentioned) include listening to testimonies presented by different volunteers, meditating, singing songs, and breaking bread together. In this setting the men bond in ways not normally possible in a prison environment. Needless to say, the table families begin to put the family structure many of the men have never had in place, creating lasting relationships that go far beyond Kairos.

PI008, one of the participants, testified to that in this manner,

Kairos enables me to deal with the people in green [Correctional Officers] a little better. Kairos has become a buffering zone. The men always wear their cross; gang members walk around with their cross; when they get mad touching it often helps to remind them to remember the table of Luke or whatever the name of the table family that they belonged to on their Kairos weekend was. (PI008)

The creation of a bond among participants was also shared by PI009, another interviewee, who said Kairos:

Bring[s] people and races together; Brings people and races together most of the people who go to Kairos are open to change and are not involved in the game wholeheartedly. Sometimes politics dictate that they behave differently; politics is your life; they don’t play in here. (PI009)

PI003 summed up the creation of personal bonds among participants in the following way:

It [Kairos] has helped me bond closely with other races whom I may never had met in the yard. Kairos has also helped me focus on my walk with Christ, and my ability to share my faith in every part/corner of this prison. Aside from
strengthening my faith it has strengthened my relationship with other races that I would never have talked with on the yard. (PI003)

**The creation of a forgiving environment.** Just as data portrayed the bonding of men through the Kairos program, it also indicated the creation of a forgiving environment. During the 3.5-day Kairos retreat, the participants took part in a forgiveness ceremony in which they wrote the names of everyone they would like to forgive on soluble rice paper ceremoniously dropped by them in a bowl of water. The pastoral team prays over their need for forgiveness of the names on the list. The participant is especially encouraged to add his own name to the list and forgive himself for whatever he did wrong. This ceremony is considered by many as the one tangible experience they take away from the Kairos retreat. This leads to the creation of a forgiving environment.

PI007 attested to this:

Kairos was very rewarding; I was pleasantly surprised; spiritually fed; the forgiveness ceremony with the rice paper was memorable for me. It has helped me to gain confidence. Prior to this I was not comfortable talking to people in group. The more research I can do the more comfortable I get. I hate getting up there if I am not prepared. It’s helped become my personal ministry and added another motor to my boat.

The forgiveness ceremony was also highlighted by several other inmates as being impactful and helpful in making the entire experience to be one that was even more life changing. FGKAC4 shared his impression of the impact of the forgiveness ceremony:

You get this turmoil tumultuous emotions are going on in the person. But there is one ceremony that was done that time is when you are doing your little notes on the rice paper. And then the talks that were along with it. Not only the talks but, talking to the gentlemen at the table. Ok. And then they go thru the ceremony of dropping it into the water and watching it dissolve with the names of all the people you are trying to forgive. (FGKAC4)
This is indicative of the fact that the tangible, more physical elements of the program that
can be seen, experienced, and touched by the inmates have a more profound impact than
the other aspects of the program. The focus group participant continued:

Because you see the food is great, the talking is great, it is things like the
forgiveness ceremony that they can physically see what you are talking about.
And then they start to begin to understand a little bit more. But can I forgive me?
I know what I did I was there. You know this kind of thing, ok? No one really
knows the problem but I do I was there. All right? Yea the courts were closed
when I was robbing the money or whatever. But can I forgive me? If they can
forgive themselves and they learn how it feels and how to do it. Can I forgive my
brother now? And it makes it easier and experience is taught. Those are the
things that make it easier or special you know, inside Kairos itself when you are
working with the guys in there. (FGKAC4)

K int. 23 summed it up by saying, “God is really working through the free people in
Kairos. It is the most life changing experience I have had in prison watching barriers
falling down and men coming together.”

At the end of the first day, as the Kairos retreat participants were sent back to
their cells, each inmate was given a bag containing a dozen cookies and instructed to use
it as he wished. On the second night, each participant was given two bags of cookies
with the first bag being for him and the second bag being for him to give away to a
friend. On the third and final night, the participant was given three bags of cookies, one
for himself, the other for a friend, and the third to be given away to someone he held in
unforgiveness.

There is always the guy that for some reason he ends up with a lot of cookies;
everybody is giving him a lot of cookies and usually it’s the kind of guy that
everybody seems to have some kind of bad feelings or resentments, you know,
seems to be the disliked guy. And, and ohm, I’ve heard of the guy who comes to
Kairos saying, the guys were giving me cookies and years ago, I was getting
cookies from everybody. What I realize is, I realize the reason they were giving
me all these cookies was that nobody liked me and everybody was giving me bags
of cookies. And, and, and it made me more retrospect; it made me look more at
my character. You know, and ohm, so it’s interesting. So it’s the guy that nobody likes who ends up with lots of bags of cookies and he…(FGKAC6)

**The enhancement of trust, vulnerability, and authenticity.** Kairos also creates a safety net which serves to enhance trust, vulnerability, and authenticity. This is because participants let their guards down and show true feelings and emotions to each other, something seldom found among men anywhere, particularly in prison. One case in point was expressed by PI008:

The number 1 cause of burnout in workers and chaplains is death notices. We have done upwards of 400 death notices. We went to a grief ministry training sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento. In and through those death notices a lot of the guys have attended Kairos; you see different emotions; you see the real person who let their guard down in Kairos. Kairos equips me to know that person and to treat them accordingly. Sometimes it is not to say anything; it may be to hold them; it may be to hand them chairs so they can throw against the wall. It has enabled me to treat them in a better way; sometimes my boss, the chaplain allows me to walk around the track with them for a while; we give them a chance to do a memorial service or a eulogy; we type it up nicely for them and take pride in faxing it to the right place; it is often read at the funeral. This one guy had four death notices and the last one was his mom, wife and daughter who died while they were coming to see him. He killed himself. In prison no one is immune; I had a recent melt down. The chapel’s priority rating is below zero especially where resources are concerned. (PI008)

It is evident Kairos Prison Ministry has helped him become even more trustworthy so the men even felt comfortable sharing their most vulnerable moments with him. Enhancement of trust and authenticity was demonstrated at a Prayer and Share session where one of the participants was beside himself with grief at the loss of his 35-year-old brother with whom he had not been able to spend time for 17 years since he was incarcerated 18 years ago. He was distraught at the fact that his relatives refused to tell him the cause of his brother’s death. It was amazing to see one of the other inmates to whom he was especially close consoling him prior to the session. This would never have
been possible without the Kairos. And even during the session, he was prayed for by the entire Kairos team. This brought to light in a vivid way the degree of helplessness that can be experienced by incarcerated men, when people close to them die without their being able to do something for them to mark that final transition.

PI001 yearned for authenticity explaining that authentic relationships are extremely rare in prison and that is one of the things with which Kairos helped.

My cellie told me to be aware of my behavior and how it influences other people. A lot of people in prison are basically rebels and are looking for reasons about how not to do things. He told to be careful about how you behave or respond to people because of the input I have people will respond to me. I hurt for genuine relationships at times but the relationships I have are genuine on their own level. I prefer my relationships to be authentic, truthful and sincere. Most people in here are insincere, because they are in the game due to prison pressures. (PI001) K int. 27 summarized his feelings regarding the enhancement of trust and vulnerability best by sharing at a Kairos retreat closing ceremony, “for the first time in a year I have been able to smile an unpretentious smile.”

**Finding Three: The Kairos Program’s Visible Impacts on the People and the Prison Environment at CSP Sacramento**

The Kairos program has visible impacts on the people and prison environment at CSP Sacramento. The major subthemes that emerged from the data are as follows:

- The impact of Kairos on the prison environment
- The positive impact on the prison yard
- The impact on individual inmates
- The impact on custody staff
- The impact on the volunteers of the Kairos Program.
**Impact on the prison environment.** As previously mentioned, CSP Sacramento Prison is a maximum-security, level IV prison. Hence, only the most violent offenders are incarcerated there and the vast majority of inmates may never be released due to the life sentences they are serving. For such a volatile environment to be considered as peaceful is highly unusual. This was attested to by PI005 who shared that “I felt God’s presence that weekend. It has created a safer environment for the guards, the prisoners, and the free volunteer staff. It’s a godlike thing; it’s calm; it’s safer.”

This wonderment was also expressed by FGKAC6, a participant of the focus group session, as follows:

> I think that its ahm, created a lot of peace amongst am members of the yard. Am, at one point there are two rival gangs that they keep separated. The northerners and the southerners. And am we can’t have both of those am, members of those gangs on a weekend at the same time because of the implications. Am, after the weekend before last, there was word came down through members of the staff that said that those leaders had talked and thought that they could sit at a peace table together, so am. (FGKAC6)

The researcher observed the prison warden attending the closing ceremonies of several of Kairos retreats. FGKAC3 from the Kairos Advisory Council believes the warden’s attendance at Kairos closing ceremonies is huge and sends a resounding message to inmates and Correctional Officers alike. As a result of the work Kairos has been doing for the last five years, he is convinced the impact of Kairos is being felt from CSP Sacramento all the way to the headquarters of the CDCR in Sacramento.

> You’ve got administrative staff that does not even walk on that yard unless they absolutely have to, the warden down. Don’t you know that Sacramento is hearing about Kairos? Oh yes they are. They most certainly are. There is no gap in my mind; because they have to do reports. Why is it we’re having peace today and then not at other times it’s, it’s when the warden calls that or the associate warden or whomever calls us back and say please come back in. why, one can only
wonder why unless they come right out and tell you but we’ve seen a very good response. (FGKAC3)

He went on to say the impact it has on the inmates when they get to see the warden attend events like a Kairos closing ceremony is they feel extremely supported and that their program is reinforced.

They don’t go out on that yard unless they have to. They’re stuck up in that office where that ivory tower is and its important. When an inmate sees that warden walk thru on a positive note cause they’ll walk out there on a lockdown and go thru buildings sometimes when they’re doing their searches and so on. But when they come thru on a positive note, wow! I get to hobnob with the warden on a positive note. You’d be surprised on what kind of effect that is very phenomenal. Very positive. (FGKAC3)

**Positive impact on the prison yard.** PI006 was convinced Kairos has had an overall positive impact on the prison yard at CSP Sacramento.

There is a visible bond between many who would normally never connect. We normally stay away from people we do not know in prison for self-preservation. With the walls being broken down in Kairos there is a bond on the yard that was not there before. It creates questions from the others and allows answers. Staff – mixed bag; some think it’s a good thing; some don’t like it because they see it as a drag and a way of getting out of the cell. Overall the yard has improved. We have more people involved in it than the church system. (PI006)

This change in the prison environment for the better was also reflected in a comment made by a participant who indicated that, as a result of the Kairos Prison Ministry’s impact on the graduates in the prison yard, a separate table has been set aside on the yard for Christians to use.

I would include or add the conditions or changes that we have seen in the staff of the prison specially everyone that we deal with in processing in and out of the prison but also that the prison itself in a very segregated population even built a table for the Christians to congregate at in the yard. So attitudes have changed not only for us going in, the inmates who participate but for the staff to change that dramatically and that positively has been eye opening and just. It’s a God thing because there is nothing that we can do to do that. It has to be a God thing. (FGKAC2)
K Int. 23 had this to say about the impact of Kairos on the yard:

Kairos is a peaceful program that has changed the temperature of the yard. Before that men did not have that in their repertoire to talk about. Men look at each other differently if you were in Kairos; Kairos provides an opportunity for us to come together. (K Int 23)

By the “temperature of the yard,” he referred to the fact that the yard is normally a very dangerous place that can become volatile and deadly in a flash. In his view, Kairos has had an impact on that. In support of this, FGKAC3, a focus group member from the Kairos Advisory Council also had this to say, “and I’ve heard some of the guys say that when Kairos is in the yard there will be no problems.” One example of this is reflected in the following quotation:

So I kinda wondered if from both of these Kairoses what sort of change we would see in these individuals during the course of the weekend and they did change over the course of the weekend. One official at the prison told me that seeing that change reflects the change that’s occurred in the yard since Kairos came. (FGKAC5)

Not all inmates see the impact as wholly positive; PI001, another interviewee, was ambivalent about the impact of Kairos on the yard, “Kairos has had a positive impact on the yard but due to pressures of prison the impact on the yard is questionable.” This was echoed by PI006 who believed that, while the impact of Kairos on the staff was mixed, there has been an overall improvement on the yard.

**Impact on individual inmates.** As a result of the Kairos Prison Ministry there have been positive changes in the prison. Participants likewise agreed Kairos has a positive impact on individual inmates. The word that best described the effect of Kairos on the inmates who participated in it is “transformed.”
In response to the question regarding what impact has Kairos Prison Ministry had on you, the inmates had this to say:

It teaches me to create a forgiving environment to be aware and receptive of another person when they are willing to own their own behavior – which Kairos calls repentance – I hate that word. I do a fair amount of helping others with this. A good one and its positive intent is evident. All in all Kairos had a small impact on me. After Kairos I took part in whatever would make me better. Kairos had another influence. After the forgiveness ceremony I learnt that I could go to God and ask for forgiveness. (PI001)

Kairos has allowed me to express and share the love of Christ in ways before unheard of. My attitude, heart and mind are more focused due to Kairos. (PI002)

It has helped me bond closely with other races whom I may never had met in the yard. Kairos has also helped me focus on my walk with Christ, and my ability to share my faith in every part/corner of this prison. Aside from strengthening my faith it has strengthened my relationship with other races that I would never have talked with on the yard. (PI003)

In response to this question, PI004 simply said, “Positive.”

It’s had a powerful, positive impact. It’s made me more aware. I come from a Catholic background but have been experiencing the different religious options that are available. (PI005)

I never attend “church” in prison because none speaks to me – this Kairos ministry does. Kairos allows people to participate. Participation gives me a personal relationship with God and the person. It’s up close and personal. Get off the chair and talk; it allows me to ask questions. It allows me to become… (PI006)

As one of the inside team facilitators and of late being the only one to give the presentation my speaking in front of a group has become more comfortable. I enjoy immensely the research and preparation to do the presentations. (PI007)

Lots of programs come and go. But Kairos is the most remembered. On most programs you don’t get a lot of questions from staff. They are always asking about Kairos. Sometimes we let them come in and look around for themselves – they get a kick from the hands that they see posted around the walls of the chapel. (PI008)
A better person; share with my family. It has had a positive impact on me. I do a lot of praying now – more than I ever had. Now I have more hope for the future. I’ve heard about Paul; I can do the time; I have not thoroughly forgiven myself for being in here but I am working on it. I am able to talk to my sons and encourage them as well. (PI009)

I have given my life 100% to God and vowed the Nazarite vow. I have written a book about wellness and spirituality. (PI010)

The above comments reflect the change that has taken place with the prisoners as well as with the personnel who work in at the prison. Apart from providing food, cookies, and a break from the prison routine, Kairos has also helped “to create lifelong friendships and common bond bonds” (PI001). PI006 described it best:

There is a visible bond between many who would normally never connect. We normally stay away from people we do not know in prison for self-preservation. With the walls being broken down in Kairos there is a bond on the yard that was not there before. It creates questions from the others and allows answers. (PI006)

