

saints



prison ministry

Missionary Athlete Orientation Manual

National Headquarters

The Saints Prison Ministry

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Southeast Regional Office

The Saints Prison Ministry

P.O. Box 1636 • Woodstock, GA 30188 • P: 770-286-2812

Dear Prospective Saints Player:

Welcome to the exciting world of prison ministry! Having been involved with the Saints since 1998, I can honestly say that you are about to embark on one of the most rewarding spiritual journeys of your life. There is no substitute for seeing men and women come to Christ, traveling and fellowshiping with other Christian athletes, and playing against some very strong competition.

Please read the enclosed manual thoroughly as it will help prepare you for your “rookie” season of ministry. Feel free to contact our office with any questions you may have. Above all, remember that you are not just a player – you are a *Missionary Athlete*.

I look forward to having you represent the Lord Jesus Christ with us, and trust that it will be a positive and unforgettable experience for you. We are glad to have you as part of our Saints Family!



Serving Him gladly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Frank'.

Frank Zeidler, Jr.
Executive Director



The Saints Prison Ministry

Mission Statement

To present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to prisoners through athletics, and to mentor them towards spiritual maturity and a successful transition into family/community

Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a national and international ministry dedicated to making a lasting change in the lives of individuals, their families, and communities through the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Core Values

- To honor God both individually and corporately
- To minister with passion and Biblical conviction
- To prudently and effectively carry out our mission
- To serve with love, compassion, humility, and integrity
- To pray and evangelize with urgency
- To cultivate Spirit-led leadership
- To honor our volunteers, prayer partners and financial supporters as valued stakeholders in our ministry
- To trust God to fulfill our ministry's potential
- To convey God's hope and celebrate what He is doing in the lives of individuals
- To maintain a God-focused perspective
- To come alongside the local church body
- To be responsible stewards of God's resources
- To faithfully meet Departments of Corrections and other external commitments

The Need for Prison Ministry

There are 2.4 million prisoners in the United States today. America's prison population is increasing much faster than the general population. The annual cost to house an inmate is approximately \$28,000.

Tragically, our criminal justice system and correctional institutions in particular are failing to rehabilitate prisoners. An estimated 95% of all inmates will someday be released, but nearly two-thirds of them will be re-arrested within three years. America's taxpayers are crying out for a better solution and only America's Christians can provide the answer.

As believers, we know that the key to rehabilitation is spiritual regeneration. Consequently, we must ask ourselves what is the most practical and cost-effective way of reaching America's prison population for Jesus Christ? Studies show that only 20% of all prisoners will attend a conventional religious program such as a chapel service or Bible study. However, inmates will gladly attend a sporting event at which the Gospel is presented. By utilizing sports as a vehicle to share the Gospel, The Saints Prison Ministry is able to reach thousands of men that may not otherwise hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Recent research has also proven the effectiveness of religious training in inmate rehabilitation. Both secular and Christian studies show a dramatically lower recidivism rate for prisoners who were disciplined while incarcerated and mentored after their release.

Finally, as a believer, Matthew 25 compels us to reach out to those we see in need. Beyond specifically stating that we are to visit those in prison (repeated again in Hebrews 13:3), the thoughts expressed in this chapter extend to seeing a need and meeting it, so our work carries over to not only evangelism but also reaching out to inmates' families as well when possible.

The History of the Ministry

The idea for The Saints Prison Ministry came five years before we played our first game. Dale Glading, the ministry's founder, trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior in March, 1977. It wasn't until 1982, however, that Glading fully surrendered every area of his life to Christ's lordship. Almost immediately, God burdened Dale with a desire to combine his then two greatest loves, Jesus Christ and sports, for the purpose of reaching the lost.

After thinking and praying about the idea for several years, Glading finally decided to act in 1987. Forming an all-Christian softball team, he was led to contact several area prison chaplains and recreation directors to schedule some games. The first game played by the team, originally named The South Jersey Saints, was on June 6, 1987. That day eight prisoners accepted Christ as Savior at the Bayside State Prison in Leesburg, New Jersey.

