

FINDING SHALOM

A VISION 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



**CHURCH AMBASSADOR
NETWORK**

INITIATIVE OF THE FAMILY LEADER FOUNDATION



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.

STATEWIDE BONDAGE STATISTICS

9.39%

**STATEWIDE
SUBSTANCE
ABUSE RATE**

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



36%

**OF IOWA MARRIAGES
END IN DIVORCE**

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

4,048

**CHILDREN IN FOSTER
CARE AS OF 2022**

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

29%

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

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/release/tableseid=359379&rid=412>



24.7%

**OF IOWA ADULTS
REPORT BINGE DRINKING**

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

35.2%

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

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

8,200
**IOWA PRISON
POPULATION AS OF
FEBRUARY 2024**

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

11%

**STATE POPULATION
BELOW POVERTY
LEVEL AS OF 2022**

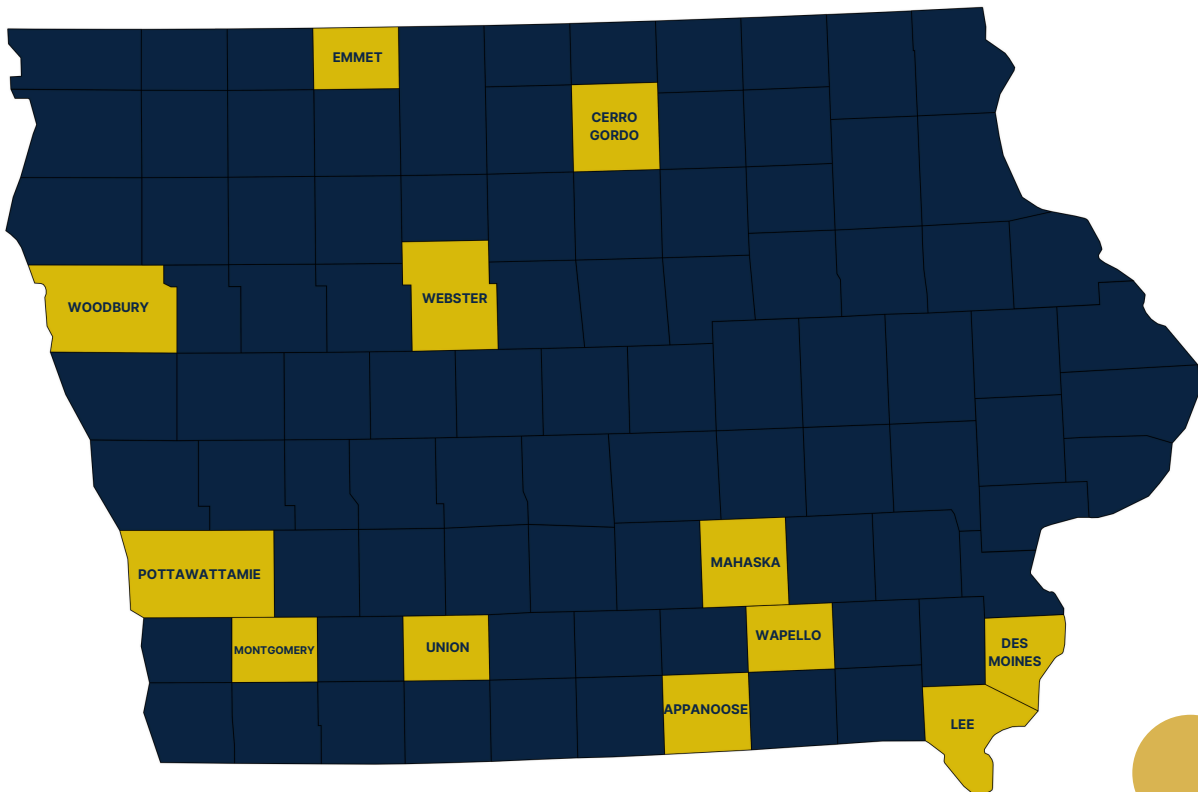
[iowadatecenter.org](https://www.iowadatecenter.org)

1,686
BANKRUPTCIES FILED IN 2023

American Bankruptcy Institute

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 jail 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 jail 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 jail 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 jail 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

Means 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...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

Is 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.

