

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP IN COUNTY JAILS: AN EXAMINATION OF PRISONERS,
FAITH-BASED VOLUNTEERS, AND JAIL ADMINISTRATORS

Linda D. Keena

Dr. Ruth Ann Roberts, Dissertation Advisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the extent to which servant-leadership exists among faith-based correctional jail volunteers in county jails and to discern the impact of the volunteers in transmitting the characteristics of servant-leadership to county jail inmates. This mixed-method design case study utilized the Self-Assessment of Servant Leadership instrument to examine the extent of servant-leadership among jail volunteers. The study also utilized interviews with inmates, faith-based volunteers and jail administrators to examine their perception of the impact of faith-based correctional jail volunteers. A phenomenological analysis involved connecting the various themes to arrive at a general description of the experience. Findings identified the volunteers as servant leaders and specifically addressed the characteristics of servant-leadership. Five major themes emerged: (a) volunteers' laughter and positive attitudes inspire inmates; (b) while being served, inmates serve others; (c) volunteers encourage a sense of peace, hope and faith; (d) volunteers started serving to fulfill a spiritual conviction to help others; and (e) volunteers love feedback.