The Saints squad played just five games that first season, but more than doubled its schedule the following year. For three years, a Saints volleyball team also toured area correctional institutions. However, our basketball team, which was formed in 1989, soon supplanted the men's volleyball squad in popularity and effectiveness.

In 2007, The Saints revisited the volleyball court by introducing a women's volleyball team in response to the many requests for a ministry to female inmates. Coupled with the men's teams, and the ability of both to visit those incarcerated in juvenile facilities, this new team completed the ministry's vision to minister to men and women of all ages.

Today, the Saints Prison Ministry is represented by 12 standing teams around the country and a Southeast Regional Office in Georgia to work with our NJ Headquarters.

Over the past 30 years, our basketball, soccer, softball, and volleyball teams have played over 4,100 games in more than 450 different prisons in 33 states and two countries. During that time we have seen over 31,500 inmates make professions of faith in Jesus Christ and distributed over 349,000 Gospels of John. The Saints Prison Ministry currently corresponds with more than 29,500 prisoners across the country and around the world, an estimated 650 of whom are enrolled in our Bible Correspondence School.

Doctrinal Statement

We believe. . .

1. In the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible, and that it is inerrant in its original autographs. It is the only and sufficient authority for all matters of faith and practice.
2. In one God eternally existing in three equal Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. In Jesus Christ, true God and true man, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, His virgin birth, His sacrificial death, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into Heaven, His present work of intercession with the Father on behalf of believers, His imminent return to receive His church, to establish His kingdom and to eventually to judge the world.
4. In the creation of man in the image and likeness of God; that man fell from his original state as a result of his sin; that by inheritance all men are sinners, totally depraved, at enmity with God and hopeless without Christ.
5. In salvation solely through the grace of Jesus Christ who is the only Way, Truth, and Life; that men are saved through His sacrificial, substitutionary death and resurrection; and that salvation is by faith and cannot be earned by works.
6. In the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit who convicts man of his sin and the need to be born again. Works of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation include regeneration, baptism into the body of Christ, sealing, indwelling, and enabling for service through spiritual gifts. Ongoing works of the Spirit in the life of the believer include illumination of the Scriptures and filling.
7. In the invisible Church, the universal body of all those who have exercised saving faith in Jesus Christ; and that believers should not forsake the assembling of themselves together in a local body which teaches clearly the Word of God.
8. In two ordinances of the Church: water baptism of believers and the Lord's Supper.
9. In the personification of evil in Satan and his demons.
10. In the everlasting salvation of the saved and in the everlasting, conscious punishment of the lost.

Rules of Conduct

All missionary athletes are expected to abide by the following rules of conduct:

1. Each player is responsible for contacting team leadership at least 48 hours prior to a scheduled game if he will be unable to attend. Verbally notifying the manager/coach at a preceding game is not an acceptable substitute for calling.
2. Conduct yourself on and off the field/court in such a way as to bring glory and not reproof to the name of Christ.
3. Each player should carefully examine his/her own motives for playing. It is our purpose to glorify God and not ourselves.
4. Players will not be discouraged from playing on other teams; however, it should be remembered that playing for a team and wearing its uniform is an endorsement of and advertisement for its sponsor. In the case of conflicting schedules, The Saints Prison Ministry games should be given priority.
5. Take measures to be properly prepared, both physically and spiritually, before each game.
6. Show respect for your teammates, manager/coach, opposing players and officials.
7. If you disagree with your manager/coach during a game, keep quiet and honor his/her decision. If you still feel the same after the game, you may talk to him/her personally and respectfully at that time.
8. Refrain from voicing or showing criticism of our manager/coach, players of either team or the officials during the game. This only generates low morale and presents a bad testimony to others. Nothing good will ever come from this type of conduct.
9. Be tolerant of poor performance. No one is perfect. Everyone will have their turn at a bad day. Leave the counseling and criticism to the coaching staff.
10. Be enthusiastic toward good performance, by a teammate or an opponent.
11. Learn from the good habits of others - your teammate's as well as your opponent's.
12. Always retain your testimony in the face of adversity.

Our focus of these rules is to put the **MINISTRY FIRST** and **ATHLETICS SECOND**. It is also a matter of **CHRISTIAN COURTESY**.