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28

PEACE

Results 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?

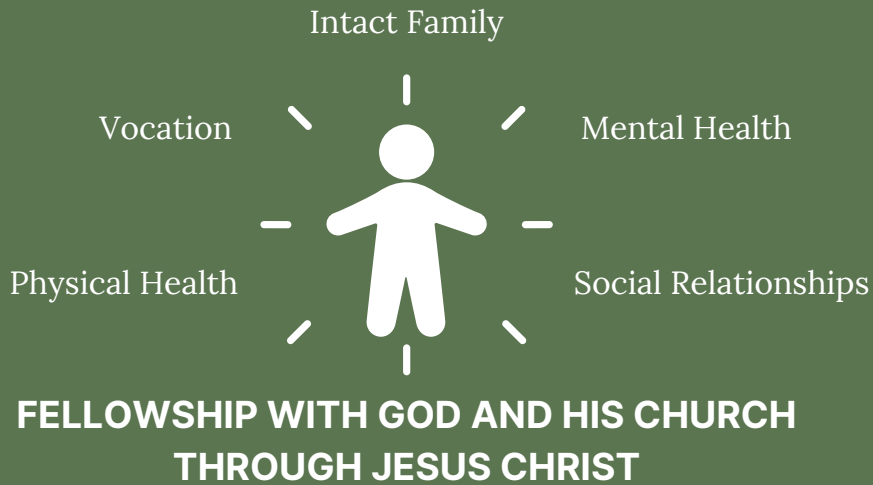
Shalom was lost when sin entered the world. Sin occurred and continues to occur when a person is convinced that what God calls good or complete is not good or complete. It needs something added or subtracted from it to become complete. Satan successfully convinced Adam and Eve that creation was not complete 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?



WHAT DOES A COMMUNITY NEED TO FLOURISH?



GOSPEL CENTERED CHURCHES AND CHURCH LED MINISTRIES

"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

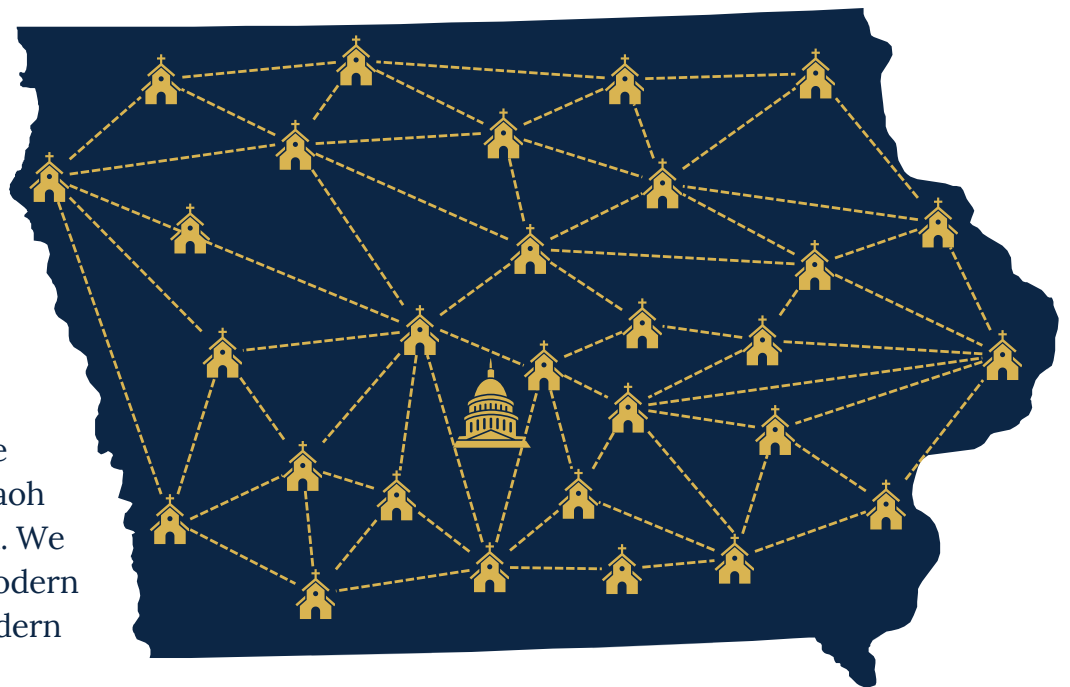
"Seeking Shalom Training" provided by Philip Herman at Highland Park Community Development Association (Des Moines, IA) and The Lupton Center (Atlanta, GA)

