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**A BRIEF INTERVENTION TO REDUCE OFFENDING**  
**THE STUDY OF A FAITH-BASED PROGRAMME**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

Concern about the growing level and cost of criminal behaviour in New Zealand has resulted in a high priority being given to the research and development of effective interventions. The targeting of appropriate interventions to those at greatest risk of reoffending is identified as a key to successful outcomes. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Making Right Choices (MARC) programme in reducing offending of those at moderate to high risk of persisting in criminal conduct. MARC is a brief, faith-based, biblical approach to curtailing offending, developed at Tauranga Community Probation Service between 1993 and 2003. Seven recidivist male offenders, 19 – 26 years of age, volunteered to participate in this study. Five of the participants were prison inmates serving short sentences and two were on supervision in the community. Two risk measures (RoC\*RoI and YLS/CLI) were used to ensure that participants met the medium/high risk criteria. In addition to attending the 10-session MARC course, participants were asked to undertake pre- and post-treatment assessments of antisocial attitudes, criminal associations and offending. Sessions were on average 60 minutes long, delivered one-on-one in an office setting. In addition to conviction history from the Law Enforcement System (LES), measures included the Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA), the Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO), the Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) and the MARC Self-report Measure of Offending (MSMO).

Follow-up assessment was carried out 6 months and 12 months after completion of the programme and/or release from prison. Results at six and twelve months after MARC showed that of the seven MARC participants, five had markedly reduced their offending on the self-report measure, three had significantly less conviction on the LES measure, four recorded a distinct drop in contact with criminal companions and two had noticeably ameliorated their antisocial attitudes. Five participants were able to describe ways they had been helped by the programme. While the limitations of the methods preclude certainty about this programme's effectiveness, the positive outcomes provide tentative support to the hypothesis that facilitating spiritual change can be an effective way to bring about cognitive and behavioural change with recidivist offenders.



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## **CHAPTER 1      BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Over the past 10 to 15 years a quiet transformation has taken place within the New Zealand Department of Corrections. Working for the Department as a probation officer for 21 years until early 2004, I was directly involved at the coalface of this change. Every aspect of how we worked with offenders was radically overhauled in a serious attempt to achieve what was once thought an elusive goal of “reducing reoffending.” In 1992 New Zealand researcher, Kaye McLaren, released her ground breaking report for the Department of Justice entitled “Reducing Reoffending: What Works Now.” Doug Graham, the then Minister of Justice noted in the foreword “This publication reviews international research to identify whether correctional interventions can reduce reoffending and if so how.....[It] moves beyond the debate to draw out an emerging body of research which has identified the most promising principles and characteristics of effective interventions” (1992, p. 3 & 25). It was proposed that these principles be adopted as a “framework for building more effective correctional programmes, services and treatment” (p. 3).

Among the international sources that provided the foundation for McLaren’s “principles of effectiveness,” were researchers Don Andrews and James Bonta. In 1994 they released the first edition of their landmark publication, “The Psychology of Criminal Conduct.” This definitive work, now in its third edition, helped fuel change and has been at the forefront of the criminal psychology field ever since. Resulting from extensive meta-analytical research by themselves and others, Andrews and Bonta advocate what they term the “general personality and social psychological” approach to changing criminal behaviour (2003, p. 159). This general model is described as a blend of social learning, cognitive behavioural and social cognition theory. It identifies what Andrew and Bonta call the “Big Four” factors or variables involved in predicting criminal conduct, namely: antisocial attitudes/cognitions, antisocial associates, history of antisocial behaviour and antisocial personality pattern. The “Big Four” are in turn influenced by problematic circumstances in the major domains of family, school/work, leisure and use of substances. Collectively they are referred to as the “Big Eight,” and are described as the “best-



validated risk factors in the research literature” (Andrews & Bonta, 2003, p. 86). While an offender will not necessarily have all eight of these risk factors, the more that emerge during assessment, the more likely it is that this person will offend in the future. Research indicates that the targeting of these risk factors with treatment programmes is likely to produce the best results in reducing reoffending (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Corrections, 2006e; McLaren, 1992, 1996). From this research base has emerged the New Zealand IOM initiative.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) is the term adopted by the New Zealand Department of Corrections to describe its new framework of operation, which is designed to be aligned with the most up-to-date research into principles of effective intervention (Corrections, 2006e). Linked to a new nationwide, networked computer system, IOM provided Corrections with an integrated approach across all its core functions in the assessment, classification and rehabilitation of offenders. This involved a huge investment in the retraining of Corrections staff to be part of this new, seamless, standardized way of working with offenders. Through rapid and wholesale adoption of the Andrews and Bonta principles, it was intended for New Zealand to break new ground (Corrections, 2006b) and become “a world leader in the corrections field” (Corrections, 2004, p. 1).

## **1.2 Three General Principles of Effective Interventions**

Emerging from Andrews and Bonta’s research, and at the heart of the IOM approach, is a classification system based on three general principles. These principles are seen as the basis of the effective treatment of offenders and are described by the terms: risk, need, and responsivity (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Corrections, 2006e).

### **1.2.1 The Risk Principle**

The risk principle adheres to the premise that criminal behaviour can be predicted, and that the level of treatment should be matched to the risk level of the offender. Offenders that are assessed as being at “high risk” of reoffending should therefore be the focus of treatment resources. Low risk offenders are viewed as better off with little or no intervention. Research shows that only a small percentage of those who commit crime in their youth will go on to



become persistent offenders. A New Zealand longitudinal study of a group of males, born in 1957, found that persistent or recidivist offenders accounted for only 6.5% of those who appeared in court during the 24-year study period (Lovell & Norris, 1990). However, nearly a third of the custodial sentences and nearly a half of semi-custodial sentences were imposed on this group, with little evidence that their offending was decreasing at the end of the follow-up period. Andrews and Bonta's (2003) analysis suggests that 20-30% of offenders are responsible for over 80% of crime. To be able to classify and target treatment resources to this high-risk group of persistent offenders is central to the risk principle.

### 1.2.2 The Need Principle

The need principle makes a distinction between criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs. "Criminogenic" is a term used to describe something that produces or tends to produce crime or criminality (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000). However, when linked with the word "need" it can be misleading. "Need" here does not refer to basic needs such as food, shelter and nurture, but rather "treatment needs" (Corrections, 2006e) or risk factors of the offender that if reduced will tend to decrease criminal involvement. Andrews and Bonta (2003) describe criminogenic needs as "simply predictors of future criminal conduct" (p. 63). In a similar vein Kaye McLaren refers to criminogenic needs as "problems or skill deficits that predict reoffending" (McLaren, 1996, p. 8). The need principle asserts that the targeting of certain crime-producing characteristics and circumstances of an offender will bring about the greatest reduction in reoffending.

It is evident that risk level and criminogenic needs are closely connected. Crime-producing characteristics, or criminogenic needs, are dynamic risk factors that link directly to the big eight mentioned above. They include factors such as antisocial attitudes and behavioural history, aggressive/violent tendencies, antisocial peer associations, dysfunctional home environment and substance abuse. Being dynamic factors they can be changed, and doing so should reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Non-criminogenic needs are also dynamic and changeable, and may be relevant to the well-being of the offender, but are only weakly associated with recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; McLaren, 1992). These include factors such as poor budgeting skills, lack of work skills, low self esteem, literacy problems, health problems, poor social skills and



difficulty with communication. While it may be important to address some of these deficits in an offender programme, if the goal is to reduce reoffending then criminogenic needs must be the main focus. McLaren (1996) refers to non-criminogenic needs as “type 2 needs” and notes that “involvement in type 2 programmes can be a very useful entry point to programme involvement for very resistant offenders, and are vital to reducing reoffending for this reason” (p. 8).

### 1.2.3 The Responsivity Principle

This principle is about matching offenders with programmes that fit with their ability, learning style and cultural orientation (Corrections, 2006e). Also contained in the responsivity principle is the issue of how amenable and motivated offenders are to participate in the prescribed treatment. Andrews and Bonta (2003) note that this issue has great importance with high-risk offenders, due to their high drop out rate from treatment. If the risk principle tells us to target high risk offenders, then we must make sure that these offenders are motivated and capable of gaining the full benefit of the treatment provided.

With reference to the responsivity principle, Andrews and Bonta (2003) strongly assert that “the most powerful influence strategies available are cognitive-behavioural” and therefore “one should use cognitive behavioural styles of service to bring about change” (p. 262). Taking a broader approach, the New Zealand Department of Corrections makes it clear on their website that the Department’s interventions are not limited to cognitive-behavioural ones, but seek to embrace “the wider social, cultural or practical elements of the offender’s world” (Corrections, 2006a, p. 2). While still grounded in Andrews and Bonta’s “what works” principles, the Department has sought to operate “holistically” and have an approach that is directed at the “whole person”. Programmes within the Department that do not specifically target criminogenic needs are described as “motivational programmes” (Corrections, 2006a, p. 2). These programmes aim to improve an offender’s “responsivity or motivation to address identified criminogenic needs” (Corrections, 2006d, p. 93). Under this holistic umbrella are cultural and religious programmes such as the Tikanga Māori programmes, the Māori Focus Units and the Rimutaka Faith-Based Unit run in partnership with Prison Fellowship of New Zealand (PFNZ) (Corrections, 2006a).