Guidelines for Saints Missionary Athletes

1. Don't give anything to a prisoner other than the approved gospel literature and don't take anything from him other than the response card and pencil that are being returned. Some inmates will ask for your hat, glove, sneaks, spikes, etc. or will ask you to mail a letter for them. These are strictly prohibited by the institutions and will get you and the ministry in trouble.
2. Never ask an inmate what he is in for or when he is due to be released. Occasionally, a prisoner will volunteer that information but do not ask him for it.
3. Remember we are guests of the institution. Whatever they say goes. By our very presence we create additional security problems for them, so be understanding of their restrictions. In most cases they are for our own safety.
4. In the event of an altercation or riot, do whatever the officer in charge tells you to do immediately and without questioning.
5. Do not bring any of the following into the facility: weapons, fireworks, tobacco products, cell phones, pills, liquids, ointments, food, or money. The only items we should take into the facility are the Saints items that have been approved by the institution and personal athletic equipment.
6. Wave caps, doo rags, and bandannas are not allowed.
7. Never give an inmate anything besides the Saints material that has been approved for distribution.
8. Do not take any items from an inmate, including letters or notes to family or friends.
9. Do not make promises to agree to perform special favors. Avoid any involvement with inmates other than that which is in conjunction with the purpose of your visit.
10. Do not give your home address and phone number to the inmates.
11. Do not leave your group or assigned area except under supervision.
12. Show respect for the facility, its officials and the inmates.

Event Day Ministry Procedures

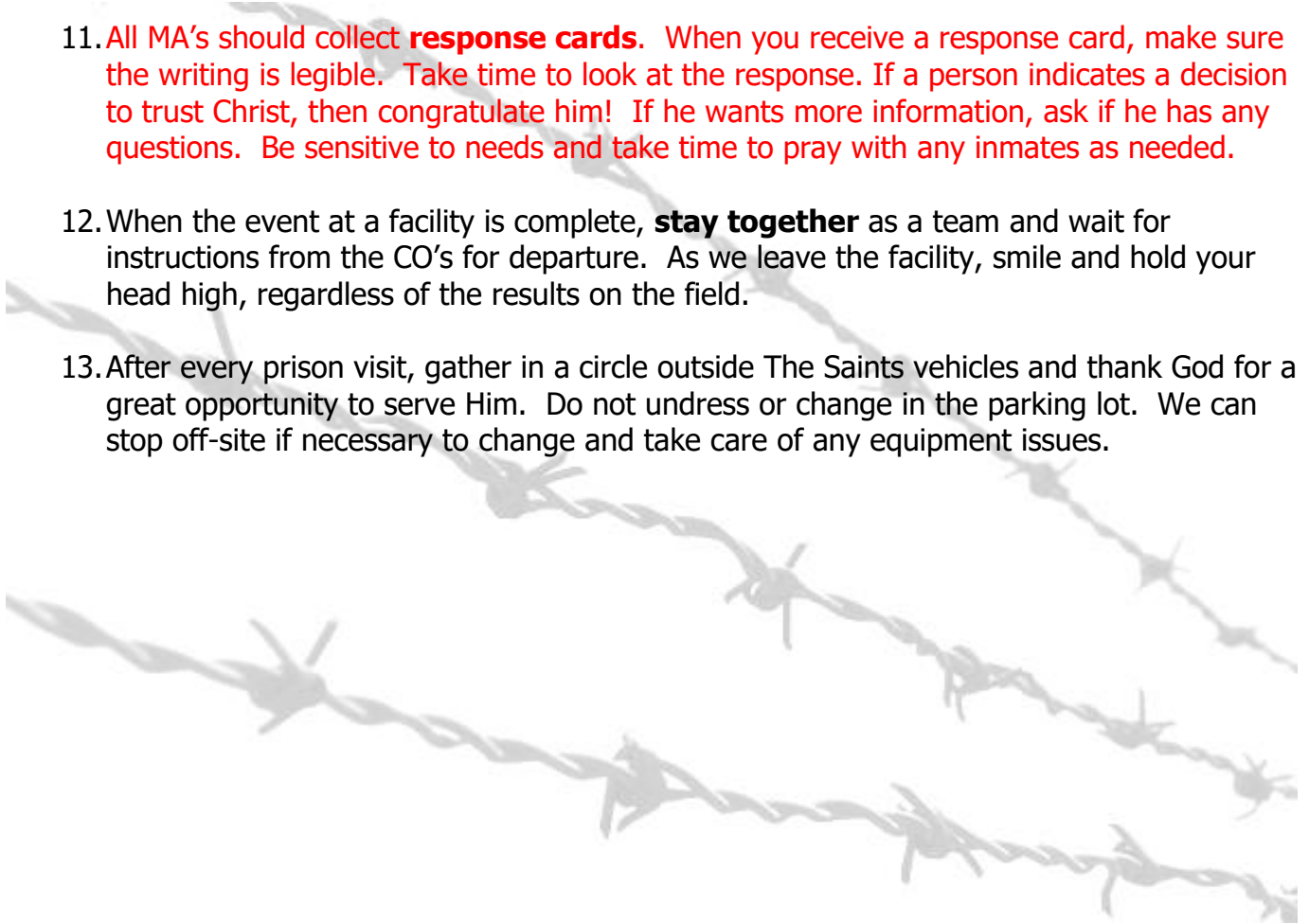
1. **Arrive on time.** We will meet for prayer 30 minutes prior to departure time. We need to depart on time to ensure timely arrival at the facility. If you are delayed or unable to attend on event day, please call and advise your team leadership.
2. **Arrive dressed to play.** All missionary athletes should be suited up to play before arriving at the facility. Upon arrival we will be ready to enter the facility in a professional manner. We NEVER dress or undress in the parking lot or in view of the facility.
3. **When team members are traveling to the facility from different locations, we will meet at a rendezvous point away from the facility so that all vehicles may arrive at the same time. We will take care of any issues relating to equipment or uniforms at that time.**
4. Everyone carries something into the facility and out of the facility. Share the burden and become a team that looks for ways to help each other. If someone has grabbed the bat bag or PA system to carry, offer to carry their glove for them. To expedite processing and protect personal property, we will bring a minimal amount of equipment into the facility. Only team equipment and bags, excepting necessary personal items required to play the specific sport, should be taken into the facility. No personal bags are to be taken inside.

Note: The Saints Prison Ministry will provide all equipment, including bats and balls. If a player wants to bring a personally owned bat for use, he does so at his own risk. The Saints Prison Ministry will not be responsible for lost or damaged personal equipment.

5. **Keep conversations to an absolute minimum while going through security. Respect the fact they have a job to do and simply pay attention to the instructions given. The coach should do all the communicating with corrections officers (COs). The rest of the team should simply wait for direction and respond to it.**
6. When moving around the facility (parking lot to prison, as well as inside), stay off the grass. Respect the fact the inmates maintain the grounds in most cases.
7. At the conclusion of the game, quickly move into **ministry mode**. One person should be assigned to gather and watch the team's equipment. A minimum number of people should set up the PA system. All others should begin to distribute literature immediately and encourage the inmates to draw near for the presentation.

Note: Inmate participation in the program is voluntary, so we cannot "force" anyone to attend and listen. We can be encouraging and reach out, but we must respect their decision to not participate.

8. When sitting with the inmates or gathering to pray with them, **mix in** among the population. There is plenty of time to be together with teammates before and after the event.
9. Three MA's will normally lead the presentation time. One will introduce the ministry and the testimony speaker. One will share a brief testimony and introduce the Gospel speaker. The speaker will bring the gospel presentation and invitation.
10. At the **close** of the presentation, pencils are to be distributed. Do not hand out the pencils before the invitation and instructions.
11. All MA's should collect **response cards**. When you receive a response card, make sure the writing is legible. Take time to look at the response. If a person indicates a decision to trust Christ, then congratulate him! If he wants more information, ask if he has any questions. Be sensitive to needs and take time to pray with any inmates as needed.
12. When the event at a facility is complete, **stay together** as a team and wait for instructions from the CO's for departure. As we leave the facility, smile and hold your head high, regardless of the results on the field.
13. After every prison visit, gather in a circle outside The Saints vehicles and thank God for a great opportunity to serve Him. Do not undress or change in the parking lot. We can stop off-site if necessary to change and take care of any equipment issues.



Keys to Effective Postgame Witnessing

- Be polite and professional when entering and leaving the institution. We have a reputation to uphold!
- Be friendly towards inmates (players and spectators) before and during the game. Develop relationships!
- Distribute tracts working from the outside perimeter of the inmate crowd first. It is important to get material into the inmates hands before they leave.
- If you are not distributing tracts SIT DOWN. Once the inmates see us sit down they will generally quiet down and gather for the presentation. Try to sit in the bleachers facing the field or on the ground in a semi-circle around the speaker. Don't sit in an enclosed circle or else the speaker will have his back towards some people.
- Don't be afraid to "mix it up". Don't intentionally segregate yourself from the inmates when you sit down. Try to sit amongst a group of inmates instead of a group of Saints.
- As soon as the last speaker has prayed, distribute the remaining material and pencils quickly and efficiently.
- When collecting response cards, always look at the card, repeat the man's name, verify his decision and thank him for listening. Clarify any unclear letters or numbers.
- When the recreation director or officer in charge says it is time to go – IT IS TIME TO GO.

Your personal testimony

One of the most important tools for personal evangelism is the personal testimony. Dr. D. James Kennedy writes, "If a Christian is to be an effective witness for his Savior, the first tool he needs is a clear, forceful personal testimony." In The Saints Prison Ministry, the personal testimony is the tool used to prepare men to hear the presentation of the gospel message.

Many Christians make the mistake of believing they do not have a personal testimony worth being told to the unsaved. The truth is that every Christian has a testimony worth telling others about. The issue is not whether I have a testimony, but how I can capsule my testimony and organize it into an effective evangelistic tool.

The Apostle Paul had several opportunities to present his personal testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. One such occasion is found in Acts 26 where Paul comes before King Agrippa. This testimony provides us with the basic chronological model for presenting our personal testimonies. There are three parts:

1. What life was like before I became a Christian (see Acts 26:4-11).
2. What happened when I received Christ (see Acts 26:12-18).
3. How Christ has changed my life (see Acts 26:19-23).

As you develop your personal testimony be sure to remember the following basic principles for the proper use of a testimony:

- Keep your testimony short, simple and truthful.
- Avoid cliches that are meaningless to non-Christians.
- Try to identify with your audience.
- Don't glory in former depravity.
- Accentuate the positives of the Christian life but don't make it sound like life is perfect.
- Avoid denominational name-calling.
- Avoid giving the whole gospel message.
- Close with an expression of confidence in your eternal destiny.

Once you have developed your testimony take time to sharpen, smooth, and perfect it. Eliminate the rough spots and trite sayings. Give it zip and life. Ask God to help you use it. In three minutes you should be able to effectively tell what you were before receiving eternal life, how you received it, and what it has meant in your life.

Personal Testimony Worksheet

There are four "R's" to developing an effective testimony: wRite it down, Read it, Revise it and Rehearse it.

This worksheet is to help you get started. Answer the questions below, then go back and write out your testimony on a sheet of paper. Remember the basic principles for the proper use of a testimony. Ask others to critique your work.

- What was life like before you became a Christian? (Think about your attitude, your hopes, fears, actions, reactions, etc...)
- What happened the day you accepted Christ? (Consider the circumstances involved when you heard and accepted the gospel. What people were involved? What Bible passage did they use?)
- How has your life changed since coming to know Christ as your personal Savior? (New attitudes, hopes, deeds, priorities, etc...)

If you came to the Lord at an early age, celebrate the blessing that it was to be raised in a Christian home and relate how knowing the Lord has made an impact upon your life. You may not have had a dramatic lifestyle change but being "in Christ" has brought about a change in your feelings, motivations, and purposes in life. These things should be emphasized when giving your testimony.

You are a missionary-athlete!

You have seen the term throughout this document, so let's clarify that. You are a missionary first and foremost – taking the Gospel into an unknown "land" using whatever means God places at our disposal. In this case it is athletics that are the tool, but ministry always comes first!

To that end, you are expected to raise support just like any other missionary going on the field. The amount of that support – both financial and otherwise – is spelled out in the MA Agreement for each team individually. The support-raising season is as follow:

Softball October 15 – October 14

Basketball and Soccer..... April 1 – March 31

Volleyball January 1 – December 31

The concept of raising support has less to do with money and more to do with sharing how God is at work in your life. The finances and prayers are necessary, but if that is your focus this will be a significant challenge for you. Your focus should be telling everyone you know about the way you are serving the Lord and how they can be a partner with you in this work. Your goal is to raise a team around you that has an equal but different role in God's work.

Tips for Raising Support

Pray – Ask God to guide you as you seek partners. Expect God to not only answer your prayer but to do abundantly above all you could ever ask or think.

Be Positive – since you are anticipating a great blessing from this season, don't be afraid to be enthusiastic and let your expectations be known.

Make a List – Take inventory of your family members and friends – Christian and non-Christian alike. Don't assume that someone will not be interested; let God worry about who he can or cannot use!. Try to come up with a least 50 people to contact about the work. Also make contact with churches where your family members and friends are involved.

Prepare a Letter – Let them know about your plans and your needs for the season. Include the following with your letter: SPM brochure, support form, and return envelope.

Follow Up – If you don't hear anything after a week or two, send an email or make a call. Often people are interested in helping but it slips their mind. When you call, ask the person if you can count on them to pray for you and the ministry. This will spark interest.

Give Thanks – As you hear from supporters, thank God for providing the funds and thank the person or church for the gift.



Sample Letters

These letters are for reference only and should not be copied verbatim. They are offered to give you a few ideas on how others have approached their family, friends, and associates in building a team of ministry partners.

Matt Schimpf
Saints Prison Ministry

Saints Supporters,

I've had enough of this cold weather. It's time for spring: warm weather, tax returns, and another Saints softball season. The Saints schedule for 2007 is set and I need to raise support for our work in the prisons.

Last season with the Saints was busy. In addition to our regular scheduled games in May, June, and July we took a four-day trip to Ohio in July. This was the first time a Saints team was in Ohio and it was successful. It went so well that we are headed back there this July to visit different prisons that we could not get to last year. I look forward to another season of sharing the Gospel with inmates and spending time with my Christian teammates.

But the Saints players cannot do this alone. Each player is responsible for a group of prayer and financial supporters. Most importantly, we need Christians praying for us every time we are visiting the prisons. Ministering in a place where Satan is hard at work is not to be taken lightly! If this is something you would like to be a part of, take a few minutes and fill out the enclosed card and mail it to the Saints office or to me.

Financially, my goal is to raise \$1200 for the season. This amount will cover travel expenses, literature, and follow-up for the 4000 or so men we will minister to this season. We plan to fly to Ohio again, so my financial goals are higher this year. Please consider including a gift of any size when you return my support card.

Last year I sent e-mails to all of my supporters explaining how each game went and how many men accepted Christ into their hearts. I would like to do the same this year so if you fill out a card please write your e-mail address on it so I can keep you up to date.

Thanks for taking time to read my letter and may God bless you for remembering me this summer.

In Christ,

Matt Schimpf

Dear Friends,

Greetings to All of you! I'm writing to you at this time to tell you about an exciting ministry opportunity that I believe God has led me into. As you may have guessed by the envelope, it involves an organization called "The Saints Prison Ministry.

To provide some background, the Saints use athletics (including softball, basketball, and soccer) as a means to the end of sharing the Gospel in prisons. The Saints athletic teams compete with inmate teams, normally in a doubleheader. Besides the inmate players, these games are typically well attended by other prisoners due to the general interest in athletics. In between the two games, the Gospel is presented and information (literature, tracts, etc....) is distributed to the men. The inmates fill out response cards, which identify those that have professed to make a decision for Christ, are interested in more information, or may want other follow-up. Besides the evangelistic emphasis, one of the things that most impressed me about the ministry is this commitment to follow up. There is a network of volunteers that minister in the following, and other, ways:

- After the initial contact with the athletes, those inmates that are interested can enroll in correspondence courses, which begin with studies in the Gospel of John
- The love of Christ is communicated through such things as the penpal program, and the sending of birthday cards to the men on the Saints mailing list.
- Transitional services are available to assist parolees with reentry into society, including assistance with practical needs such as finding housing and employment, as well as connecting them with a Bible believing church.