WHY CHURCH-STATE PARTNERSHIP?

Iowa's communities, especially those in the 12 counties most in bondage, need hope and vision. The government on its own is not able to cast a life giving vision, foster hope or create community. The government has always been dependent on community partnership to help create this. There is no partner better suited than the Church of Jesus Christ, who holds the Hope of the Gospel as well as wholistic community through the body of Christ.

In the Church Ambassador Network, we are building a network of Kingdom Impact churches from various types of evangelical churches across the state. A kingdom impact church shares the Gospel, holds to the teachings of Christ written in Scriptures, raises up disciples and pours into their community.

It is our desire to engage this network of churches to carry out a vision of church-state partnership modeled long ago in Scriptures through Joseph and Pharaoh. God gave vision to Joseph to meet the needs of the people of Egypt and He gave authority to Pharaoh to carry out that vision. We are bringing today's modern day Josephs to our modern day Pharaoh.



“Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one as discerning and wise as you are. You will be over my house, and all my people will obey your commands. Only I, as king, will be greater than you.”

Genesis 41:39-40

THE CHURCH AT WORK

ENGAGING IN ORPHAN CARE

ROLE

MINISTRY

Adoption Support> The Reel Hope Project

Foster Family Support> Wildwood Collective

Transitional Care> Isaiah 117

Private Adoption> Lutheran Family Services

Crisis Pregnancy> Agape Pregnancy Resources

Foster Care Prevention> Together For Good

Closed Loop Referrals> Thrive Iowa

Community Development> Love INC

Churches across the state are also partnering with schools like Dordt University to raise up Biblically equipped, Christian **social workers** to meet the needs of the state and position the church to serve. As well as connecting with social workers and government leaders to build relationships with them, thank them for their service and come alongside them in serving the community.

APPLYING THOSE PRINCIPLES

These ministries break the cycle of bondage, through the power of Jesus Christ by providing hope, community and redemptive compassion, and this model can be replicated in other areas of bondage like those listed below.

