

The Equipping Network
Coach Profile
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Summary

The traditional view of U.S. prison ministry is rooted in what the outsider does FOR the prisoner (or formerly incarcerated). By contrast, we believe the best role for an outsider is to develop indigenous leaders within existing prison churches. We propose that empowering indigenous leaders is the most biblical, enduring, and impactful approach to prison ministry.¹ In this context an effective Coach disciples, mentors, or supports God-gifted current or former prisoners for Christian ministry, based on their:

- Comprehension of prison culture in the U.S.
- Passion to apply principles of cross-cultural missions and ministry practice
- Vision to develop indigenous leaders

Skills

1. **Shifts Responsibility:** A Coach actively and intentionally works to shift primary responsibility for the work of Christian theology, ministry, and practice from outside ministries to gifted leaders within the prison churches themselves. They look to promote, catalyze, encourage and empower Christians to contextualize the gospel in their local context.²
2. **Provides Resources:** A Coach is a resource connector who recognizes the unique limitations on ministry resources created by the prison environment and creates access to resources that will improve indigenous ministers' competence, effectiveness, and scope of influence. They provide resources outside of the local community that may be helpful in the process of contextualization such as commentaries, theological works, biblical scholars, original Bible languages and anthropological studies.³
3. **Inspires Action:** A Coach encourages gifted prisoners to take up the mantle of ministry leadership, mentors those prisoners through ministry experiences, and respects indigenous leaders' theological conclusions and ministry approaches even when the facilitator disagrees. An effective Coach "enables or empowers local Christians to make good decisions in light of the particular challenges they face. The facilitator is more concerned with equipping Christians to discover their own methods and means than identifying them or pointing them out...They anticipate that local leaders will want to lead, and they find helpful ways to ensure that this happens."⁴

Outcomes

The evidence of effective Coaching can be observed when competent leaders within the prison churches are: (1) ministering according to their own spiritual gifting for building up the Body of Christ; (2) developing themselves as leaders using the tools and resources provided by the Coach; (3) discipling new leaders within the prison churches and (4) desiring to see their ministry impact people beyond prison and into the wider Church and community.

¹ Mark Walker, *Prison Ministry as Cross-Cultural Mission*, <https://vimeo.com/831975408/8fcf4152df>.

² Frank Tucker, *Intercultural Communication for Christian Ministry* (Adelaide, Australia: Frank Tucker, 2013), 340–41.

³ Tucker, *Intercultural Communication for Christian Ministry*, 340–41.

⁴ A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2012), 196–216.