### **1.3 Development of the MAKING RIGHT CHOICES (MARC) Programme**

In the early 1990's, around the time that Kaye McLaren presented the Department of Justice with her 16 principles of effective intervention (McLaren, 1992), the New Zealand government formed a crime prevention action group which produced a strategy paper on crime prevention. This paper made the observation that the post-war increase in crime could be attributed, at least in part, to changes in New Zealand society described as "a loss of traditional values" and a "breakdown of family life" (Crime Prevention Action Group, 1992). It recommended the targeting of preventative programmes to youth at risk of offending, in particular, persistent offenders who are likely to progress into criminal careers. In response to this paper, I was asked by management of the Tauranga Probation Office to develop a rehabilitative programme to target "at risk" young offenders in our local area. From this request came the birth of the Making Right Choices (MARC) programme. This was the beginning of a ten year project to develop and refine an offender programme that would be effective in reducing re-offending. Over the previous decade I had been heavily involved in running outdoor pursuits and wilderness-type programmes for offenders and "at risk" youth. While raising motivation and producing some short-term gains, these adventure programmes proved to be limited in their ability to change attitudes and reduce offending over the long-term (Bauer, 1982; Zampese, 1997).

In piloting various versions of the MARC programme during the 1990's, I sought to develop a programme that was in line with McLaren's "What Works" principles and other available research. Over time MARC moved from being predominantly outdoor pursuits-orientated to an educational programme that targeted antisocial attitudes and values, and sought to awaken the conscience of the offender to moral responsibility. Key elements of the programme were its foundation in biblical values, and its use of Christian young men to work closely with offenders as mentors and pro-social role models. McLaren (1992) noted that for educational programmes to be effective they needed to "focus on cognitive restructuring, moral development and problem solving" (p. 15). Effective interventions target personal attitudes, values and thinking styles connected with law-breaking, and promote identification with anti-criminal role models (McLaren). This became a benchmark for the development of MARC.



In 1994 Dr Christopher Trotter from Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, was invited to present a series of seminars to managers and probation officers throughout New Zealand on “The Effective Supervision of Offenders.” Between 1989 and 1993, Trotter had carried out an extensive research project for the community-based Corrections Division of the Victorian Department of Justice. From his research he identified five approaches or keys for effective offender programmes (Trotter, 1994). These closely paralleled Kaye McLaren’s principles. Included in Trotter’s keys were the targeting of high-risk offenders, problem-solving, empathic and reflective listening, and the minimizing of contact with other offenders. However, the key that was identified as being of greatest importance in reducing re-offending involved the modelling and rewarding of pro-social attitudes and behaviour by programme facilitators. During his New Zealand seminars, Trotter sought to train probation officers to counteract the anti-social attitudes and behaviour of offenders with the modelling and reinforcement of a different way of thinking and acting. Trotter’s influence further confirmed the importance of the moral development, mentoring and pro-social values approach being built into MARC.

Another significant influence in the development of MARC was Julie Leibrich’s research published in a book entitled “Straight to the Point – Angles on Giving Up Crime” (1993). From a series of interviews with 50 ex-offenders, Leibrich sought to find out what motivates an offender to change their behaviour and give up crime. Among a number of significant factors, Leibrich found that revising personal values and acquiring things of value in life were key change agents. Gaining a sense of shame was also one of the most commonly mentioned stimuli for change. Just over half the group said that religion or spiritual things were important to them, with the discovery of new faith clearly having a “dramatic influence on a few” (Leibrich, p. 128). In the preface to Leibrich’s book, a former New Zealand Secretary for Justice (1982 – 86), Jim Callahan, wrote: “Above all however, the decision to go straight is a personal one. It cannot be imposed. It comes from the mind, spirit and conscience of the person” (p. 8). As well as seeking to bring about change on a cognitive and behavioural level, addressing spiritual issues was seen as foundational in the change process adopted by MARC.

While McLaren, Trotter and Leibrich provided guiding lights for the development of MARC, another significant influence came from an unexpected quarter. In 1992 the New Zealand



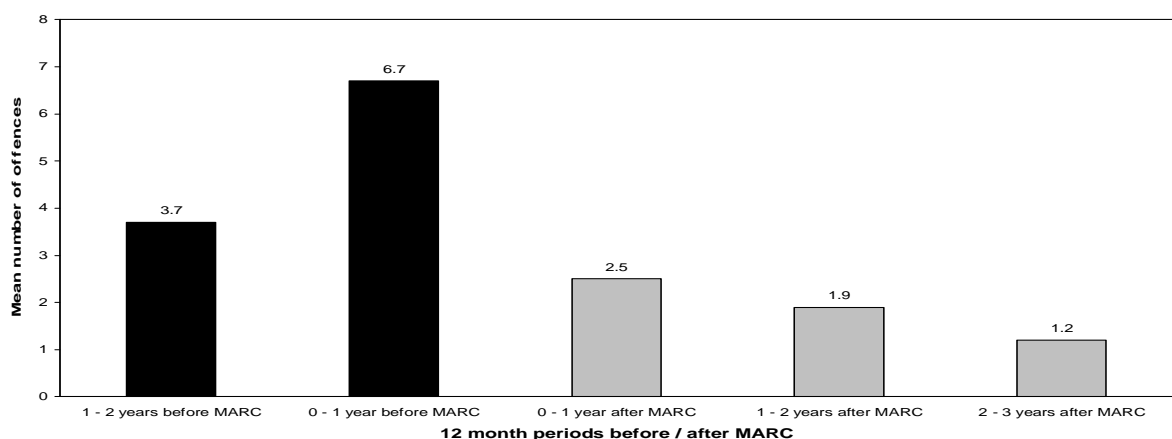
Department of Corrections (then called the Department of Justice) invited Mr Bill Gothard, founder and president of the Institute in Basic Life Principles (IBLP), to present a seminar to divisional heads and managers of the department on “How to Solve Crime in New Zealand” (Gothard, 1992). IBLP is an international Christian organisation that is best known for its seminars on solving “basic youth conflicts” and “anger resolution.” A key recommendation of the Wellington seminar was to appoint volunteers as mentors in a character-building programme with offenders (Gothard, 1992). Upon receiving a written report of the seminar circulated among Justice Department field workers, I sought to find out more about the mentoring programme run by IBLP in the city of Indianapolis. In July 1994 I was invited to attend an IBLP conference in Indianapolis along with a government delegation from Russia. Following this visit I began working closely with IBLP in New Zealand to train young volunteers to assist on the MARC programme. From 1995 to 2000 the MARC programme ran 10-day residential courses for high risk young offenders. Offenders volunteered for the programme, often as an alternative to imprisonment, and were teamed up with the IBLP mentors.

Although MARC was an unconventional approach within Corrections, it was permitted to continue due to positive outcomes and its adherence to principles of effective intervention outlined by McLaren and Trotter. However, with the introduction of Integrated Offender Management, the Department of Corrections embarked on the development of a set of “core programmes” to address the criminogenic needs of high-risk offenders. These criminogenic programmes were to be the focus of resources and the priority for probation officers in referring offenders to appropriate interventions. Drawing upon meta-analytic research that indicated interventions become more effective as hours increase (McLaren, 1996; Zampese, 1997), criminogenic programmes were designed to be “long, hard and intensive” (Corrections, 2006b, p. 3). The group session, 100 hours in length, typically ran daily for three hours, on four days of the week. The development of these Corrections interventions seemed to signal the end for the MARC programme, and courses ceased in mid-2000.

In the months that followed the launch of criminogenic programmes, it soon became evident that not all higher risk offenders were suited or able to attend such intensive programmes. In looking for a viable alternative for those “falling through the cracks,” I began developing an

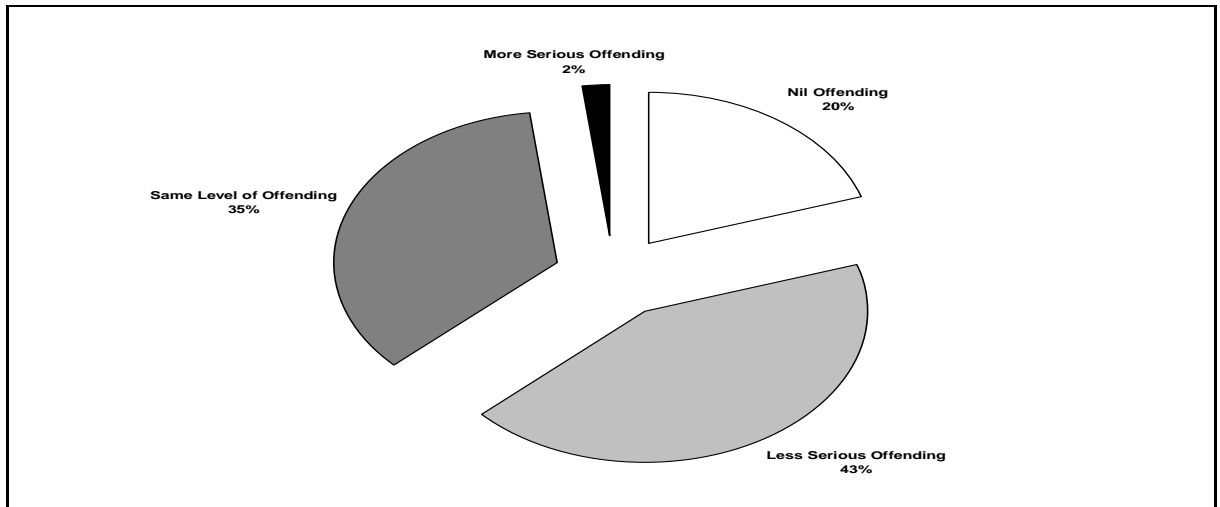


office-based version of the MARC programme, using elements of MARC that were likely to have greatest impact in changing anti-social attitudes and raising motivation to address other offending needs. As part of the approval process to implement this revamped version of MARC, an analysis of attendance and offending patterns of previous MARC participants was reported to Corrections Head Office. It was found that from the 64 medium to high-risk offenders referred to MARC since 1995, 57 had successfully completed the programme (Lees, 2002). This 89% compliance in itself was significant as offender programmes tend to be notorious for poor compliance, with 25% dropout being the norm, and in some cases being as high as 50% (Corrections, 2001; Wilson, 2004). A study of conviction data of MARC graduates, using the Law Enforcement System (LES), showed that the rate of convictions dropped from an average of 7 per year before MARC to less than 2 per year in the years following MARC (Figure 1). The seriousness of offending also decreased, with 20% of graduates never re-offending, and 43% re-offending in a less serious manner (Figure 2) (Lees, 2002). While not claiming to be rigorous research, this submission resulted in a Head Office review team describing MARC as “by all accounts successful,” and granting conditional approval for MARC to resume operating in Tauranga (Mellor, T., personal communication, October 22, 2002). Prior to commencing my post-graduate university studies, six offenders successfully completed the 10-hour office-based MARC course in the latter part of 2003. The evaluation of this brief, one-on-one, faith-based programme is the basis of this research project.



**Figure 1. Average rate of offending for MARC participants before and after MARC**





**Figure 2. Seriousness of re-offending since MARC**

#### **1.4 Research into Faith-based Offender Programmes**

The Christian approach to reducing criminal offending came to prominence with the opening of a 60-bed “faith-based” unit at Rimutaka Prison on 16 October, 2003. In a 2003 press release, the Department of Corrections described the unit as using “Christian-focused teachings, programmes and ethos to help put offenders on the right track”. While a recent “Statement of Intent” on the Department of Corrections website places this programme under the umbrella of “motivational programmes” designed to improve responsiveness to criminogenic programmes (Corrections, 2006d, p. 93), it has previously acknowledged that the unit is based on similar faith-based units in the United States “that have achieved low re-offending rates” (Corrections, 2003). A reduction in re-offending would indicate that faith-based programmes go beyond merely helping motivate change, and in fact address some of the crime-producing treatment needs of offenders.

On the topic of spiritually-based change, Lambert (2004) refers to the “substantial research literature” documenting the relationship of spiritually-based change to “physical and mental health.” However, he further notes that “given the large number of clients who subscribe to a religious belief system, and the importance of such a system to their functioning, it is surprising to see the degree to which discussions and research are missing from the literature on



psychotherapy process and outcome” (p. 817). In view of these comments it is hardly surprising that a recent search of the PsycInfo database for research into “Christian,” “faith-based” or “spiritually-based” rehabilitative interventions returned minimal results.

One of the few documented faith-based prison studies is the 2002 evaluation of the Texas InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI). This comprehensive pre-release programme, launched in 1997, is described as being “Anchored in biblical teaching, life-skills education, and group accountability”, with an emphasis on “spiritual growth and moral development” (Johnson & Larson, 2003, p. 4 & 25). Although the Johnson and Larson did not give an outline of the biblical curriculum used, they described some of the programme requirements. IFI inmates were expected to participate in daily classes, worship and devotional times. They were given “homework” and required to do a considerable amount of reading outside of class. Sixteen to 24 months of the programme was completed in prison, followed by aftercare support from Christian mentors for at least 6 to 12 where possible. Research into IFI used a sample of 177 participants and a 1,754 non-participant comparison group (matched with IFI participants on the basis of race, age, offence type and risk score). This research found that 17.3% of faith-based programme graduates were re-arrested during a two-year post-release period, compared with 35% re-arrest for the matched comparison group (Johnson & Larson, 2003). Also during the two-year period it was found that 8% of faith-based graduates were re-incarcerated, compared to 20.3% for the matched comparison group. It was found the aftercare mentor contact was a significant factor in achieving lower recidivism. Narratives produced by the programme graduates revealed “five spiritual transformation themes” associated with their rehabilitation, namely: “(a) I’m not who I used to be; (b) spiritual growth; (c) God versus the prison code [i.e., spirituality counteracting the negative influence of the prison sub-culture]; (d) positive outlook on life; and (e) the need to give back to society” (Johnson & Larson, p. 5).

Another 2002 study was carried out to determine dominant factors supporting successful transition to the community for women ex-inmates after six months of involvement in a faith-based release programme. Welcome Home Ministries (WHM) is described as a holistic programme, with a mind-body-spirit framework, designed to support women’s successful transition to the community following imprisonment. Utilizing open-ended data-generating



questions, this qualitative study involved 45-minute tape-recorded interviews of 27 WHM participants at least six months after release from prison. While no specific questions were asked about spiritual beliefs, 96% of the women noted the importance of belief in God, with themes such as “let go, let God” and “turning your life over to God” (Parsons & Warner-Robbins, p. 11 & 12). Closely connected with this was the gaining of freedom from addiction.

In response to the Bush administration’s policy of making subsidies available to faith-based social service initiatives, a 2005 study looked into the efficacy of prison rehabilitation ministries in the American criminal justice system (McDaniel, Davis, & Neff, 2005). While the results were inconclusive, there was some evidence to suggest that faith-based programmes reduce rates of recidivism, improve prison behaviour and help inmates to adjust to the outside world. In conclusion it is suggested that the “moderate” level of effectiveness demonstrated by prison ministries could be improved “with further study and modification” (p. 182).

It is accepted that the MARC intervention is more short-term and less comprehensive than the prison ministries included in the above studies. The Rimutaka faith-based prison is run as a partnership between Prison Fellowship New Zealand (PFNZ) and the Department of Corrections, with Corrections taking care of custodial requirements and PPNZ responsible for running an 18-month “Christian development program.” Christian mentors, from a wide range of denominations, work one-on-one with inmates for eight months before leaving prison, and up to two years post release (PFNZ, Promotional Brochure-b). A 10-hour programme certainly could not hope to match the level of influence afforded by dedicated prison units. However, it is noted that MARC was originally developed as a community based programme seeking to divert young offenders on the pathway to imprisonment. When delivered in a prison setting to inmates about to be released, as was the case with most participants in the current study, it provides inmate volunteers with an introduction to the process of spiritual transformation. Participants are afforded the opportunity to receive a clear explanation of the Christian worldview, and gain understanding of how problems could be solved on a spiritual level.

While MARC’s brief 10 session framework is substantially different in structure from the more comprehensive faith-based prison programmes, there is some research that suggests brief bible-



based interventions can also be effective. Beginning with weekly volunteer-led bible studies, early research on Prison Fellowship prison programmes showed that inmates who attended 10 or more of these bible studies prior to release were significantly less likely to be arrested during a one year follow-up period (Johnson, Larson, & Pitts, 1997). In gaining government approval to establish dedicated faith-based units, Prison Fellowship International (PFI) argued that if even a “small dose of religious programs can have noticeable effects,” increased faith-based programming, “coupled with educational, vocational and cognitive” components, is likely to be even more effective (Johnson & Larson, 2003, p. 8). Research indicating this to be the case helped pave the way for the New Zealand Prison Fellowship faith-based prison initiative (Corrections, 2003).

### **1.5 Spiritual, Cultural and Ethical Issues**

In designing a programme with a spiritual and values-based foundation for stimulating behaviour change, in my view it is not possible to have a generic approach. Spirituality means different things to different cultures and religions, and it cannot be blended into one homogenous set of beliefs or truths that will be accepted by everyone. Even the approach by Alcoholics Anonymous, with its concept of a generic “higher power” encompassing all beliefs and conceptions of god, could be seen as promoting a religion of universalism and relativism. The belief that all conceptions of God are equal, and truth in this area is whatever we want to make it, sharply contradicts the Christian view of reality (Bobgan & Bobgan, 1991; Burns, 1991). Even the naturalistic tenets of “multiculturalism” that views all cultures as morally equivalent and merely reflections of their own history and experience, denigrates a foundational Christian belief in a transcendent source of truth and morality (Anderson, Zuehlke, & Zuehlke, 2000; Colson & Pearcey, 1999). Attempts to dilute belief systems and use non-specific terms to create a bland spirituality that will be acceptable to all is seen by Christians as creating a “form of religion but denying the power of it” (2 Tim. 3:5, Revised Standard Version). On this issue, McDaniel et al. (2005) comment that “universal sentiments about faith may warm the heart, but they also sound an omen to those fearful of the potential homogenization of faith traditions into a generic form of civil religion” (p. 181).



Rather than diminish what Christians believe to be the transforming power inherent in an uncompromising presentation of biblical faith, the MARC approach is to be upfront and clearly identify the worldview and spiritual reference point that underpins the programme. Informed consent through full disclosure of values, goals and procedures of the programme give participants the choice of whether to participate in a “potentially value-changing experience” (Anderson et al., 2000; Hohmann & Larson, 1993, p. 85). MARC does this by identifying itself as a biblical programme based on a Christian worldview. The key elements of this worldview are outlined in the course brochure. While MARC is open to all who wish to address their offending behaviour, attendees volunteer for the programme after gaining a clear understanding of the MARC approach and what will be required of them. An undertaking is given that attendees will not be pressured to become Christians or join a church. Participants also have the right to withdraw from the programme at any point without penalty, other than possibly being required to undertake an alternative intervention.

During the years of developing MARC within Corrections, approximately 50% of attendees were of Māori ethnicity, and they often proved to be the most responsive to its spiritual basis. Finding connections with their Māori heritage, many showed a strong cultural affinity to Christianity and seemed to welcome the opportunity to attend a Christian-based intervention. From a historical perspective it is noted that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century Māoridom embraced Christianity, despite the abuses of colonialism and the unworthy actions of some missionaries. Claudia Orange (1989), in her book “The Story of a Treaty” documents that “by 1840, nearly half of the Māori population was following Christian beliefs and ways,” and for this reason the Treaty was viewed by many “as a bond similar to the covenants of the bible” (Orange, 1989, p. 34). While the importance of Christianity within Māori culture may have diminished in recent years, it still holds a place of significance. The same could be said for Pacific Island culture. It was found during MARC courses that the Christian message of love, equality, forgiveness, and reconciliation holds a strong appeal across cultures. Although MARC seeks to avoid having any particular cultural emphasis other than presenting a biblical representation of Christianity, it does attempt to be cognisant and respectful of the cultural background of attendees.



## 1.6 The Present Study

During the ten-year development of MARC, within the Department of Corrections, it was required to continually demonstrate that it was in line with the best available research on effective offender programmes. From its inception, MARC targeted medium- to high-risk offenders and was often used by the court as an alternative to imprisonment. Within the programme there was a “focus on cognitive restructuring, moral development and problem solving” (McLaren, 1992, p. 15). It sought to target personal attitudes, values and thinking styles connected with law-breaking, and promote identification with anti-criminal role models (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; McLaren). On a therapy level, MARC had similarities with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) through using a biblical approach to challenge criminogenic ways of thinking and maladaptive core beliefs (Anderson et al., 2000). As well as encouraging the revision of personal values, MARC sought to advance gaining a sense of shame over wrongdoing and acquiring things of lasting value (Leibrich, 1993). Through the modelling and reinforcing of Judeo-Christian pro-social values, MARC sought to mentor offenders toward a different way of thinking and acting (Trotter, 1994, 2006).

While MARC may be seen as a Christianized blend of CBT and other offender “what works” principles, it is the emphasis on spiritual transformation that makes it unique among offender programmes. MARC seeks to facilitate spiritual change by identifying root problems that result from the violation of spiritual principles. The MARC problem-solving model (Appendix A) views root problems on a spiritual level as feeding up into problematic cognitions, emotions and behaviours (Gothard, 1992). It is through the targeting of these spiritually-based root problems that MARC aims to shift the anti-social attitudes and behaviours of high-risk offenders. It is hypothesised that targeting root problems and facilitating change on a spiritual level can more effectively stimulate cognitive/attitudinal and behavioural change than conventional approaches, especially when participants are open to such change. Hence MARC endeavours to produce positive outcomes following a brief intervention, when research indicates that longer programmes are needed to achieve significant results (McLaren, 1996; Zampese, 1997).



Originally it was planned to recruit MARC volunteers from offenders in the community, however, this was hindered by a lack of referrals from probation officers. When approval was later gained to present MARC within a local prison, five inmates enrolled. They were serving short sentences and did not have the opportunity to attend Corrections programmes. It is noted from a recent prison study by Corrections researcher, Nick Wilson, that the majority of high-risk offenders spend “relatively short periods in prison”, thus restricting their ability to receive “intensive psychological treatment initiatives.” For many who did receive treatment, “usually for A & D abuse,” it was “marked by a singular lack of success” (Wilson, 2004, p. 11). While not claiming to be intensive treatment, MARC was able to fill a gap for inmates who would otherwise have missed out on any formal intervention.

The present study will look at whether the 10-hour MARC programme, with its spiritual dynamic, can contribute to a reduction in anti-social attitudes and criminal actions of higher-risk offenders. It is acknowledged that MARC’s modest efforts to reduce re-offending seem unlikely to succeed, given Nick Wilson’s findings, and recently publicised research showing that the Corrections 100-hour programmes are struggling to do so (Kay, 2006; Wilson, 2004). If the findings of this research indicate that the brief MARC intervention has produced significant change, then this would give weight to the hypothesis that facilitating spiritual change is an effective way to change behaviour.



## **CHAPTER 2      THE PLACE OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW WITHIN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

### **2.1    A Comparison of Worldviews**

With the growing acceptance of multiculturalism in psychology, it appears that the concept of worldview has moved to centre stage and the traditional dominance of western empiricism is being challenged (Misra, 1993). Packer (1985) observes that “In recent years there has been increased questioning of the notion that research in psychology is, or can be, value free” (p. 1081). Guba and Lincoln (1994) contend that “Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways” (p. 105). A 1996 article referred to the “virtual acceptance of multiculturalism as a ‘fourth force’ in psychology” with the result that “the role of religion in counselling and psychotherapy has become an acceptable topic for debate and discussion” (Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough, & Sandage, p. 448).

“Worldview” is a concept borrowed into English from a translation of the German word “weltanschauung.” It refers to the overall perspective or framework through which an individual or group sees and interprets the world around them. Everything we see and think about is filtered through our worldview, and it affects how we interact with reality. While the concept of worldview still allows for debate on the merits of differing views of reality, it helps remove the arrogance of thinking that “my way is the only way to interpret the world.” In a definitive volume on the Christian worldview, international prison ministry leader Charles Colson, most famous for his role in the Watergate scandal and his subsequent conversion to Christianity, has co-written what he believes to be the most important book of his career. “How Now Shall We Live?” compares competing worldviews in the context of how they answer age-old questions such as: Where do I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is wrong with the world? How do we fix it (Colson & Pearcey, 1999)? The Christian answer to



these foundational questions reveals the wide distinction between the biblical worldview, and the popular philosophy of naturalism (Table 1).

	Christian Worldview	Naturalistic Worldview
<b>Where do I come from?</b>	<b>The world was created</b> by a supremely intelligent, all-powerful, and loving God.	The <b>random interaction</b> of energy and matter over millions of years has accidentally produced the world as we know it.
<b>Why am I here?</b>	To live in <b>intimate relationship</b> with God. To experience his <b>love and guidance</b> on a daily basis.	To ensure <b>survival</b> of the species. To find my own meaning and <b>happiness</b> .
<b>Where am I going?</b>	We have freedom to choose where we will spend <b>eternity</b> – <b>with God or separated from God</b>	There is no life beyond the grave. <b>Death is the end of our existence.</b>
<b>What is wrong with the world?</b>	We choose to obey or disobey God's <b>moral law</b> (the 10 commandments). Our <b>choices have consequences</b> (we reap what we sow). <b>Wrong choices</b> (sin) leads to suffering – both for ourselves and others.	<b>Environmental hazards, dysfunctional systems</b> (social & biological) and <b>maladaptive human processes</b> (behaviours, cognitions, emotions) interfere with individual happiness and the well-being of society.
<b>How do we fix it?</b>	We are all law-breakers (sinners) and are <b>powerless to save ourselves</b> . Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has provided a <b>rescue plan</b> . Jesus took the <b>penalty</b> for our sin and made a way for us to be <b>saved</b> . When we receive this gift <b>our lives are transformed</b> – we gain motivation and power to act in love.	We need to find ways to: <b>minimise hazards</b> <b>correct dysfunctional systems and improve maladaptive human processes</b> – i.e. correct poor thinking, feeling and behaving.

**Table 1. A Comparison between the Christian Worldview and that of Naturalism**



Sometimes found under other banners such as scientism, positivism, materialism or reductionistic empiricism, naturalism is the belief that natural causes alone are sufficient to explain everything that exists. Colson contends that this has become the dominant worldview of Western culture, and has invested science with an elevated position of ultimate intellectual authority (Colson & Pearcey, 1999). In its quest to be recognized as a science, psychology has largely embraced the naturalistic worldview. In the most recent edition of the *Psychotherapy Handbook*, a newly added chapter on “The Constraints of Naturalism” alerts the reader to some of the dangers of naturalism and questions whether its “biases” are “leading us to ignore potentially effective factors and conceptions” (Lambert, 2004, p. 44). It is the naturalistic worldview within psychology, rather than empiricism per se, that sharply conflicts with the Christian view of reality (Table 1). From a historical perspective it is noted that many of the early empiricists and developers of the scientific method were motivated by their Christian beliefs (Colson & Pearcey, 1999; Morris, 1982). They regarded science as a means of revealing the intricate design and creative genius of God. But the Christian worldview also sees empiricism as being largely limited to natural phenomena and inadequate when it comes to understanding spiritual reality.

## **2.2 A Conflict of Worldviews**

### **2.2.1 The Emergence of a Competing Religion**

Prior to the rise of psychology and naturalism during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Christian church had a long history of being at the forefront of development of the helping professions, especially ministry to the troubled and disadvantaged of society. Thomas Szasz (1988) makes the observation that most psychiatric historians ignore the fact that modern psychotherapy has its roots in “the pastoral cure of souls” (p. 25). As the western world adopted a naturalistic and secular humanistic worldview, new approaches to addressing social needs and providing the “cure of souls” began to take prominence. Szasz suggests that psychology emerged as a new secular religion. Quoting from two of the founding fathers of modern psychology, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, Szasz seeks to make this point:



“We do not seek to bring [the patient] relief by receiving him into the catholic, protestant, or socialist community. We seek rather to enrich him from his own internal sources....Such activity as this is pastoral work in the best sense of the word” (Freud, 1927, quoted in Szasz, 1988, p. 180).

“Healing may be called a religious problem....Religions are systems of healing for psychic illness....This is why patients force the psychotherapist into the role of a priest, and expect and demand of him that he shall free them from their distress. This is why we psychotherapists must occupy ourselves with problems which, strictly speaking, belong to the theologians” (Jung, 1932, quoted in Szasz, 1988, p. 181).

As psychology emerged with the hallmarks of a competing religion, promoting a conflicting worldview and gaining legitimacy by attempting to present itself as pure science, it was inevitable that it would be at variance with established religion. In the psychotherapy handbook it is acknowledged that “traditionally, there has been at least a mild antagonism between psychotherapy and religion” (Lambert, 2004, p. 278). Jones and Butman (1991) comment that “more often the antagonism against Christianity is subtle, demonstrated more in the silence about religion in psychology text, papers and classes than in open antagonism” (p. 24). At the beginning of this research project, a review of the recommended texts for post-graduate psychology papers at Massey University revealed this silence and the minimal importance placed on religion, spirituality or Christianity. A one-paragraph entry in Kaplan and Sadock’s 1400-page *Synopsis of Psychiatry* (1997) observes that:

“From the psychological point of view, perhaps the striking feature of religion is its universality. There are few societies in which religion plays no significant role, and there are relatively few people who, at one time or another, have experienced some religious stirring. From this universality one must infer that religion performs some adaptive function, it is invoked to satisfy one or more universal human needs” (p. 862).

Despite this acknowledgement of the “universality” of religion and its “adaptive function”, it does not warrant any further comment in this exhaustive volume on clinical psychiatry. It is



perhaps ironic that the word “psychiatry” is derived from two Greek words meaning “healing of the soul or spirit” and yet traditionally within this profession the spiritual dimension has been largely ignored. The 820-page Bergin and Garfield Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behaviour Change (Lambert, 2004) devotes four paragraphs to the “religious beliefs” of therapists and three paragraphs to “spiritually based change” (pp. 278, 817). It makes a concluding remark that “given the large number of clients who subscribe to a religious belief system ... it is surprising to see the degree to which discussions and research are missing from the literature on psychotherapy” (p. 817).

While the 440-page text on “Practice Issues for Clinical and Applied Psychologists in New Zealand” (Love & Whittaker, 2000) has nothing in the index under religion, spirituality or Christianity, some pages refer to religious and spiritual issues. A paragraph in the chapter on Pacific Island people contains a caution that “the professional working with a Pacific client ignores the religious aspects to their lives at their peril” (p. 160). Under a heading of “Religion,” in the chapter on “Working with Asian People”, the importance of religion to “virtually all aspects of life” is emphasised (p. 171). Again the psychologist is cautioned that “to ignore or discount this facet of Asian mind would be to deal with only part of the person” (p. 171). A helpful paragraph on “spirituality” is found in the chapter on “Pakeha Clinical Psychology and the Treaty of Waitangi.” It points out that if the Pakeha therapist is uncomfortable talking about “matters of the spiritual realm...then progress in therapy will be halting and shallow” (p. 156). By way of contrast the text describes religion in the western world “to have largely become an ‘optional add-on’ to life, something that is partaken at intervals, or on special occasions, but which is not necessarily an integral part of ‘real life’” (p. 171). In other words, religion is seen as largely irrelevant in the western world.

From a worldview perspective it is noted that the major proponents of psychotherapy were (or are) non-Christian thinkers, often coming from an atheistic or agnostic perspective. According to Jones and Butman (1991), many had “large axes to grind against religion generally and Christianity in particular,” and engaged in developing major psychotherapy systems with “competing ‘life views’ that are religious in scope and content” (p. 24). This “grinding of axes” can clearly be seen with the founding fathers of modern psychology, particularly Sigmund



Freud. In a vigorous and sometimes vitriolic critique of the history of psychotherapy, psychiatrist and university professor, Thomas Szasz (1988), described Freud as “proud, chauvinistic” (p. 139), “an angry avenger and a domineering founder of a religion (or cult)” (p. 155). Szasz devoted a whole chapter of his book to “Sigmund Freud: The Jewish Avenger,” citing evidence that Freud saw himself as a “Jewish warrior, fighting against a hostile Christian world” (p. 149). He noted that even Freud’s colleague, Carl Jung, saw “bitterness” as being his “main characteristic” (p. 150).

Freud viewed religion as “the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity,” (Freud, 1927, quoted in Szasz, 1988, p. 136). He referred to himself as “a completely godless Jew” and a “hopeless pagan” (Meng & Freud, 1963, quoted in Adams, 1970, p. 16). Growing up in a society “imbued with the spirit of Christian anti-Semitism” (Szasz, 1988, p. 153), Freud allegedly had great resentment towards the Christian religion. A story is told of Freud as a child, with his father, being pushed around and having their clothes muddied by some supposed Christians. Freud was ashamed that his father did not retaliate and vowed that some day he would get even (Oates, 1958, cited in Adams, 1970). It is suggested that psychoanalysis was the “weapon” Freud used to “inflict vengeance on Christianity” (Adams, 1970, p. 16; Szasz, 1988, p. 146).

### 2.2.2 The Promotion of Hedonism and Moral Relativism

While it is debatable whether psychology, riding on the back of naturalism, deliberately sought to displace the Christian worldview, however, its influence in undermining Christian moral values contributed to further consternation within the Christian church. Colson and Pearcey (1999) refer to psychology as a field that assumes that human beings are objects to be manipulated and controlled, like scientific variables. This then leads to an approach that denies things like the soul, conscience, moral reasoning, and moral responsibility. Using Freud as an initial example they contend that he “did more than anyone else to debunk the very notion of moral responsibility”. They allege that Freud “reduced humans to complex animals, rejecting explanations of behaviour couched in ‘old-fashioned’ theological terms – such as *sin*, *soul*, and *conscience* – and substituting scientific terms borrowed from biology, such as *instincts* and *drives*” (italics in the original, p. 176). Then referring to later developments such as B. F. Skinner’s behaviourism, they see psychology as attempting to create a new brand of “scientific”



utopianism, where “the flaws in human nature are a result not of moral corruption but of learned responses – responses that can be unlearned so that people can then be reprogrammed to be happy and adjusted” (p. 177). This is consistent with the Lambert (2004) chapter on “The Constraints of Naturalism.” It describes “hedonism” as the assumption that all living things seek pleasure and avoid pain. The text notes that this assumption “dominates formal disciplinary conceptions of therapy outcome, human nature, and human relationships” and is a unifying concept between therapies. It remarks that “Although psychoanalysts and behaviourist agree on little else, they agree on the importance of hedonism” (p. 60). In Freud’s words “we have found it impossible to give our support to conventional morality [which] demands more sacrifices than it is worth” (Glasser, 1965, p. xv). By normalizing hedonism and cutting loose from moral constraints of the past, Freud, Skinner and other psychological frontrunners were seen as helping legitimize the sexual revolution of the sixties and seventies. This moral relativism championed by the leading lights of psychology served to deepen the divide between psychology and the Christian church.

### 2.2.3 Finding Common Ground

Given this antagonism and clash of worldviews, it is perhaps surprising that in North America there is a 20,000 member professional body of Christian Psychologists called the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS), and most Christian seminaries and universities offer courses in Psychology. While it seems that many Christian psychologists and counsellors are happy to integrate psychology with their Christian beliefs, numerous books and articles have been written to caution Christians about aspects of psychotherapy that are incongruous with Christian principles (Jones & Butman, 1991). This is not surprising given the diverse nature of psychology and the opposing factions within its own ranks. While integration in any form is rejected by certain Christian writers (Adams, 1970; Bobgan & Bobgan, 1997), it seems that many Christian therapists are able to find some common ground, believing that psychology can enhance their professional practice without compromising their biblical worldview (Anderson et al., 2000; Riddell, 2006).



### 2.3 The Christian approach to therapy

According to a Statistics New Zealand media release (2001) on cultural diversity, over 2 million New Zealanders identify as being Christian. While this figure is unlikely to represent the number who actually internalise and practice Christian beliefs, it does indicate that the Christian worldview holds a significant cultural position in this country. In view of this, and given the large Christian population of North America, it is perhaps surprising that there is so little available within mainstream psychology that provides a Christian-focused approach to therapy. Referring to research done by Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough, & Sandage (1996), Lambert (2004) noted that this research “indicates that religious/spiritual clients prefer therapists who address change within a spiritual framework,” and if they are unable to find such therapists “many avoid treatment altogether” (p. 817). Clients who “identify themselves as ‘Christian,’ tend to prefer therapists who share their religious beliefs” (p. 278). Lambert also notes from research findings that religious cognitive therapy for depression, and pastoral counsellors, achieve outcomes that are “equal to or better than those professionally trained in cognitive methods” (p. 817).

Among the well-respected Christian leaders in the biblical counselling field is best-selling author, Neil Anderson. He, along with psychotherapists Terry and Julianne Zuehlke, have published a text on the “practical integration of theology and psychology” entitled “Christ-Centered Therapy” (2000). In the introduction the authors express their desire to “integrate the truth of God’s Word with compatible methodology from the science of psychology” (p. 14). Later, in a chapter that focuses on the integration issue, Anderson and his colleagues describe the cognitive-behavioural therapy sequence of replacing of irrational beliefs with new ways of thinking and responding. They then make the observation that “this process is about as close to the description of the concept of Christian repentance as one can get” (p. 106). This sequence is also linked to the biblical concept of being “transformed by the renewal of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). However, a key point of departure from CBT is the understanding of “the reality of the spiritual world,” and the “possibility that spiritual warfare could be part of the counselling process” (p. 108). Negative thoughts can be identified as coming from “patterns of the sinful flesh learned from living in a fallen world, or flaming arrows from Satan ... (see Ephesian 6:16;



1 Peter 5:8)” (p. 109). Counselees who understand the Christian worldview can quickly reject the “lie” behind their negative thinking, when they see its dubious origin and “the truth” is revealed (p. 123). While the western naturalistic mind is likely to balk at such concepts and may dismiss them as belonging to a bygone era, numerous case studies are documented in Anderson’s books of counselees gaining swift and lasting relief from serious conditions through this integrated approach (e.g. Anderson, 1990, p. 148; Anderson et al., p. 150).

Perhaps the Christian psychologist who is best known for researching and presenting the biblical concepts within mainstream psychology is Everett Worthington, Professor of the Department of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. Through his research and publishing of books on “forgiveness” he hopes to show the value of this “tool” in reconciling and transforming relationships (Worthington, 2006, 2005). By developing and researching a programme called Forgiving and Reconciling through Experiencing Empathy (FREE), Worthington has made available an evidence-based intervention that can be used by counsellors of various persuasions. While packaging the Christian concept of forgiveness for a general market, Worthington cautions that “forgiveness must fit the belief system of the person employing it. If not, forgiveness can be a blunt instrument, not a tool” (Worthington, 2006, p. xii). It is noted that the process of overcoming “bitterness” through receiving “grace,” and understanding the power of forgiveness, is a key principle presented in the MARC course.

Here in New Zealand, Pastor and therapist Diane Divett has pioneered and researched (at Doctorate level through Auckland University) the Christian-orientated Refocussing Therapy (RFT). Research has validated the effectiveness of Divett’s approach and she is now in demand, in New Zealand and overseas, to train others in the RFT method. Divett sees most psychological theories as falling short of providing the healing, resolution and fulfilment of unmet needs available when a person connects with “God’s empowering presence” (Divett, 2006, p. 1) This connection occurs through helping a person to locate, access and develop their “God spaces,” thus shifting their focus and freeing them from binding issues in their lives (p. 1).

As already noted, in the Corrections field some opportunity is being afforded Christian-based programmes to prove their efficacy. A 20-bed Christian-focus unit has been operating at



Manawatu Prison for many years, and in 2003 the 60-bed “faith-based” unit opened at Rimutaka Prison in partnership with Prison Fellowship New Zealand (PFNZ). Although the brief MARC intervention differs greatly in format from the more comprehensive PFNZ prison programme, it draws upon the same biblical foundation and thus relies upon the same spiritual change elements. A PFNZ publication describes their work as “a ministry of transformation, restoration and reconciliation,” and through “a process of faith development and Christian encounter, inmates take responsibility for their behaviour ...” (PFNZ, Promotional Brochure-a). It is noted that Prison Fellowship International (PFI) is now the world’s largest volunteer organisation involved in prison work. With 45,000 trained volunteers in the US alone, its founder, Charles Colson, has received international acclaim for his contribution to criminal rehabilitation (Bolkas, 2002; McDaniel et al., 2005). While overseas research supports the effectiveness of such faith-based prison programmes (Johnson & Larson, 2003; McDaniel et al., 2005; Parsons & Warner-Robbins, 2002), research is still in progress to determine outcomes from New Zealand initiatives.

## **2.4 Similarities between MARC and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy**

In development of the Christian-based MARC programme, there was initially no intention to integrate its biblical approach with any particular psychological theory. However, research in the Corrections field, with the emergent principles of effective interventions, had a significant influence on the MARC development. Andrews and Bonta’s (2003) emphasis on cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) fitted well with MARC’s central theme of shifting maladaptive core beliefs and removing root problems. Anti-social behaviour, emotions and cognitions provided an entry point for MARC to uncover spiritual dysfunction and introduce an offender to a biblical solution (Appendix A). Biblical concepts such as “strongholds” of false thinking (2 Cor. 10:4-5) and “lies” from “the devil” (John 8:44, Acts 13:10) are seen as having a close parallel with CBT’s notion of maladaptive cognitive processes. Then biblical solutions, such as confession, repentance, forgiveness and renouncing of lies, are presented as powerful ways of escaping the past and beginning a new way of thinking (Anderson et al., 2000; Backus, 2000; Worthington, 2006). While many MARC participants are unfamiliar with the Christian worldview, and are usually not ready to fully embrace this new way of thinking, MARC aims to start them on a



journey of spiritual and cognitive change – a change that will lead them away from offending, and eventually into a more responsible way of life.

## **2.5 The Spiritual Dimension of MARC**

While MARC may have similarities to cognitive-behavioural interventions, it is the spiritual dimension that makes it distinctly different. To understand how MARC intends to go beyond changing maladaptive cognitions and focuses on bringing about spiritual change, an understanding is needed of the Christian view of human spirituality. It is widely accepted by Christians that the bible presents a tripartite model of humankind, consisting of “body, soul and spirit” (1 Thess. 5:23). The spirit is identified as the heart of man that is designed to be the dwelling place of God (Isaiah 57:15, Eph. 3:16-17). Without God at the centre, our lives become spiritually dead and we are unable to receive inspiration and power to live as God intended (Eph. 2:1-3) (Appendix E). In order to bring about a spiritual rebirth (John 3:3), a number of factors must come into play.

*Please note that the following factors are described from a Christian viewpoint using biblical terminology.*

### **2.5.1 The Authority Factor**

Although the authority of the bible is often a topic of fierce debate, mainstream orthodox Christians generally accept its claim to be the inspired word of God and the final authority on matters of conduct, faith and doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16). The fact that it was written by more than 40 authors, from various walks of life, on three different continents (Africa, Asia and Europe), over a 1,600 year period, writing in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) on numerous controversial topics, and yet it reads as one unfolding story with unity and harmony of thought, strongly points to its spiritual and supernatural origins (Comfort, 2003; McDowell & Stewart, 1993). The numerous Old Testament messianic prophecies that were perfectly fulfilled hundreds of years later in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is further evidence supporting its divine authority (Strobel, 1998). Christians believe that when a person accepts the authority of the bible, and starts responding to the “truth” it contains, then a spiritual



transformation begins to take place (John 8:32, Heb. 4:12). The bible is used as an authoritative foundation for everything that is taught on the MARC programme, with the goal of facilitating spiritual change.

### 2.5.2 The Prayer Factor

Central to the Christian worldview is the essential role of prayer in opening the way for change in the natural world. The bible teaches "...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16), "... we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," and therefore Christians need to be "... praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance ..." (Eph. 6:12, 18). In seeking to redirect young men away from destructive lifestyles, MARC recognizes that there is a spiritual battle that needs to be won through effective, fervent and persistent prayer. Vital to the effectiveness of MARC is the commitment of the facilitator to pray daily for each participant from the time they volunteer for the programme and throughout the follow-up period (Appendix W). The facilitator is supported in prayer by church prayer teams.

### 2.5.3 The Fear Factor

As a MARC participant comes to understand that the cause and effect nature of physical laws has a similar counterpart in the moral realm (Appendix G), a healthy fear of undesirable consequences can develop. In the same way that a person would fear falling to their death on a slippery mountainside, they also need to fear the destructive end that results from the slippery slide of moral decline. The biblical concept of the "the fear of the Lord" involves a person coming to realise that God has established loving moral boundaries to protect humankind from harming self and others. The fear and awe that a person may experience as they look over the edge of the Grand Canyon is similar to what can be experienced when a person understands the awesome power of God and the certainty of just consequences for "stepping over the edge" morally. The bible teaches that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ..." (Prov. 9:10) and "... by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil" (Prov. 16:6).



#### 2.5.4 The Grace Factor

When John Newton, the callous, hard-living slave-trader was converted to Christianity in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, he penned the words of a famous hymn “amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.” The biblical term “grace” can be defined as the undeserved favour of God poured out upon the human race (John 1:16, Eph. 1:7-8, 2:8). In our lost and wretched state, God took upon himself the punishment for our law-breaking, to rescue us from eternal death and reconcile us back to himself (Rom. 5:17, 20-21). In addition to this redemptive grace, God seeks to empower and equip us through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, thus enabling us to break free from sinful habits and find our true life purpose (John 15:26, Acts 1:8, Rom. 8: 12-13). While pride blocks a person from receiving grace (James 4:6), the hard experiences of life and suffering consequences for wrong-doing can make them more open to God. Stubborn pride gives way to redeeming grace and the process of spiritual change begins (2 Cor. 12: 9-10). Sometimes the harsh realities of prison life can make a person more open to receiving grace and thus allowing spiritual change to take place.

#### 2.5.5 The Love Factor

The New Testament writers used the Greek word “agapé” to describe the unselfish, self-sacrificing, unconditional love that is the foundation of the Christian worldview. The bible teaches that “... God is love (agapé)” (1 John 4:8, 16), that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbour as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). This is in contrast to more self-seeking types of love, such as brotherly love (philéō) and sexual love (eros). The bible teaches that when religious action is not grounded in agapé love, it becomes worthless human action and can even be offensive to others (1 Cor. 13:1-2). Agapé love cannot be produced by self-effort, but needs to be spiritually imparted – “... the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit ...” (Romans 5:5). As the MARC participants are introduced to God’s agapé love, this begins a spiritual process where they can learn to love in this way – “We love (agapé) Him because He first loved (agapéd) us” (1 John 4:19).

#### 2.5.6 The Revelation Factor

Another biblical concept of great importance in bringing about spiritual change is divine revelation. The bible teaches that when the human spirit is empty of God’s presence, it is open



to deceptive influences that “blind” a person to biblical truth – “If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News ...” (2 Cor. 4:3-4 New Living Translation). God gains access to the closed human mind through the human spirit, bringing a revelation of truth. This access is facilitated by the prayers and witness of Christians. Revelation can bypass mental roadblocks and can sometimes bring dramatic change. The conversion of Saul, the obsessed persecutor of Christians who later became the great Apostle Paul, is an example of the power of revelation (Acts 9:1-19).

#### **2.5.7 The Conscience Factor**

The conscience is seen as a function of the spirit and is calibrated by connection with God’s Holy Spirit (Rom. 8: 1-2, 1 Cor. 6:11). Without this regular adjustment it becomes like a clock that has slowed down to the point of being worthless. By awakening and re-calibrating a person’s conscience to right and wrong on a spiritual level, MARC seeks to bring about a shift in thinking that will act as a deterrent to future criminal conduct.

### **2.6 The Goal of the MARC Intervention**

It is accepted that established, recidivist offenders are “hard to rehabilitate” and can be “extremely resistant to change” (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Corrections, 2001, p. 6; Wilson, 2004). Attempting to stop a high-risk, persistent offender from breaking the law is like trying to stop a moving train. You are unlikely to bring it to an abrupt standstill, but hope to slow it down in preparation for stopping. This research project seeks to examine whether helping offenders awaken their conscience, realise their moral responsibility, become more God-fearing, experience agapé love, receive truth and revelation, and discover ways to solve problems on a spiritual level, will slow down the rate and seriousness of their offending. In the brief 10-hour MARC intervention it is not expected to bring offending to a complete standstill, but it is intended that some spiritual change will occur, providing motivation to change anti-social ways of thinking, to have less contact with anti-social associates, and move away from anti-social behaviour (i.e., less offending).



## **CHAPTER 3      METHOD**

### **3.1    Design**

Due to the ethical and practical considerations outlined below this study adopted a quasi-experimental A-B design, consisting of a seven single case studies with offender volunteers from within the Department of Corrections. Measures before and after the MARC intervention were used to look for evidence of cognitive and behavioural change. As an external researcher working with participants under the jurisdiction of Corrections, only limited access was given to offender information. Having been granted permission to obtain research data solely from MARC volunteers, meant that it was not possible to include a control group of non-MARC participants. Priority was given to the needs of participants, with a goal of protecting their anonymity and minimising the intrusion of research requirements into the delivery of the programme. Ten one-hour sessions were delivered either weekly or twice-weekly in a series of one-on-one interactions with the programme facilitator. Five participants were prison inmates and two were being supervised by a probation officer in the community. It is readily acknowledged that in the natural setting of the counselling room, at a prison or in the community, there was limited ability to control important variables in this research. Threats to its internal validity were likely present, such as uncontrolled influences from home or the prison environment, possible selection bias due to using volunteers, change occurring due to maturation of participants, deficiencies in the measures used and the influence of experimenter expectations (Kazdin, 2003).

While the choice of the less rigorous quasi-experimental A-B design limits the conclusions that can be drawn, it does takes the research beyond mere observations within treatment to include observations from repeated measures in the period before and after the MARC course (Barlow & Hersen, 1984; Kazdin, 2003). These measures were used to indicate level of offending, significance of criminal associations, degree of anti-social attitudes and risk of further offending. As the A-B single case design cannot rule out the influence of confounding variables, it is accepted that observation of change from pre-intervention measures are only correlational in nature, and any evidence of change does not necessarily establish cause and



effect relationships between therapy and outcome (Barlow & Hersen, 1984). Despite these limitations, the A-B case study design can still give some indication of treatment efficacy, and is particularly useful when beginning research into a new form of therapy or when it is not feasible to have a control group, or repeatedly introduce and withdraw treatment variables. Barlow and Hersen assert that among the important functions of the case study is its contribution to the “generation of new hypotheses, which later may be subjected to more rigorous experimental scrutiny” (p. 67).

Another limitation of the single-case design is the generality of findings. Can the results from a single case be replicated in other studies? Replication studies with similar results would be needed to give strength to single case findings. However, in terms of external validity or generality of findings Barlow and Hersen (1984) contend that “a series of single-case designs in similar clients in which the original experiment is directly replicated three or four times can far surpass the experimental group/no-treatment control group design” (p. 58). While neither design addresses generality across different therapists or settings, replicating single case studies enables examination of the individual characteristics of each participant. From this additional information it may be possible to determine which type of participant responds best to the intervention. In group studies there is a blurring of individual differences, and the statistical analysis of results can mask the fact that the treatment was effective for certain cases. Making the distinction between clinical vs. statistical significance, Barlow and Hersen (1984) note that if a few members of an experimental group respond favourably to treatment, while others fail to improve and some deteriorate, then statistically the experimental group may appear the same as the unchanged control group. In such trials the clinical effects are averaged out, leading the researcher to overlook “the marked effectiveness of these treatments on some clients” (p. 38). While visual inspection is the most commonly used but relatively insensitive method of evaluating single case data, it can be regarded as reliable when marked effects are evident. Applied research using single-case design has “emphasized the importance of searching for potent intervention effects and subjecting the data to visual inspection rather than statistical evaluation” (p. 291; Kazdin, 2003).



Although offending behaviour is the most salient measure in this study, the intermittent nature of this type of behaviour makes it difficult to establish a pre-intervention baseline. A further problem is that offending patterns, obtained from LES conviction data, only relate to offending for which the participant was caught and a conviction entered. For some offenders this may represent only a small percentage of their actual criminal activity. In an attempt to determine a more accurate level of offending behaviour, this study uses an additional self-report measure of offending.

Due to the small size of the MARC sample, the constraints on data collecting, and the limitations of the single case A-B design, it was not feasible to use a statistical method to examine the significance of test results. However, visual inspection of pre and post-intervention measures, along with the characteristics of each individual case, has been used to give an indication of the clinical significance of the MARC intervention. In dealing with recidivist offenders, whose entrenched pattern of offending and high risk rating indicate a strong resistance to change, then any evidence of a reduction in criminality warrants further investigation. Of particular interest would be any evidence of a marked level of change, indicating possible potent intervention effects. Minor fluctuations in attitude or behaviour from pre-intervention measures during the 12-month follow-up would be treated as insignificant, given the lack of precision in the A-B design.