FAMILY

EDUCATION

ADDICTIONS

MENTAL HEALTH

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

*“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.**”*

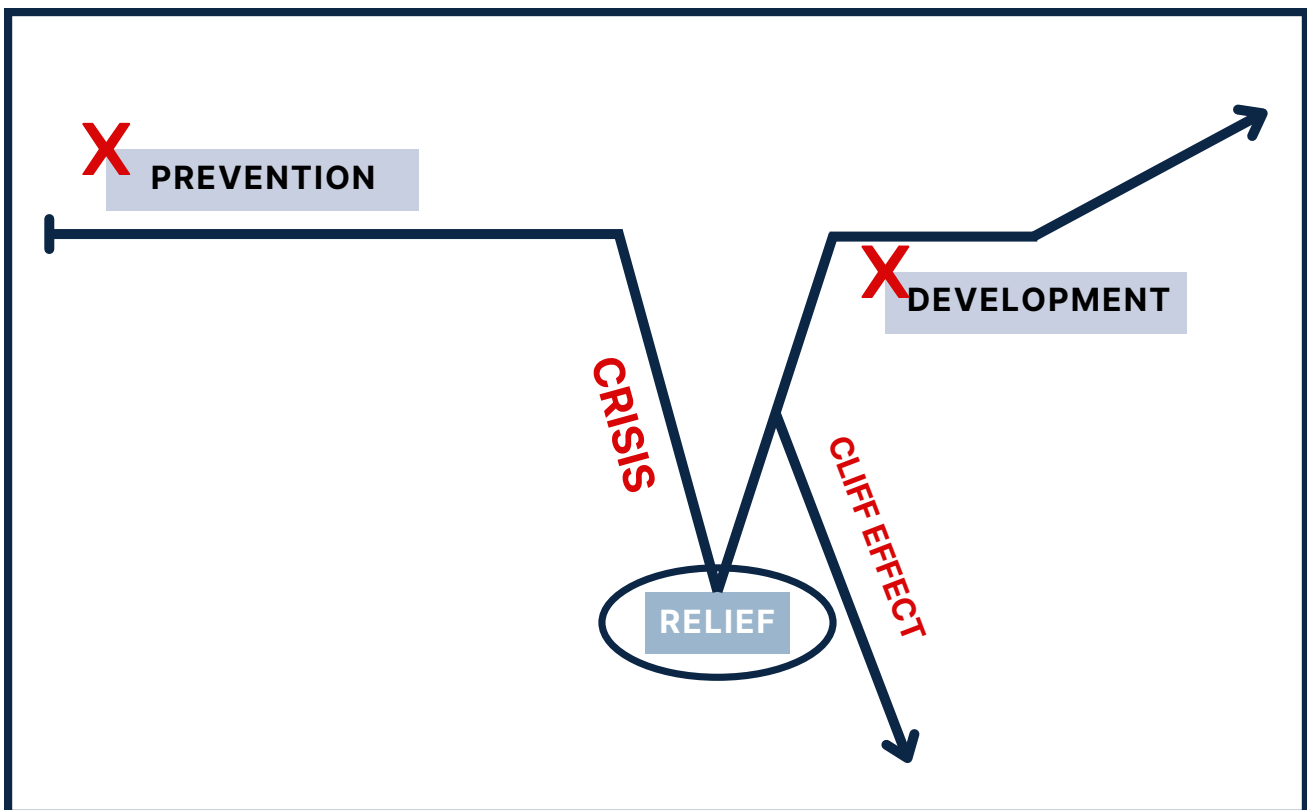
-Jeremiah 29:4-7

APPLYING TO LEGISLATION

Principles to Consider:

- **We need to make a long term investment into people:** Generational poverty cannot be transactional, it requires a long-term investment into people. We need to walk alongside people as they develop more than we need to invest in resources. Time is our best investment.
- **Our social service programs must get beyond relief:** Investing heavily into relief can help bring temporary benefit, but if you do not help people move on it will result in generational bondage. We need to begin investing as much if not more into prevention, rehabilitation and development, working alongside community partners.

THE SHORTCOMINGS OF OUR CURRENT SYSTEM:



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

- **Strengthen Community Partnerships:** It is important as a state that we find ways to utilize community partners throughout the path from bondage to shalom by removing barriers between the faith community and government with Thrive Iowa.
- **Social Workers:** In order for Iowa to have a high quality and effective social service system, we need to attract and retain the best social workers by lowering case loads, setting more competitive pay, and bringing systems up to modern standards. These changes will see people set free and save Iowa money long term.
- **Elimate the Cliff Effect:** We need to look at new ways of ending people’s time on social services. We need to look at grace periods that give time for people to adjust after they no longer qualify and for ways to scale back social services.
- **Accessible Drug Courts:** Drug courts have proven to be incredibly successful in seeing people set free from addictions and kept out of our criminal justice system. This incredible resource needs to be accessible for all Iowans.
- **Drivers Licenses:** We need to create greater access to repaying fines by making repayment easier across multiple counties and statewide access to a repayment program. This will ensure transportation for Iowans acquiring or maintaining jobs.

WALKING ALONGSIDE PEOPLE:

