



THE ROAD TO SHALOM

A STRATEGY FOR BREAKING BONDAGE IN IOWA



"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

- Saint Augustine



BONDAGE IN IOWA

When we look at our world, we know that we are not at peace. In our souls, we do not have rest. Apart from Christ, we are in absolute poverty; not the socio-economic status, but the state of being. A term that clearly defines what the Bible means by poverty is bondage. Being in bondage is being unable to escape from a circumstance or behavior. All of creation lives in some form of bondage and all of creation is crying to be set free.

In the Church Ambassador Network, a ministry of The FAMiLY Leader Foundation, we work to come alongside the State of Iowa to help people break free from bondage as well as to prevent others from ever falling into it. The Gospel of Jesus Christ comes with the hope filled promise of freedom, rest and peace, and is the power by which the Church of Jesus Christ has witnessed people being rescued from the deadly grips of bondage for many generations.

This booklet gives an overview of critical areas of bondage impacting Iowans, counties in our state that have most felt bondage's effect, ministries that are successfully breaking bondage, and key systemic problems and solutions to address in order to break bondage in the State of Iowa.

"Hopelessness and social isolation are prevalent in the lives of people who come to Health and Human Services seeking support."

Health and Human Services Director Kelly Garcia



STATEWIDE BONDAGE STATISTICS

9.39%

**STATEWIDE SUBSTANCE
ABUSE RATE**

The Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP)
2020 Report

6,586

**CHILDREN IN FOSTER
CARE AS OF 2022**

<https://www.iowadatacenter.org/index.php/data-by-source/state-agencies/number-children-foster-care>

8,434

**IOWA PRISON POPULATION
AS OF JUNE 2023**

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FRB/1294232.pdf>

35.1%

**OF CHILDREN
IN IOWA ARE
BORN OUT
OF WEDLOCK**

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/unmarried/unmarried.htm>

11.4%

**STATE POPULATION
BELOW POVERTY LEVEL**

2020 U.S. Census

29%

**OF IOWA FAMILIES
HAVE ONLY A SINGLE
PARENT IN THE HOME**

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/release/tables?eid=359379&rid=412>

2,277

**BANKRUPTCIES
FILED IN 2021**

American Bankruptcy Institute

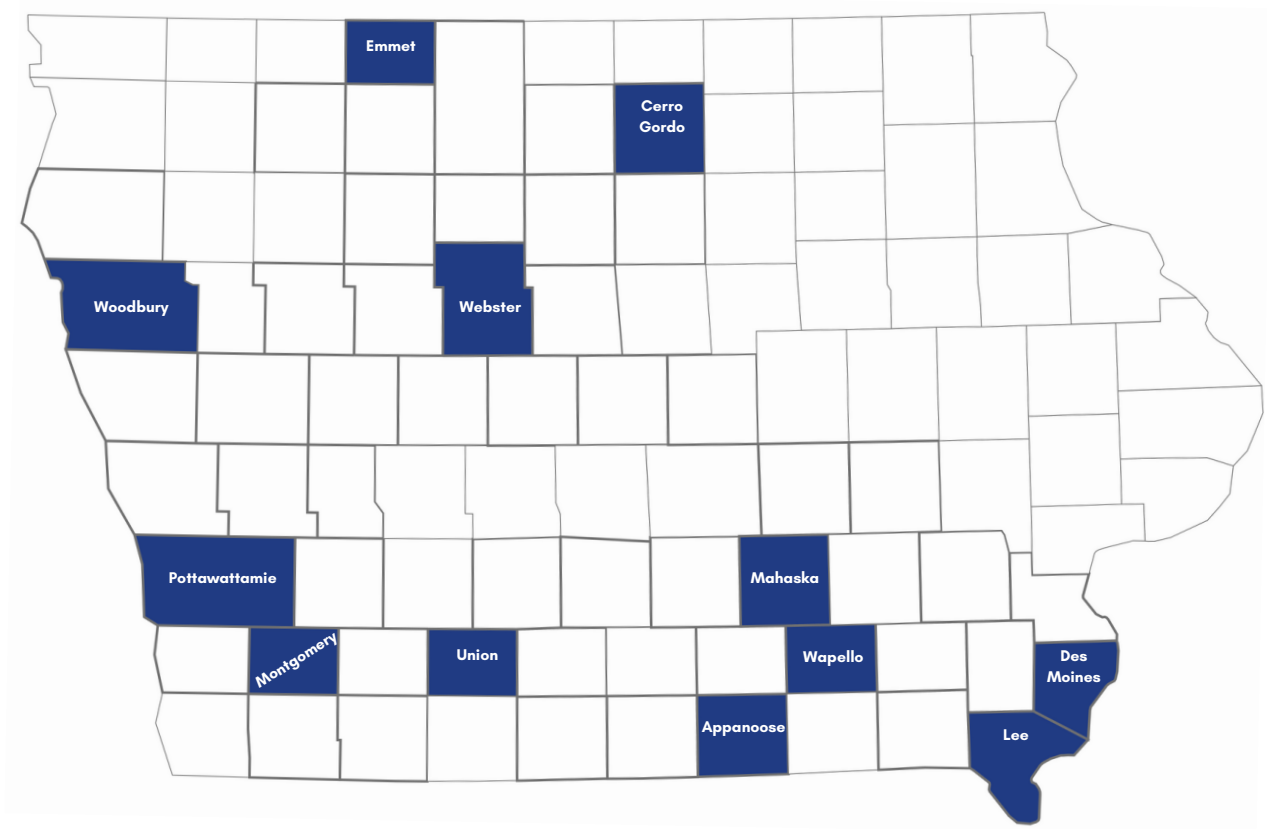
43%

**OF IOWA MARRIAGES
END IN DIVORCE**

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/divorce_states/divorce_rates.htm

COUNTIES MOST IN BONDAGE

It is helpful to get a better snapshot into what is happening in Iowa in regards to bondage. To accomplish this, we can note a per capita analysis along with just raw numbers. The per capita analysis gives an excellent insight into what is happening in Iowa communities. This includes analyzing the breakdown of the family, poverty rates, child abuse, foster-care placements, food insecurity, prison admission rates, bankruptcy rates and substance abuse rates on a per capita basis for all 99 counties. These counties are the highest on a per capita basis.



The two common denominators across all 12 of these counties are:

ADDICTIONS AND THE BREAKDOWN OF THE FAMILY



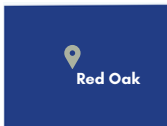
#1 WEBSTER

- **3rd in substance abuse rate.**
- **3rd in single parent rate.**
- **5th in % of children in foster-care.**
- **5th in divorce rate.**
- 6th in adult food insecurity rate.
- **6th in child out of wedlock rate.**
- 8th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- 11th in child food insecurity rate.
- 15th in percentage below poverty.



#2 WAPELLO

- **2nd in substance abuse rate.**
- 3rd in bankruptcy rate.
- **4th in child out of wedlock rate.**
- 5th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- 9th in percentage below poverty.
- 10th in child food insecurity rate.
- **10th in single parent rate.**
- 11th in adult food insecurity rate.
- **13th in % of children in foster-care.**



#3 MONTGOMERY

- **2nd in % of children in foster-care.**
- **2nd in single parent rate.**
- 3rd in child food insecurity rate.
- 8th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- **9th in child abuse rate.**
- **9th in child out of wedlock rate.**
- 11th in adult food insecurity rate.
- **15th in substance abuse rate.**



#4 APPANOOSE

- **1st in foster-care rate.**
- 2nd in child food insecurity rate.
- 4th in poverty rate.
- 6th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- **7th in substance abuse rate.**
- 9th in adult food insecurity rate.
- **10th in divorce rate.**



#5 WOODBURY

- 2nd in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- **2nd in child out of wedlock rate.**
- **5th in single parents rate.**
- **5th in substance abuse rate.**
- **6th in foster-care rate.**
- 7th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- 9th in bankruptcy rate.



