



## Innovation: Living Gospel Ministries – Video discussion guide

Open with prayer

Introduce video

Share some basic facts about mass incarceration in the US (Drawn from *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander):

- The US has 5% of world's population and 25% of the world's prisoners. More than many repressive regimes
- Some 3 million people were in US prisons in 2010, and 7 million outside prison under control of the justice system. This population is overwhelmingly people of color.
- The prison population increased from 1980s to 2010 mainly because of minor drug offenses and mandatory minimum sentences.
- On release people who have “paid their debt to society” face discrimination finding jobs and housing and are prohibited from voting in many areas.
- This is the context in which our Synod has started Living Gospel ministries to help former prisoners deepen their faith, re-enter the community and find employment.

Show video

Discussion questions

- What did you notice most about this story? Did anything surprise you?
- Philip says that he felt that “no one wants to give you a chance” and “everyone looks down on you” when he came out of prison. Have you observed this prejudice in action in the community, at work or at church?
- What are the pros and cons of your church welcoming people who were formerly incarcerated?
- Innovation activates people for mission. Living Gospel was formed because, first, Pastor Manson brought a passion for helping former offenders and, second, because of the great need. What passions for service exist in your congregation? What needs in your community need addressing?
- In what ways could having Synod funds and resources available through Forward Together in Faith help your congregation put ideas into action?