**Impact on custody staff.** Kairos Prison Ministry has also had significant impact on the custody staff as expressed by staff members, inmates, and the Kairos Advisory Council members. They can see the progress and continue to applaud the efforts of the ministry as taking one step toward doing some of the rehabilitation work not being done in the prison environment. It is the belief of the inmates that even Correctional Officers are impacted by Kairos’s presence at CSP Sacramento. In the words of PI003, “it has had an impact on the system because the COs do not act so much like jerks.” However, PI009 has experienced negativity to anything spiritual or faith-based from some of the Correctional Officers:

Most guards don’t like you doing anything positive. Maybe 1/100 doesn’t have a problem with it. They don’t call you when you should go to attend the programs that you are scheduled to attend. They refer to protestant services as prostitution services. Guards have a problem with Kairos. (PI009)
Since Kairos has been active steadily for the past five years, it is the belief of the volunteers from the Kairos Advisory Council that the Correctional Officers are less stressed and more open/used to Kairos. FGKAC2 reflected, “the CO’s [Correctional Officers] are now glad to see Kairos back I have even had one of them say they were glad that you guys are back.” This was corroborated by FGKAC1 who shared “when we are in the chapel they leave their gang affiliation outside.” FGKAC5 also agreed offering, “you know and I’ve heard some of the guys say that when Kairos is in the yard, there will be no problems.”

The fact that Kairos is having an impact on the custody staff is evidenced by an incident that took place on the first day of Kairos Weekend Retreat 10, October 2010 when some of the volunteers observed the Correctional Officer who was driving the bus from the main entrance to the C Chapel in an obviously distraught state of mind. When the bus arrived at its destination and before disembarking, upon the consent of the officer, the entire team laid hands on him and prayed with him, while another officer was standing outside observing and wondering what was going on. This led to the officer sharing a portion of the personal problem he was experiencing. He took the following day off to get spiritual counseling and more prayer from his pastor. The next day, the officer was back to normal and doing quite well.

**Impact on volunteers of the Kairos Program.** This notion of the impact of Kairos on its volunteers was also supported by PI008, who described the impact of Kairos on the volunteers in the following manner:

In prison there’s not too many times that people let their guards down and share with each other. I see a big change in 75% of the men that go thru it. I believe that it is due to the willingness of the free staff [volunteers] that really love what they
are doing. They all believe in this program. It takes respect from the men in green, [Correctional Officers] men is blue [prisoners] and your own colleagues. (PI008)

As reflected in the data, the Kairos Prison Ministry also impacts the volunteers of the Kairos program in several ways. The testimony of FGKAC4 reflects why he is passionate about Kairos Prison Ministry.

Well, I um, first started my involvement with Kairos out of a sense of uh obedience to what I felt was God moving in my life through people that I knew, who were involved with the Kairos Prison Ministry, and after I got involved I really enjoyed working with the men inside in a very rewarding ministry. I think the men that come inside the weekends especially are looking for something and uh this ministry in a unique way creates an environment for them that really experience true friendship uh and have an opportunity to really take a look at their lives and see what Jesus Christ in fellowship with other men can do to make their lives more meaningful. To be a part of that is a real privilege. (FGKAC4)

FGKAC3, another Kairos Advisory Council volunteer, put it in this manner, “it [Kairos] is life-changing not only for the people it serves, but also for the volunteers, and it also impacts friends and family – life-changing.” FGKAC7, a focus group member who had served on the outside team supporting the men while they are in prison during a Kairos retreat, shared the impact the very first Kairos Weekend Retreat she attended had on her:

You know I really did not have any expectations about the prison. I was asked to work on the outside team and I was going through some really tough, emotional things and ohm, over the weekend, through the meditations and reading the talks... I really, you know, I broke down and really shared how I was feeling with the women on the team. The experience I had was, they immediately put hands on me and prayed for me and shared with me their experiences ohm, and how I was feeling and how they dealt with it. And uh, you know, I gained such a sense of peace and felt such love from these women that I have never felt. I didn’t expect that I would be taken care of. I expected I was there to take care of others and what happened was that I was cared for and I was loved and healed. (FGKAC7)
Finding Four: Kairos Provides a Degree of Structure

One key result of the study is the notion that Kairos is a highly structured program providing a framework for the participants and graduates to learn how to cope with their environment in a different, perhaps better, way. The program is designed in a deliberate way for men to learn about Kairos, themselves, and Christ with the goal of living in a faith community with others. Beginning with the 3.5-day retreat, Kairos helps individuals become vulnerable enough to begin to trust others and begin authentic relationships with them (Burnside, 2003; Thompson, 2011).

PI008 summarized the structure provided by Kairos Prison Ministry on the individuals:

I believe the Kairos Ministry’s way of bringing the gospel to those who would normally never hear it is truly the best. For us who don’t like the typical church setting, this is fresh and actually provides a forum in which we can be both participants and seekers simultaneously. By calling upon members of the group to share, well, it really opens otherwise closed people up and provides access to open communication. The initial four day breaks open hardened heart and allows God to create new people. I believe we would greatly benefit from a regular 1 ½ day reunion [Two Day Retreat] in the same venue as the 4 day. Hearing from guests, sharing food and drink creates a very good atmosphere and solidifies the bond. (PI008)

The Greek word Kairos means God’s special time and the belief of the Kairos volunteers is that God speaks to each individual in his own way at the time that is right for him. He also affects each individual differently and brings him from where he is to where God wants him to be. At a Kairos retreat, K Int. 28 shared that God had made several attempts to get his attention throughout his life. He first threw a pebble but he refused to listen; then he threw a rock, still to no avail. He finally landed a boulder on
him that brought him to his knees when he became a prisoner. It is almost as if the Lord put him in a confined space just so he could get his attention and direct it toward Him.

K Int. 22, another participant at a Kairos retreat, described how God structured his path:

God stopped calling me. He called when I was 13 years old but I went away. He had to knock me down like Paul and it took 20 years. I believe God has spared me for this time. I love you guys and I have been thoroughly blessed these past few days. (K Int. 22)

Participants of the focus group illustrated this notion of transformation by sharing:

I think it’s great to see that transformation during the weekend from someone who struggles with themselves and people around them to someone who is accepting of the differences between people and I also, I also like to see the transformation in the staff in the prison also. (FGKAC1)

This structure has been manifested by improvement in race relations, as was shared by FGKAC4:

But I have seen during weekends ah inmates really make a change in the way they relate to one another. Ah, some of them fairly dramatic - a skinhead embracing a person of color. That just doesn’t happen in the normal course of events. Maybe more significantly what I’ve observed over the years is that there’s a fairly good number of inmates who continue to participate in this program through their own initiative and are determined to make the most of their environment and learn how to live within the prison and do their time in a positive way instead of participating in more of the negative aspects of prison life. So that’s always inspiring for me to see you know, to see someone make a change that really carries on in their life not just on the weekend. (FGKAC4)

K Int. 22 summed it up by saying that Kairos Prison Ministry is a process of self-discovery for volunteers and inmates. This fact along with the impact the program has had on the volunteers working within the Kairos Prison Ministry was shared by a participant from the Kairos Advisory Council:

Over the years of my involvement with Kairos, I’ve seen, personally seen, an inmate who was a yard leader and used to not being able to be reached out to
come in on the first night ahm, curious and …and off to himself and by the end of the weekend singing and dancing and clapping and then going out onto the yard and teaching his cronies the same thing. I’ve seen that. I’ve also seen people on weekend, the free people on the weekend change in attitude, approach their opinions of the inmates. (FGKAC4)

There was only one dissenting voice that came from FGPO02, a member of the prison staff who attended the focus group session. While his interaction with the Kairos program was limited to signing passes for inmates to miss his classes during a Kairos retreat, he claimed Kairos is just an avenue for the inmates to get out of their assignments. He also saw the Muslims as being more dedicated and committed than the people who were graduates of Kairos.

This qualitative case study was based on the interviews, observations, and field notes collected during a four-month period. The major findings were recounted in the voices of the people best able to express their experience with the Kairos Prison Ministry. Particularly resonant were the voices of 10 of the inmates of CSP Sacramento, nine of whom were graduates of the Kairos program. The study findings were clustered into four significant themes and resulting subthemes discussed in this chapter: 1) The Participants’ Troubled Backgrounds, 2) The Kairos Program’s Positive Impacts on Participant Inmates, 3) The Kairos Program’s Visible Impacts on the People and the Prison Environment at CSPS, and 4) The Kairos Program Provides a Degree of Structure. The key patterns and major ideas found in those themes are discussed below.

**Results and Interpretation**

Despite the fact that Kairos Prison Ministry has been in existence in California State Prison Sacramento since 1991 and throughout the United States for 36 years, the program remains relatively unknown except to those who participate in it in prison.
Consequently, little research exists regarding the program and its impact on its graduates. The literature reviewed provided a framework for understanding the findings of the study.

**Situating This Research in the Literature**

The first literature stream examined the background and demographics of the incarcerated and provided a backdrop for the factors that have led to the explosion of incarceration in the United States over the past 40 years. Among these are declining educational opportunities (Darling-Hammond, 2010), the socioeconomic background (Wacquant, 2009), and the involvement in the use and distribution of illegal drugs (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011; NAACP, 2011). In combination with these are restrictive laws and policies that end in incarceration. Foremost among these is the largely unsuccessful War on Drugs launched by President Nixon to use the threat of incarceration to serve as deterrent to the use of drugs (Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2010). Also impactful on the incarceration rates of males is the California’s law of sentencing criminals, known as Three Strikes and You’re Out. Enacted as Proposition 184, it imposes a minimum sentence of 25 years to life for three-time repeat offenders (Brown & Jolivette, 2005). The prisons in California are bursting at the seams as a result of this law. Consequently, CSP Sacramento, is presently a multi-mission institution that houses 2,666 inmates and employs more than 1,700 staff. In existence since 1986, the institution primarily houses maximum-security inmates serving long sentences and those who have proved to be management problems at other institutions. The racial composition of the three strikers is African American making up the largest group followed by Hispanics and, to a smaller extent, Whites. This composition is similar to
that of the groups who take part in a normal Kairos retreat in which the group is primarily Black, followed by Hispanics and a sprinkling of Whites.

In California, the majority of the prisoners come from the state’s major urban centers, especially Los Angeles and the counties that neighbor it (Gilmore, 2007). In the Kairos retreat sessions held at CSP Sacramento one of the introductory exercises held on the first night involves asking prisoners to introduce themselves and where they come from. A typical response includes places such as South Central Los Angeles, Compton, Oakland, Sacramento, Fresno, Stockton, Richmond, and Pittsburg.

The second literature stream visited the history of faith-based organizations and the impact they have had on prisons in general and on the inmates who participated in them while incarcerated. As found in the literature, faith-based organizations have been in existence since the establishment of the first prison in this country. They continue to form a major part of the limited rehabilitation work done in today’s prisons. Faith-based services are provided by all the correctional institutions in the United States. They provide programs such as prayer groups, personal development, meditation groups, and marriage classes, “revivals, life skills, Bible study, family religious festivals, anger management, musical choirs and bands, prerelease mentoring, and several religion-specific programs such as Yokefellow or Kairos” (Mears et al., 2006, p. 353).

Presently, at California State Prison Sacramento, there are approximately 27 volunteer programs taking place on a regular basis. Only one or two of those programs are not sponsored by a faith-based organization. The men who participated in the study of Kairos were emphatic about the positive impact these faith-based programs are having on the time they are spending in prison.
The third literature stream looked at the effect of prison ministries on the way inmates serve their time. It reviewed literature regarding the role of prison chaplain volunteers and how they become involved. Also examined were the factors related to why people volunteer to serve in faith-based programs similar to Kairos. Additionally, the impact of religious programs on negative behavior, as well as how religion helps people cope as prisoners was traced. Primary among them were the faith and the moral development of prisoners in a faith-based program at a correctional facility.

The review ended by highlighting the role of prison chaplains in the rehabilitation effort presently taking place in the prisons in the United States (Maruna et al., 2006; Monsma, 2001; Murphy, 1956; Skotnicki, 2000; Smith & Sosin, 2001; Sundt, Dammer, & Cullen, 2002).

The latter examined the prison chaplain and is similar to the Kairos experience at CSP Sacramento because of the burden placed on three chaplains to service the spiritual needs of 2,666 inmates. This can only be done with the assistance and support of volunteers, which is what Kairos Prison Ministry does. A core team of five volunteers run the Prayer and Share at the prison every two weeks and at least 30 volunteers attend every Kairos retreat that is normally held every six months.

Of particular importance to this research was the study by Thomas and Zaitzow (2006) which examined a primary concern of correctional officers pertaining to the role played by religion in the way prisoners cope with their sentences. They indicate that a only small group experience real conversion while in prison. This can be evidenced from the fact that of the number of inmates that have gone through the Kairos program only a
fraction of them remain involved today particularly those who have been incarcerated for larger periods.

There was a sense of relevance in the study conducted by Swanson (2009) which concluded that the themes of cognition, volition and relationships needed to be in place concurrently for faith and moral development to occur in prisoners. These themes also emerged in this study and the recommendation of that study that mentors were a necessity in providing accountability to prisoners could be found in the impact the Prayer and Share had on the participants and the way it helps them to become accountable as they mentor each other on an ongoing basis.

Especially meaningful was the study by Maruna et al. (2006) which studied 75 prisoners who claimed they were saved while in prison. The study argued that conversion can be used as strategies both for shame management and coping skills. The fact that the prisoner gets both a new identity and a sense of purpose can be seen in the interviewees of this study as they try to change the script of their life through the intervention of Kairos Prison Ministry.

The study by Kerley et al. (2005) proved helpful in demonstrating how inmates can serve their time differently as is the goal with the graduates of the Kairos Prison Ministry. The study investigated the way religiosity and religious programs impacted prisoner behavior in a negative way. The findings from this study was a useful backdrop to this research on the impact of Kairos as it revealed that religion does lessen negative behavior in a prison setting. Similar findings were manifested in this evaluation of Kairos Prison Ministry on CSP Sacramento.
Interpreting This Research on the Kairos Program at CSP Sacramento

Findings based on the data set indicate the Kairos program has positive impacts on the program volunteers, inmates, correctional officers, prison yard, and the prison system as a whole. Transformation and change has been taking place within program graduates as a result of the rehabilitative work. Change starts with the individual inmate who participates in the weekend retreat program and then works its way to the yard, the staff, and the environment and even to the volunteers of the program. Research results and interpretations arise from data gathered through first-hand witnessing of the transformations taking place as a result of Kairos.

There has been a lot amount of change in the prison environment as well as on the inmates and their influence on the prison yard and on the volunteers. Resultant transformations are evidenced in improving race relations and the general transformation of the graduates, other prisoners, volunteers, and the custody personnel. The inmates who participate in the program feel a strong sense of love emanating from the volunteers; they in turn pass on that love and peace to their fellow inmates. There has also been a gradual shift in the ownership of the program, particularly the biweekly Prayer and Share sessions, from the volunteers to the inmates. Such transfer, therefore, serves as a source of empowerment to the individuals involved.

The four overarching themes, previously explained, emerging from the research must be understood in the demographic profile of men incarcerated at CPS Sacramento. The recurring subtheme of poverty as a leading reason people who end up in prison was noted by the inmates interviewed as well as by the participants of the Kairos Advisory Council Focus Group and the participants of the Prison Officials Focus Group.
Wacquant (2009) corroborated this in the literature claiming, “young black men from the
ghetto were the prime quarry of the aggressive rolling out of the penal state after the Civil
Rights Revolution” (p. 63).

Research data collected and analyzed portray the inmates as those who grow up in
households headed by single females with non-resident fathers, lack role male models,
become rebels, and enter into an ongoing cycle of fatherlessness. This results in poverty
and diminished basic needs of food, safety and security, and inadequate education. A
consequence of the absence of positive parental guidance is children are forced to grow
up before they are fully ready and begin to take on adult problems at an earlier age than
they otherwise should. Like some fruits, they tend to become force ripened (Alexander,
2011; Davis, 2003; Focault, 1977; Petersilia, 2006).

Based on a summary demographic, the findings can be synthesized into three
overarching themes forming the basis for answering the research questions, addressing
the research problem, and recommending action. The Kairos program provides a degree
of structure for the incarcerated men, transforms them as individuals, and transforms
them in relation to others.

**Provides a degree of structure.** In structured ways, through the 36 hours of
team formation, a forgiveness ceremony, and acts of giving, Kairos helps create a
forgiving environment and teach forgiveness to people in a place where forgiveness
might be perceived as being weak. The retreat experience is followed by Prayer and
Share, which, as the heart of the Kairos program, teaches the men accountability as well
as holds them responsible for their actions. However, the program does not provide
added opportunities for the men to fully experience all six components of the program,
since the instructional reunion, the monthly reunion, and the two-day retreat have not been implemented at CSP Sacramento.

Kairos provides structure by giving away cookies to the men in prison. This simple act of kindness achieves positive outcomes. In addition to helping inmates create friendships in the prison and reflect on their behavior to others, it also helps create a forgiving environment in a place where it is difficult for people to let their guards down and show their true feelings to other people for fear of being perceived as being weak.

While rapport between the Kairos volunteers and the men who attend a typical Kairos at CSP Sacramento is excellent, there are basic age and racial differences between the two groups. The Kairos volunteers are all elderly White gentlemen who live in middle class neighborhoods and are nearing the end of their lives, while the men they cater to are young, Black, and come from impoverished lower class inner city neighborhoods with the resultant lack of basic opportunities.

**Transforms men as individuals.** A pattern of meaning in the data is that Kairos is a catalyst for transformation of men as individuals. When asked about the reasons why the men were in CSP Sacramento, voices of the inmates, Kairos officials, and the prison officials indicated that adverse effects on them as persons emanated from the environment in which they grew up, the choices they made, the absence of positive role models in their lives, and an absence of mentorship provided by parents and others.

A leading cause of incarceration was the use of drugs and alcohol. The use is a mirror image of the data from the literature reviewed. Alexander (2010) contended the drug war is the single most important reason that has led to an increase in the United States prison population. Research also shows that offenders often commit crimes to
support drug habits. The pattern shown in the research was that there is a direct
correlation between drug abuse and a life of crime that causes individuals, if caught, to
end up in prison. Having been incarcerated as a result of the pursuit of this habit, some
inmates get caught by the three strikes law and are forced to remain in prison for life.
After having accepted the situation in which they find themselves, they are led to seek a
better way to serve their time. Through their involvement in Kairos Prison Ministry,
hundreds of lives have changed because they are willing to embrace an atmosphere of
Christ.

Despite the fact that people are in prison because of crimes that have been
committed, the subtheme of poverty indicates that being poor, wanting more than society
is able to offer, making poor choices, and being unable to pay for legal defense when
faced with problems with the law all combined to get young people from impoverished
zip codes to being incarcerated. The data also revealed that when young people do not
have positive influences as role models, they are more likely to end up accepting negative
influences that cause them to make poor choices they often regret later on in life. These
were apparent in the inmates at CSP Sacramento until they became involved in Kairos,
became transformed through the experience, and began to seek a better quality of life that
would help them wherever they found themselves.

One by-product of Kairos is the creation of personal bonds of friendships among
participants. Many of the participants claimed one of the greatest things they took away
from Kairos were personal friendships. Kairos also created a common bond among
graduates from different Kairos weekend retreats who got to know each other through the
biweekly Prayer and Share sessions. This was helpful because when the men realized
they were not alone in their faith journey, they became more trusting, thereby enhancing accountability and responsibility for their actions.

Kairos transforms the inmates, custody officers, as well as the volunteers. It transforms the inmates as a result of the Kairos experience, which gives them a greater sense of hope, helping them become more open to participate in other positive programs and affect the environment, even if they are transferred to other prisons. Testimonies of those who have been released also demonstrate their abilities to make better choices and become transformed human beings. It was a strong conclusion of the research that Kairos Prison Ministry improves the quality of life of the inmates wherever they find themselves. Kairos transforms the custody officers by helping some of them individually as well as by giving them an improved workplace in which to operate. Finally, Kairos transforms the volunteers through Team Formation, Prayer and Share, and other elements of the program. The researcher has also personally been transformed by every Kairos he has attended and believes God works on a different aspect of his spiritual development in each Kairos.

**Transforms men in relation to others.** Prison is a much more racial society than non-prison society. For their very survival, inmates are forced to associate with the group that best represents the majority of people of their ethnicity. Kairos helps bring people of different race, religion, and gang affiliation together who would not normally interact. During a Kairos retreat, it is extremely noteworthy that in a place that is a microcosm of the outside society and is extremely segregated, people can see inmates of different races sitting around the same table, sharing meals together and even exchanging
hugs with one another. This is simply not done in such a macho environment where each individual has to prove to his people how tough and manly he is.

One of the results emerging from the data was the Kairos graduates have been given their own table on the C yard. It is the belief of the researcher that the fact Kairos graduates have been given their own table at which to congregate is a sign of the great amount of respect the program has now earned among the inmate population. This may be attributed to the fact that the program reaches out particularly to gang leaders in prison who, once transformed, can help transform their followers and others.

Another point shared in the focus group was that two of the rival groups in the prison had decided to come together at a peace table. The implication of this is major because the members of the two rival gangs mentioned are forced to be separated by the prison staff since they have sworn to kill each other on sight if they find themselves in the same environment. The two points mentioned are a very good reflection of some of the transformation that can now be found in the environment. It is the belief of the researcher that some of this transformation may be in part attributable to the impact of the Kairos Ministry Program.

Quite recently California State Prison Sacramento has been examining the current state of the volunteer programs taking place at C Yard with an aim to reduce its volunteer programs. As a result of the impact it has been having, Kairos was one of the few programs allowed to remain on Thursdays with a change in time from 6:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

All in all, the data that emerged from this research was corroborated by what was shared by John Thompson, Kairos Executive Director, during his interview:
The reason Kairos seeks to introduce inmates to Christ is two-fold. Firstly, it helps with their spiritual salvation and secondly it brings about an encounter that begins to serve as a catalyst for the process of transformation from a criminal to a pro-social attitude. This includes developing a more mature understanding of what it means to be a person, citizen, father, husband, employee. The 3.5-day weekend is just a jumping off point for the work of rehabilitation which begins to take place through the prayer and share accountability groups.

In summation, Kairos Prison Ministry is a well-organized ministry that facilitates positive outcomes. As a result, prison has become less violent as the changing behaviors of those who participate in it actually influence those around them. It does this by providing a degree of structure for the participants, by transforming the participants as individuals, and also by transforming the participants in relation to others. Hence, Kairos triggers openness among inmates and a willingness to learn within a Christ-like atmosphere, thereby reflecting a sense of peace and calm upon the entire environment at California State Prison Sacramento.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommended Actionable Solutions

Introduction

Framing this research was investigation of a problem: The effectiveness of the Kairos Prison Ministry’s faith-based intervention program is not clearly understood in terms of how it impacts the behavior of its program graduates at California State Prison Sacramento in Folsom, California. Using a qualitative case study approach, the researcher sought to investigate this problem by learning about the impact of the program from people directly involved with the Kairos Prison Ministry, namely Kairos graduates from CSP Sacramento, officials of Kairos Advisory Council, and employees of CSP Sacramento. Central to this investigation was finding answers to the three research questions:

1. What are the backgrounds and demographics of the graduates of the Kairos Program at CSP Sacramento?
2. How does the Kairos Program affect the way the men that have participated in the program serve time?
3. What is the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the prison environment at CSP Sacramento?

Based on the results and interpretation discussed in Chapter 4, provided herein are answers to the research questions and conclusions that emerged from the study along with recommendations for actionable solutions. As a qualitative case study, the research collected and compared data from multiple sources of evidence, as this study utilized artifact analysis, field observations and notes, semi-structured interviews, and focus
groups for data collection. The rich field of data enabled triangulation of findings and, consequently, of results.

This chapter opens with a brief introduction to the study followed by the conclusions, which provide answers to each of the three research questions. Recommended actionable solutions proffer possible resolutions to the issues identified in the study. The chapter closes with a summary that highlights the main points raised in the chapter.

Conclusions

Before presenting recommendations relative to the central problem investigated, answers to the research questions are set forth. Responses to each question arise from the findings, results, and interpretations of Chapter 4. Ultimately, these answers originate in the data set assembled from the qualitative research methods described in this document.

Research Question 1: Backgrounds and Demographics of the Graduates of the Kairos Program at CSP Sacramento

The research revealed that the men who are incarcerated at California State Prison Sacramento come from a background including a confluence of factors that together are a perfect remedy for incarceration. Typically, the inmates come from poor urban centers in California’s inner cities including, but not limited to, South Central Los Angeles, Oakland, Compton, South Sacramento, and Richmond. Patterns of causality emerged in explanation of why the men are incarcerated: a life of poverty, lack of parental guidance, parental abuse and neglect, drug and alcohol abuse, and growing up within the system.

Prior to conducting this study, it was the contention of the researcher that primarily people who were Black ended up being incarcerated. This notion was dispelled
by the participants of the study who were comprised of six Whites, two Hispanics, one
Pacific Islander, and one Black. Incarceration in California, therefore, appears to be
color blind.

Based on the data, a life of poverty inevitably leads to a lack of habilitation and
the ability to make better life choices. This often leads to a life tied to crime in an effort
to seek more than one is able to gainfully attain. Growing up in poverty with a single
mother and a non-resident father causes a lack of role modeling and limited, if any,
parental guidance. In a situation in which parents exist, they are either abusive or are
incapable of providing adequate support because they are drug addicts or alcoholics or
are surviving on welfare. Environments like this often lead to involvement in gangs just
for survival purposes. Involvement in gangs leads to either of two things, death or
incarceration. Many children also end up growing up within the system and moving
through the juvenile justice system to the criminal justice system. Invariably this leads to
some involvement in foster homes, the juvenile justice system and finally incarceration at
California State Prison Sacramento.

One of the inmates interviewed strongly complained that he was suffering from
cruel and unusual punishment because his punishment did not match the crimes he had
committed. He said that he was a thief that got caught up in the three strikes law and now
he was serving a life sentence. This story was also heard from several other graduates of
the Kairos Prison Ministry.
Research Question 2: The Effect of the Kairos Program on the way the Men Serve Time

The answers to the research questions were framed in the voices of the inmates interviewed, the correctional officers who worked closely with them, and the volunteers of the Kairos Prison Ministry that run the faith-based program in CSP Sacramento. According to the inmates surveyed, the members of the Kairos Advisory Council, and the employees of CSP Sacramento, Kairos Prison Ministry is an overwhelmingly successful program. Every inmate interviewed found Kairos to be a positive experience. The men used strong adjectives and superlatives to express their wonderment about the program.

The key subthemes that emerged from the data included Kairos being a key element to success that helped with the bonding of groups from different backgrounds. This is evident in the close relationships formed through attendance at the Weekend Retreat and at the bi-weekly Prayer and Share sessions. Kairos served to reduce prejudice in a highly racial environment and created a more forgiving environment. This happened because people from all different gang affiliations and racial groupings grew close after breaking bread with each other in table families and sharing with each other on an ongoing basis through Prayer and Share. Trust is enhanced through the forming of accountability groups and by providing the opportunity for men to display their vulnerability and authenticity with one another. Finally, Kairos provides an opportunity for the inmates’ improvement of quality of life wherever they find themselves. In particular, the testimonies of graduates who have been released indicate they become more successful human beings as a result of their Kairos experience. Those who are
transferred to other prisons continue to provide moral leadership in their new
environment.

**Research Question 3: The impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the Prison Environment at CSP Sacramento**

Kairos is an extremely structured program that helps provide a framework for the graduates to better cope with their environment. Kairos transforms them as individuals and helps them firstly become more Christ-centered and open to exploring other programs for their own self-enhancement. They form lasting bonds with others who are also involved in the same faith-based journey. Such involvement provides a degree of accountability as well as responsibility for their actions. The graduates also become transformed in relation to others and they become better able to live more harmoniously with the people by which they find themselves surrounded.

Kairos Prison Ministry has an indelible impact on the inmates who take part in and graduate from the program. This provides a spillover effect, thereby creating a positive impact on the yard. Kairos Prison Ministry has an impact on the correctional officers that come in contact with the program. Finally, the program has a large impact on the entire prison system as a whole.

Based on the findings of the study, it is clear the impact of Kairos on the prison environment at CSP Sacramento is undeniable. All participants interviewed agreed Kairos has had a positive impact on the environment at California State Prison Sacramento.
Recommendations

Four main themes emerged from the findings of the study as presented in the results and interpretations of Chapter 4:

1. The Participants’ Troubled Backgrounds
2. The Kairos Program’s Positive Impacts on Participant Inmates
3. The Kairos Program’s Visible Impacts on the People and the Prison Environment at CSPS
4. Kairos Provides a Degree of Structure

Consideration of recommendations arising from this research was based upon these four dominant patterns. In order to improve the effectiveness and the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry at California State Prison Sacramento, the following recommendations are proposed for Kairos Prison Ministry and for further research.

Kairos Prison Ministry

1. The existing Kairos program consisting of three elements should be maintained but should be expanded.

2. Every attempt should be made by the Kairos Advisory Council to implement the remaining three components of the Kairos program – the one-day instructional reunion, monthly reunion, and two-day retreat. As part of this expansion, Prayer and Share should operate in a manner similar to the 3.5-day retreat.

3. The Advisory Council of Kairos Prison Ministry in Sacramento needs to make a concerted effort to recruit participants who are younger and more representative of the racial groups found in California State Prison
Sacramento. This will help the program make an even greater impact on its graduates because the age and racial divide will be bridged.

4. More staff from California State Prison Sacramento should be invited to attend the closing ceremonies of Kairos retreats so they can learn first-hand about the program and its impact, thereby, being better able to provide support and advocacy to the program.

5. Every effort should be made by the CDCR to continue supporting positive volunteer programs like Kairos Prison Ministry to help with the rehabilitation efforts of the incarcerated men and to fulfill the mission of the department itself.

For Further Research

1. Follow-up research needs to be done to see if an expansion of the Kairos program into its six components has a positive impact on the men.

2. The role of the faith-based institutions that can provide assistance in the area of rehabilitation should be researched to see what is working and how it can be strengthened, improved, and replicated.

3. Further research needs to be done regarding the impact of non-faith-based programs on the men who take part in them to see if they provide results similar to that of Kairos.

4. An investigation should be made of the perception of the prison officials of the Kairos program.
Summary

This study sought to explore the impact of Kairos Prison Ministry on the inmates who take part in its programs at California State Prison Sacramento. The study proved a program like Kairos Prison Ministry has a positive impact on the population it serves, regardless of whether they are released or remain in prison. Many of the men incarcerated for the crimes committed are using this time of deep deprivation and suffering to improve their faith journey through the assistance of Kairos Prison Ministry and its bi-weekly Prayer and Share program. Their only concern was they felt Kairos Prison Ministry needed to give them more opportunities to continue to grow their faith by offering them access to the remaining components of the program.

Kairos is an effective, well-structured program that has had a meaningful, positive, and lasting impact on its graduates at California State Prison Sacramento. It could have even greater impact if it were strengthened and expanded. Evidence from the graduates, as well as from the volunteers surveyed, indicated they would prefer if the three remaining components not presently being utilized are included in the program, namely the Monthly Reunion, the Instructional Reunion, and the Two-day Retreat.

Conducting this research was a major growing and stretching experience for the researcher. In addition to answering the research question and learning to conduct qualitative research, he also became close to and learned a great deal from a population of which little is known. He has also undergone significant personal and spiritual transformation as a result of his own involvement in Kairos Prison Ministry. This experience and the stories of the men in California State Prison Sacramento will remain with him for a long time to come.
List of References


Appendix A: Volunteer Groups At CSP Sacramento

Below is an overview of the volunteer programs that were offered at CSP Sacramento in 2010.

Alcoholics Anonymous - A 12-step recovery program through which inmates learn to understand the impact of alcohol addiction on their lives and what is needed to lead an alcohol free existence.

Bayside Ministry – a Christian-based study group

Bible Study Dewsnap – A protestant bible study group

Bible Study Morsey – A protestant bible study group

Buddhist Ministry – A program that teaches Buddhist philosophy and techniques

Catholic Men’s Group – A group that helps with the identification of behavior patterns and how to improve in decision making for the future

Chapel Choir – An evangelical music group

Christian Science – A program that teaches Christian science principles and programs.

Church of the Latter Day Saints - A program that teaches Mormon principles and practices

Cultural Impact and Prisoner Empowerment Group (CIPEG) – A literacy program

A Course in Miracles – A program that teaches inmates to let go of hate and develop a love-based ego

C-Veteran’s Group – A group that support veterans of the United States military who are incarcerated in CSP Sacramento

Gangali – A group that teaches inmates accountability

IAM/Message of Peace – A program that teaches inmate participants spiritual healing and behavior modification

Jehovah’s Witness – A worship group that adheres to the principles and practices of the Jehovah Witness

Mandala – A program that helps with the identification of behavior patterns and making of choices

Moving Meditation – A program that teaches Tao philosophy and techniques

Narcotics Anonymous – A 12-step recovery program through which inmates learn to acknowledge narcotics addiction its impact on their lives and the need to live a narcotics free life.

Spiritual Insight – A program that helps inmates with their spiritual development

Spirituality 101 - A program that helps inmates with their spiritual development

Toastmasters – A group that teaches the skills to be an effective public speaker while at the same time fostering a sense of leadership and responsibility

Workshop in Divine Mercy – A program that studies the life of Jesus Christ (CSP Sacramento, 2010)
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

(Brief Description of Project)

Questions:

1. What type of relationship do you have with your children?
2. When were you incarcerated?
3. When did you make your Kairos weekend?
4. What was the experience of the Kairos weekend like for you?
5. What was your discipline record before your Kairos weekend?
6. What has your discipline record been like since your Kairos weekend?
7. How often do you attend prayer and share?
8. What might prevent you from attending prayer and share?
9. What impact has Kairos Prison Ministry had on you?
10. What impact has Kairos Prison Ministry had on the prison environment at CSP Sacramento?
11. What do you like the most about Kairos Prison Ministry?
12. What areas do think Kairos should improve in?
13. What intervention program has helped you the most while in prison?
14. Any other comments?
Appendix C: Consent Forms

Prison Staff

1. **SUBJECT NAME:** __________________________

2. **TITLE OF RESEARCH:** Evaluation of Kairos Prison Ministry at California State Prison Sacramento: A Qualitative Case Study

3. **INVESTIGATOR'S NAME:** W. Edward Bureau, Ph.D. **Co-Investigator:** Phillip Tim Palacio

4. **RESEARCH ENTITY:** This research is being done by Drexel University

5. **CONSENTING FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY:** This is a long and an important document. If you sign it, you will be authorizing Drexel University and its researchers to perform research studies on you. You should take your time and carefully read it. You can also take a copy of this consent form to discuss it with your family member, physician, attorney or anyone else you would like before you sign it. Do not sign it unless you are comfortable in participating in this study.

6. **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:** You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of the Kairos Prison Ministry on the graduates of its program so as to better understand the role of this intervention program as a part of the rehabilitation effort currently in place at California State Prison (CSP) Sacramento and to examine its impact on the way the inmates serve their time. You are selected as a possible participant in this study because you work with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and are familiar with activities of the Kairos ministry sessions at CSP Sacramento.

   This study is being conducted by Tim Palacio, a graduate student doing this research project in partial fulfillment to obtain a Doctorate in Education (EdD).

   There will be approximately 12 participants in this focus group. You may choose not to take part in this study. You may also withdraw from this study at any time, even if you sign the consent form and begin to participate.

7. **PROCEDURES AND DURATION:** You understand the following things will be done as part of this study:
   - If you decide to participate you, along with other participants, will participate in one in-depth focus group interview of approximately 60 to 90 minutes.
   - Before the initial interview, Mr. Palacio and you will discuss this document and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions that you have about the interview process and use of the information you provide during the interview.
   - The interview will discuss your experiences and opinions of the Kairos Prison Ministry program
During the interview Mr. Palacio will be taking notes on your answers to the questions, and the session will be audio recorded. You will be able to discontinue the interview at any time.

8. RISKS AND DISCOMFORT/CONSTRAINTS: Risks for a protocol of this nature are minimal. The study process may involve issues brought up by interview questions that you may find embarrassing or personal in nature. The methodological premise of phenomenological study is that the most important data or information about a phenomenon comes from those who have experienced it, which in this case is the Kairos Prison Ministry Program.

9. UNFORESEEN RISKS: Participation in this study may involve unforeseen risks. If an unforeseen risk should occur, they will be reported to the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance.

10. BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. This study may provide societal benefits by contributing to the understanding of how Kairos impacts those who participate its outreach in CSP Sacramento. A summary of the study findings will be available to you upon request.

11. ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES: This is not a treatment study. The alternative is not to participate in this study.

12. REASONS FOR REMOVAL FROM STUDY: You may be required to stop the study before the end for any of the following reasons:
   a) If all or part of the study is discontinued for any reason by the sponsor, investigator, university authorities, or government agencies; or
   b) Other reasons, including new information available to the investigator or harmful unforeseen reactions experienced by the subject or other subjects in this study.

13. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to be in the study or you may stop at any time during the study without the loss of the care benefits to which you are entitled. However, you will be expected to follow the instructions provided by the research staff in order to ensure your safety and privacy at the level you wish.

14. RESPONSIBILITY OF COST: There is no cost to you for participating in this study.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY: Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way and only the researcher will know your identity. The researcher will store all digital data in password protected electronic files accessible to only the researcher. In any publication or presentation of research results, your identity will be kept confidential without your explicit written permission. Once the study is complete, all transcripts and recordings will be destroyed. As per Drexel university guidelines, a copy of this informed consent form will be kept with the PI for three years following the completion of the study.
16. NEW INFORMATION: If new information becomes known that will affect you or might change your decision to be in this study, you will be informed by the investigator.

17. QUESTIONS: If you have any questions about this study or your participation in this study, contact:

Dr. W. Ed Burre at 215-847-8183, who is Mr. Palacio’s Supervising Professor
Mr. Tim Palacio 916-289-8879

You may also contact the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 215-255-7857.

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will receive a signed and dated copy of this consent form for your records.

18. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: If you wish further information regarding your rights as a research subject or if you have problems with a research-related injury, for medical problems please contact the Institution’s Office of Regulatory Research Compliance by telephoning 215-255-7857.

19. CONSENT

- I have been informed of the reasons for this study.
- I have had the study explained to me.
- I have had all of my questions answered.
- I have carefully read this consent form, have initialed each page, and have received a signed copy.
- I give consent voluntarily.

I freely consent to participate in this research study.

Subject

Date

Investigator or Individual Obtaining this Consent

Date

List of Individuals Authorized to Obtain Consent

Name Title Day Phone # 24 Hr Phone #
Tim Palacio Co-Investigator
Prisoners

DREXEL UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY
PRISONERS

1. SUBJECT NAME: ________________________________

2. TITLE OF RESEARCH: Evaluation of Kairos Prison Ministry at California State Prison Sacramento: A Qualitative Case Study

3. INVESTIGATOR'S NAME: W. Edward Bureau, Ph.D. Co-Investigator: Phillip Tim Palacio

4. RESEARCH ENTITY: This research is being done by Drexel University

5. CONSENTING FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY: This is a long and an important document. If you sign it, you will be authorizing Drexel University and its researchers to perform research studies on you. You should take your time and carefully read it. You can also take a copy of this consent form to discuss it with your family member, physician, attorney or anyone else you would like before you sign it. Do not sign it unless you are comfortable participating in this study.

6. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to learn what impacts the Kairos ministry program has on men participating in it at California State Prison, Sacramento.

This study is being conducted by Tim Palacio, a graduate student doing research project in partial fulfillment to obtain a Doctorate in Education (EdD).

You are free to decide to not participate in this study. Also, if you do agree to participate, you can withdraw your participation in the study at any time.

You will be one of six men interviewed during the study.

7. PROCEDURES AND DURATION: You understand the following things will be done as part of this study:
   - You will have one interview conducted by Tim Palacio. Questions will focus only on your experiences with the Kairos ministry program.
   - A private room in the prison chapel will be used for the interview, which may last up to one hour.

8. RISKS AND DISCOMFORT/CONSTRAINTS: The methodological premise of phenomenological study is that the most important data or information about a phenomenon can only come from those persons who experience it. Your experiences will give insight into the impact of the Kairos ministry program. What you choose to share with the researcher is entirely your choice.
The researcher has set in place means to protect the confidentiality of what you wish to share, although loss of confidentiality is always a risk.

You will be able to discontinue the interview at any time.

9. **UNFORESEEN RISKS:** Participation in this study may involve unforeseen risks. If an unforeseen risk should occur, they will be reported to the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance.

10. **BENEFITS:** There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. The study will create a clear picture of the impact of the Kairos ministry program. A summary of the study findings will be available to you upon request.

11. **ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES:** This is not a treatment study. The alternative is not to participate in this study.

12. **REASONS FOR REMOVAL FROM STUDY:** You may be required to stop the study before the end for any of the following reasons:

   a) If all or part of the study is discontinued for any reason by the sponsor, investigator, university authorities, or government agencies; or

   b) Other reasons, including new information available to the investigator or harmful unforeseen reactions experienced by the subject or other subjects in this study.

13. **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to be in the study or you may stop at any time during the study without the loss of the care benefits to which you are entitled. However, you will be expected to follow the instructions provided by the research staff in order to ensure your safety and privacy at the level you wish.

14. **RESPONSIBILITY OF COST:** There is no cost to you for participating in this study.

15. **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY:** Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way and only the researcher will know your identity. The researcher will store all digital data in password protected electronic files accessible only to the researcher. Any hard-copy materials with identifying information will be stored in a fireproof safe. In any publication or presentation of research results, your identity will be kept confidential without your explicit written permission. Once the study is complete, all transcripts and recordings will be destroyed. The anticipated end of the program is August 2012. As per Drexel university guidelines, a copy of this informed consent form will be kept with the PI for three years following the completion of the study.

16. **NEW INFORMATION:** If new information becomes known that will affect you or might change your decision to be in this study, you will be informed by the investigator.
17. QUESTIONS: If you have any questions about this study or your participation in this study, you should fill out a Form 22 request for information/interview form. That should be submitted to the Catholic Chaplain or Marc Elia, who would then call Tim Palacio. Mr. Palacio would contact you as soon as practicable.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at Drexel University at 215-255-7857.

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will receive a signed and dated copy of this consent form for your records.

18. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: If you wish further information regarding your rights as a research subject or if you have problems with a research-related injury, for medical problems please contact the Institution's Office of Regulatory Research Compliance by telephoning 215-255-7857.

19. CONSENT

- I have been informed of the reasons for this study.
- I have had the study explained to me.
- I have had all of my questions answered.
- I have carefully read this consent form, have initialed each page, and have received a signed copy.
- I give consent voluntarily.

I freely consent to participate in this research study.

Subject ___________________________________________________________________________ Date ___________________________________________________________________________

Investigator or Individual Obtaining this Consent __________________________________________________________________________ Date ___________________________________________________________________________

List of Individuals Authorized to Obtain Consent

Name __________________________________________________________________________ Title __________________________________________________________________________ Day Phone # __________________________________________________________________________ 24 Hr Phone # __________________________________________________________________________

Tim Palacio Co-Investigator
Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

Kairos Ministry

Focus Group Questions:

1. Please state the nature of your involvement in Kairos Prison Ministry?
2. How long have you been involved with Kairos Prison Ministry?
3. Why are you passionate about Kairos Prison Ministry?
4. What results have you seen over the years?
5. What would you say is the greatest impact Kairos has had on the people it serves?
6. What in your view is the leading reason that the prisoners end up in prison?
7. What can Kairos do to increase the impact it has on the population that it serves?
8. What impact has Kairos had on the prison environment at CSP Sacramento in general?
9. Do you have any other comments?
Focus Group Interview with Officials at CSP Sacramento

1. Please state the type of work you do at CSP Sacramento.
2. How long have you worked at CSP Sacramento?
3. Have you had any interaction with inmates that participate in the programs that are offered by Kairos Prison Ministry at CSP Sacramento?
4. If so, what is the nature of that interaction?
5. Have you had any interaction with the volunteers of the Kairos Prison Ministry?
6. If so, in what context have you interacted with the volunteers?
7. What is your perception of the program offered by Kairos at CSP Sacramento?
8. What impact has Kairos had on the inmates at CSP Sacramento?
9. What impact has Kairos had on the prison environment in general at CSP Sacramento?
10. Are you aware of the impact that Kairos has had on other prisons that you may have worked at in California?