In the US today, there are well over 2 million inmates living in our prisons. Sadly, it is clear that the rehabilitation prescribed by the government is largely ineffective. This is evidenced in the fact that when prisoners are released, approximately 75% are arrested again, and return to prison within four years. Clearly, something else is needed. As believers, we know that something else to be regeneration through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

I have been given the opportunity to participate in this ministry as an athlete playing on one of the Saints softball teams for the season, which begins in May and runs through September. The regular season consists of full-day trips every other Saturday to prisons in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, and Maryland and Tuesday night games (at closer institutions) on the weeks when there isn't a Saturday game. My anticipation is that due to work commitments, my initial involvement will primarily be on the Saturday trips (thankfully, there is flexibility in the scheduling). Beyond the regular season, there are a few other longer-term (4 to 8 day trips) "Crusades" to more distant destinations. Participation on those Crusades is a separate commitment from the regular season.

I'm excited to see what God is doing and will continue to do through this ministry and look forward to what He I see will teach me through the experience. As a missionary athlete, one requirement is to raise financial and prayer support. I would ask that you prayerfully consider partnering with me in this ministry in one or both of these ways. If you feel led to do so, please return the enclosed blue pledge card in the envelope provided. Thank you for taking the time to read about this ministry and for your consideration!

In Christ,
Jason Baxter



Dear Family and Friends,

As many of you know, two of the greatest loves of my life are my Christian faith and sports. I have spent countless hours on many softball fields over the years. As I have grown up, raised a family, and become stronger in my Christian walk, my priorities in life have changed. I heard of ways that I might use my athletic skills to reach people for Christ and began looking into those options. Now with the help of my Christian softball friends, we have formed the first Saints Prison Ministry in Georgia

The Saints Prison Ministry is a national organization that uses sports as a way of breaking down the barriers between inmates and the outside world. Only 20% of inmates will attend a formal religious program or service in prison, but through sports the Saints Ministry regularly draws crowds of 50 to 200 inmates. Our team travels to prisons and played two games against the best players that the prison has to offer. In between those games we are given the opportunity to preach the Gospel and hand out the Gospel of John to everyone that has gathered for the games. We will also be given the chance to personally lead men to Christ. After we are gone, the ministry will continue helping these men in their beliefs through correspondence courses, penpal programs, sending of birthday cards, and transitional services once they reenter society.

The United States prison population consists of over 2 million inmates which equals a mission field roughly the size of Jamaica. Sin runs rampant in these institutions and roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of these men will be re-arrested once they are released. Studies have shown that these rates drop to as low as 15% for inmates that find Christ and are supported in their faith. Since their founding in 1987, the Saints have played more than 2300 games in more than 340 different prisons in 25 states and two countries. During that time they have seen over 20,000 prisoners make professions of faith in Jesus Christ. The Saints currently correspond with over 25,000 inmates, and their Bible correspondence school actively disciple an estimated 2500 inmates students.

We are entering our second season, with our first season being a total success. After visiting five prisons within the state of Georgia, and a combined total of over 800 inmates in the yard, we saw 111 inmates make professions of faith in Jesus Christ. From young men in their early 20s to men well into their prime, every color, race, shape, size and religion, not one was discriminated against. After each visit into a new prison, after speaking to those men who have opened up their hearts and souls to us, I can only speak for myself when I say I have become more humbled each and every time.

As a missionary athlete I am asking for your support in a couple of areas. First, and most importantly, I need to establish a team of prayer partners. I'm about to begin serving as a missionary in one of the harshest mission fields in the world. My friends and I will be entering a place where Satan has a firm grasp and will need as many people praying for us as possible. Secondly, I would like for you to consider making a tax-deductible donation to support me in this endeavor. This money will go to pay for travel, literature, study materials, team expenses, Bibles, and other expenses that are necessary for this ministry to be a success.

I have enclosed a response card and envelope if you would be willing to support me in one or both of these areas. Thank you for taking the time to read this and may God richly bless you!

Sincerely,
Thomas Carberry