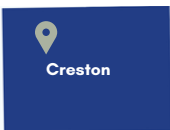
#6 DES MOINES

- 1st in bankruptcy rate.
- **1st in single parent rate.**
- **1st in child out of wedlock rate.**
- **4th in divorce rate.**
- 5th in adult food insecurity rate.
- 6th in child food insecurity rate.
- 7th in percentage below poverty rate.
- **12th in substance abuse rate.**



#7 LEE

- 1st in child food insecurity rate.
- **3rd in child abuse rate.**
- **3rd in divorce rate.**
- **3rd in child out of wedlock rate.**
- 4th in adult food insecurity rate.
- **11th in single parent rate.**
- 13th in poverty rate.



#8 UNION

- **4th in substance abuse rate.**
- **6th in child abuse rate.**
- **9th in divorce rate.**
- 10th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- 12th in poverty rate.
- **14th in foster-care rate.**



#9 POTTAWATTAMIE

- 2nd in bankruptcy rate.
- 7th in foster-care rate.
- 7th in child out of wedlock rate.
- 8th in divorce rate.
- 9th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- 14th in single parent rate.
- 16th in substance abuse rate.



#10 EMMET

- 3rd in foster-care rate.
- 4th in child abuse rate.
- 4th in bankruptcy rate.
- 8th in child out of wedlock rate.
- 13th in single parent rate.



#11 CERRO GORDO

- 1st in substance abuse rate.
- 9th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- 14th in child abuse rate.
- 14th in child out of wedlock rate.
- 15th in single parent rate.



#12 MAHASKA

- 6th in substance abuse rate.
- 7th in prison admission rate per 100,000.
- 7th highest divorce rate.
- 16th highest poverty rate.



BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF SHALOM

In the Church Ambassador Network, a ministry of The FAMiLY LEADER Foundation, we hold to the biblical teaching that God created the world and it was good. The world was created in perfect Shalom. Shalom is a word and concept used in Old Testament scriptures that does not translate well into English. In English it means **good**, **rest** and **peace**.

good

/gŭod/ adjective

Complete. Whole. God looked at Creation and said that it was good. It was complete. It did not need anything added or subtracted from it.



"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day. So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done." Genesis 1:31 -2:2

rest

/rest/ noun

A place of quiet. Free from motion or disturbance. When something is complete, you can have a true rest in both your body and your soul. Not only can you rest from physical work, but there is also nothing weighing down your soul.



"Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

peace

/pēs/ noun

When creation is in both internal and external harmony. Where there is true rest there is peace. No hostility in the soul, the body, others, or creation. Only peace.

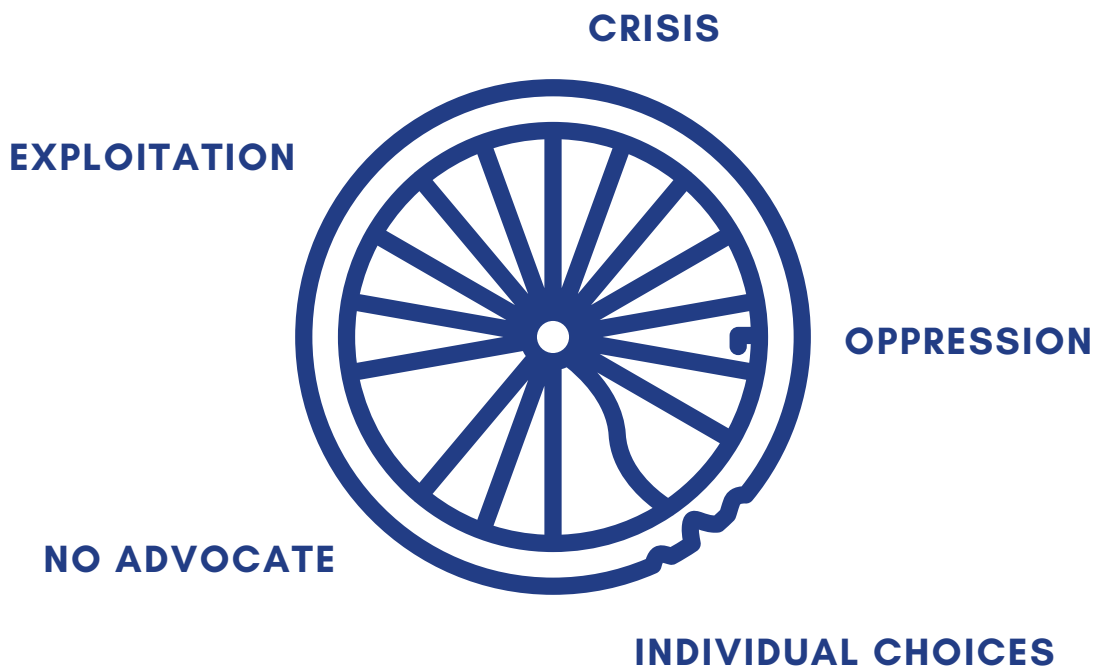


"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7

WHAT HAPPENED TO SHALOM?

Shalom was lost when sin entered the world. Sin occurred and continues to occur when a person is convinced that what God calls good or complete is not good or complete. It needs something added or subtracted from it to become complete. Satan successfully convinced Adam and Eve that creation was not complete and they chose to disobey and sin against God. Mankind has been choosing this ever since. Sin has made creation incomplete, resulting in a loss of rest and peace, bringing hostility between mankind and creation and most importantly between mankind and God.

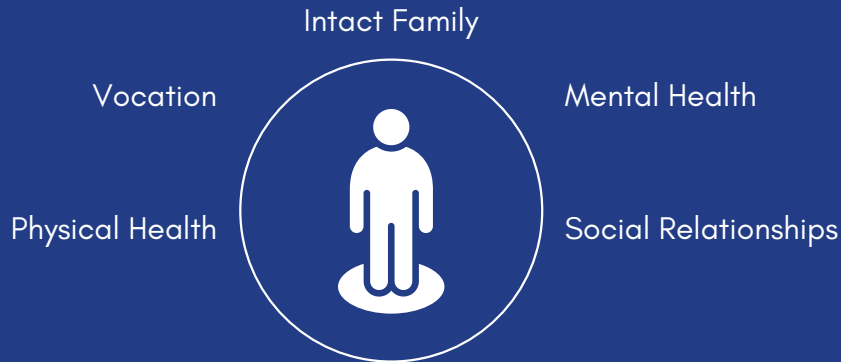
WHAT BREAKS SHALOM?



"Seeking Shalom Training" provided by Philip Herman at Highland Park Community Development Association (Des Moines, IA) and The Lupton Center (Atlanta, GA)

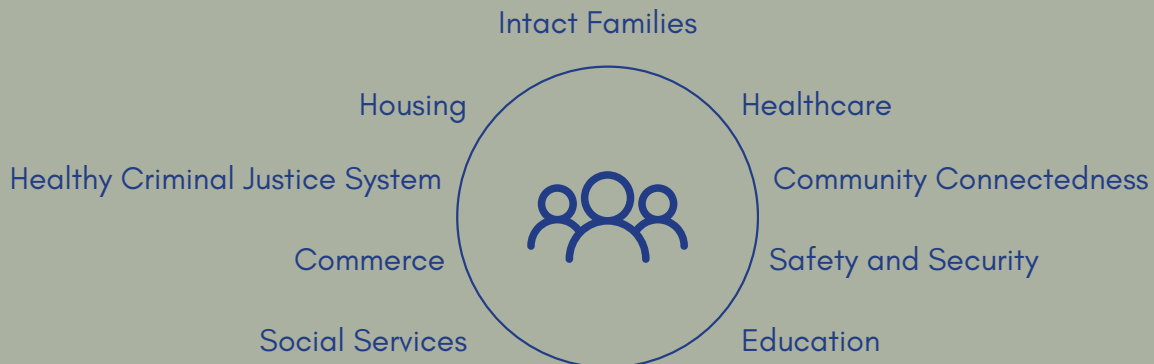


WHAT DOES AN INDIVIDUAL NEED TO FLOURISH?



Fellowship with God and His Church through Jesus Christ

WHAT DOES A COMMUNITY NEED TO FLOURISH?



Gospel Centered Churches and Church led ministries

RESTORING SHALOM FOR THOSE IN BONDAGE

For those who are in bondage, experiencing the lack of shalom through hopelessness and social isolation, the greatest need is

REAL HOPE AND GENUINE COMMUNITY

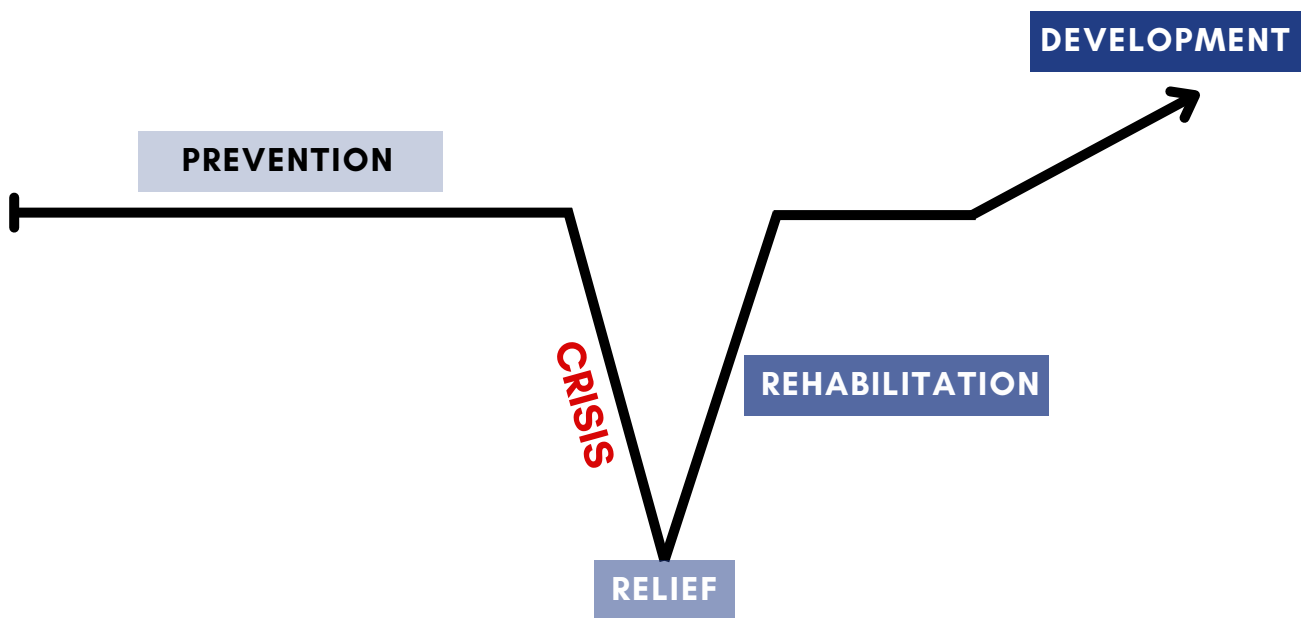
Jesus Christ is the only one that can bring true transformation and restoration out of brokenness by giving an eternal hope and inviting us into the family of God and community of the Church. Through Him, the needs of the soul are met that cannot be met by services or resources. This is why the Church is crucial to the work of breaking bondage in individual lives and across communities.

"Seeking Shalom Training" provided by Philip Herman at Highland Park Community Development Association (Des Moines, IA) and The Lupton Center (Atlanta, GA)



COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

All bondage eventually ends in a spiritual death. Bondage takes way more from you than you ever imagined. Bondage ravages your relationships beginning with yourself and overflowing into others. In order to break bondage it is essential that our strategies, Church and government, take a comprehensive approach as illustrated below.



PREVENTION
Stopping potential crisis or trauma

RELIEF
Urgent and temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering

REHABILITATION
Restore people and their communities to positive elements of their pre-crisis conditions

DEVELOPMENT
Ongoing change that moves people closer to being in right relationship with God and others.

When Helping Hurts by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert (2012)



MINISTRIES BRINGING SHALOM IN IOWA CHILD WELFARE

THESE MINISTRIES BREAK THE CYCLE OF BONDAGE BY PROVIDING HOPE AND COMMUNITY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST



Together for Good

Offering practical help and relational support to parents and their children.

TOGETHER FOR GOOD

comes alongside vulnerable children and isolated parents as a fulfillment of God’s calling to defend, visit and care for widows and orphans. Social isolation is one of the greatest risk factors for child abuse and neglect and they provide a solution by hosting children during times of parental crisis and surround families with ongoing relational support through their network of care.



WILDWOOD HILLS RANCH OF IOWA

exists to transform lives and strengthen communities by providing healing, hope and God’s unconditional love to children and youth at risk.

WILDWOOD HILLS RANCH

works to make sure all Midwestern children have the opportunity to grow into healthy adults— educated, free from poverty, safe from abuse and violence, and engaged as members of communities and nurturing families. **The Wildwood Collective**, a new extension of Wildwood Hills Ranch, provides proven step-by-step methods, training, resources and coaching for local churches to launch sustainable ministries serving foster families, adoptive families and biological families in crisis.



THE REEL HOPE PROJECT

Creating profile videos of children waiting for adoption

THE REEL HOPE PROJECT

vision is to mobilize the faith community to step into adoption, foster care, and prevention efforts. We serve as a bridge between Church and State, partnering broadly on both sides to see an end to youth waiting for families. We believe in approaching this need from both ends of the spectrum – preventing kids from entering the system and finding families for kids awaiting adoption.



MINISTRIES WORKING TO BRING SHALOM IN IOWA

THESE MINISTRIES BREAK THE CYCLE OF BONDAGE, THROUGH THE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST BY PROVIDING HOPE, COMMUNITY AND REDEMPITIVE COMPASSION

compassion:

/kəm'pɑSH(ə)n/ noun

(za'akah) to cry out deeply for justice and relief from bondage. As Christians, when we see suffering and bondage, our hearts' response should be compassion.

"When we seek to offer redemptive compassion, we seek to act justly and relieve oppression, releasing someone from their suffering in ways that are lasting and life-changing. Compassion that is redemptive brings opportunities, through community, to regain or achieve the fullness of life God promises all."





HOW CAN THE CHURCH ENGAGE?



Pray

Join us in praying for your governing authorities, your communities, and for the church to engage.



Social Worker Appreciation

Consider ways that your church can engage locally by starting a social worker appreciation initiative.



Partner

Contemplate ministries that your church could multiply, host, or engage in for your community.



Shepherd to Shepherd

Initiate a meeting with a local governing authority to serve them and sow God's word and prayer.

*"This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the exiles I deported from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their produce. Find wives for yourselves, and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons and give your daughters to men in marriage so that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there; do not decrease. **Pursue the well-being of the city I have deported you to. Pray to the LORD on its behalf, for when it thrives, you will thrive.**'"*

-Jeremiah 29:4-7



ADDRESSING COMPREHENSIVE ISSUES FACING IOWA

The Church Ambassador Network has had over 8,000 connections with Iowa's state government leaders from both political parties and in all three branches. As a result, we have seen a pattern of common issues facing our state, and encourage our governing authorities to press in on the following.

ADDRESSING ADDICTIONS

Protect the vulnerable in our communities from addictive and/or predatory behaviors.

PRIORITIZING THE FAMILY

Uplifting and incentivising the family unit for the benefit of children and communities.

WRAP-AROUND CARE

Pursuing policies and ministries that look beyond relief and into wholistic care.