### **3.2 Participants and Setting**

The seven participants were recruited through Wanganui Community Probation Service and Wanganui Prison. The target group were male offenders, 17 – 26 years of age, assessed on two risk measures as being of medium to high risk of future serious offending. The community-based participants attended weekly sessions at an interview room in the town of Marton. From five candidates who were referred by a local probation officer, one failed to return after the first session, another relocated elsewhere, and a third was arrested but later requested to complete the programme in prison. This request to deliver MARC within the prison, coupled with a lack of referrals from Community Probation, led to a shift in the make-up of the MARC participants.



Thus, the original plan to recruit offenders in the community was modified to include prison inmates.

In order to establish pre and post-intervention levels of offending, prison candidates needed to be serving relatively short prison sentences (less than two years), and be approaching the end of their sentence. To enable easier post-release follow-up contact, inmates were also selected on the basis that they would likely be living in the lower North Island upon release. Inmates who had attended a Corrections rehabilitative programme during their current prison sentence were ineligible, as this would have introduced a confounding variable where change could be attributed to the earlier programme. Out of six inmates meeting the criteria, four volunteered for the programme, plus the one who had commenced MARC in the community. The five prison volunteers opted for twice-weekly sessions, held in prison interview rooms.

Usually when an offender enrolls in a rehabilitative programme, they are either well motivated to address their offending behaviour, or they are under compulsion by a court or prison requirement. Sometimes there are incentives, such as: if a programme is successfully completed then their probation reporting will become less frequent, or for inmates it could result in an earlier release from prison. In the case of the MARC research, ethical requirements prohibited any form of compulsion. The only incentives offered were an achievement certificate, course folder and bible, to be presented upon completion. While the two community volunteers (Participants D & F) showed some motivation to reduce their offending, encouragement from their probation officer also seemed to help maintain attendance. Similarly, most of the prison volunteers showed some desire to address their offending, but it was evident that MARC was also seen as a way to add variety to their mundane prison schedule. This was particularly so for Participant E, who appeared to have minimal inclination to stop offending. The fact that MARC could be completed in a short time-frame, in the privacy of one-on-one sessions and with flexibility in attendance times, seemed to help make MARC attractive to participants. Perhaps with the exception of Participants C & G, there was no indication that volunteers were attracted to MARC by its spiritual basis. Some in fact showed a degree of apprehension about this, and required reassurance that the programme would not attempt to coerce them into changing their beliefs.



Candidates were presented with an information sheet and consent form by the researcher, outlining procedures, content, philosophy and requirements of the programme. These forms had been approved by the Massey University and Ministry of Health ethics committees. In signing the consent form volunteers agreed to be part of the study, to have conviction data viewed, and to participate in follow-up assessments. While all participants had the option of withdrawing from the course at any stage without penalty, seven of the eight volunteers who went beyond the first session completed the programme.

The following brief profiles of the seven MARC participants come largely from self-reported information and the LES criminal and traffic history printout. Their recorded age is at the time of commencing MARC, and their risk rating represents the highest recorded RoC\*RoI measure in the months immediately prior to attending MARC. The RoC\*RoI rating system will be explained in more detail under the list of measures.

### 3.2.1 Participant A

Participant A is a New Zealand European/Pakeha, aged 25, with a high risk rating. An active gang member, he remarked “we all grew up together – it’s my whole life.” Raised in a dysfunctional family, with his father frequently absent, at age 12 his parents permanently separated. Three years later his father committed suicide. Shoplifting began at age 8 – 10, and first contact with the police was at age 12. A year later he was no longer attending school. He has never had stable employment. Since the age of 17 he amassed 45 convictions in the adult court and received eight terms of imprisonment. His offending includes theft, burglary, driving whilst disqualified, drug possession and manufacture, male assaults female, breach of court orders, interference with and taking of motor vehicles. In recent years he has been in prison more than at large. There was no disclosure of any previous religious history. The first three MARC sessions were attended prior to his arrest and imprisonment. He later completed the programme while on remand in Wanganui Prison.

### 3.2.2 Participant B

Participant B is a New Zealand Māori, aged 26, with medium risk rating. He has gang connections, but is not a gang member. Although his parents have remained together, he



reported a history of family strife and alcohol abuse, and noted that he was permitted to drink alcohol and smoke cannabis within the home. He reported that he was expelled from school at age 16 after “giving a guy a hiding,” and went “haywire” from age 19 after accidentally killing an elderly man with his vehicle. Despite substance abuse and an unstable lifestyle, he has managed to engage in periods of seasonal employment as a bushman. Offending began at age 14 with burglaries and selling drugs. Since the age of 18 he has amassed 17 convictions in the adult court for offences that include theft, burglary, driving with excess breath alcohol (5), driving whilst disqualified, drug possession and supply. He has had no previous involvement with the Christian faith. MARC was completed while an inmate at Wanganui prison. He was released at the end of the course, having served half of a nine month term for burglary, drink driving and disqualified driving.

### 3.2.3 Participant C

Participant C is a New Zealand Māori, aged 25, with a high risk rating. He recently quit his gang membership after over 10 years of active involvement. He reported an abusive and violent upbringing, mainly from his father. His parents separated when he was aged 7 and his mother died two years later. At age 13 he left school and joined a gang after being “kicked out of home” by his father. Graffiti and stealing began around this time. He has never had stable employment. Since the age of 16 he has amassed 41 convictions. These include theft, burglary, common assault, breach of court orders, driving excess breath alcohol, male assaults female, threatening to kill/do grievous bodily harm, escaping custody and wilful damage. Although he commenced MARC with some understanding of Christian beliefs, this had not been a significant part of his upbringing. He completed MARC while an inmate at Wanganui Prison, serving a five month sentence for breach of community work and failure to answer bail.

### 3.2.4 Participant D

Participant D is a New Zealand European/Pakeha, aged 25, who had a medium risk rating prior to attending MARC. While he had the benefit of a reasonably stable upbringing with supportive parents, he commented that they were “pretty easy-going” and he had “a lot of freedom.” He remembers an upsetting time, at age 10, when his parents went through a “bad patch” with frequent “yelling and arguments.” Performing poorly at school, he got in trouble for smoking,



drinking and truanting, and left at age 15. Having commenced consuming beer and spirits at age 12, he was soon also using cannabis. On his first encounter with the police at age 13, he was castigated for driving a motorbike in town. Since the age of 18 he has had nine convictions in the adult court, including dangerous driving, driving with excess breath alcohol (3) and possession of cannabis oil. He has had no previous involvement with the Christian faith. He attended MARC soon after being released from prison, having served half of a five month term for drink driving and cultivating cannabis.

### 3.2.5 Participant E

Participant E is a New Zealand European/Pakeha, aged 20 years, with a high risk rating. Experiencing abandonment by his parents from a young age, he grew up in a series of foster homes. While having had no contact with his mother since infancy, he has seen his father on a few occasions, but remarked that they “don’t get on.” Committing his first burglary at age 5, with an older brother, “stealing stuff” soon became an entrenched habit and often resulted in removal from foster homes. At age 14 he first experienced “lock-up,” and has since served six terms of imprisonment. He is an active gang member, and noted that almost all of his associates are members of the gang. Generally he is unemployed, and of no fixed abode, when not in jail. His 42 convictions include dangerous driving, driving while disqualified, wilful damage, breach of court orders, possession of offensive weapons, unlawfully taking motor vehicles, burglary, wilful trespass, shoplifting and receiving. His previous involvement with the Christian faith was minimal. He attended MARC while serving half of a one year term of imprisonment for disqualified driving, dangerous driving and breach of court release conditions.

### 3.2.6 Participant F

Participant F is a New Zealand European/Pakeha, aged 19 years, with a medium risk rating, but just marginally below the “high risk” cut-off point. Growing up in an unstable home environment, he experienced violence from his first stepfather during early childhood and had negligible contact with his “real dad.” For an 18 month period around age 11, when he was “playing up at school and not communicating,” he was sent to live with friends of the family. He remembers “moving a lot,” going to many different schools and being frequently bullied during his childhood. Another painful memory is the death of his second stepfather, by suicide,



when he was aged 16. He reported that he was “always in trouble” at school and has been mainly unemployed since leaving. His first police contact was for “running away from home,” and at age 15 he was apprehended with a friend “breaking into a car.” In just over the two years prior to commencing MARC he accumulated 17 convictions in the adult court and has served two short terms of imprisonment. His offences include unlawfully taking a motor vehicle, thefts, breach of court orders, dangerous driving, disorderly behaviour likely to cause violence, cultivating cannabis, possession of utensils (for drugs) and disqualified driving. He has had no previous involvement with the Christian faith. MARC was completed while on probationary supervision for common assault.

### 3.2.7 Participant G

Participant G is a New Zealand Māori, aged 19, with a high risk rating. Although his upbringing was fairly stable and supportive, he reported being deeply affected by the death of his father at age 13. Another upsetting memory is being “kicked out of school” at age 16 due to his poor attendance. He had performed well the previous year, and “felt hurt” that it was “instant with no second chance.” At that time he had “a passion” for skateboarding, but later gained steady employment. At age 16 he had begun mixing with criminal friends and was soon to appear in the Youth Court for unlawfully getting into a motor vehicle. While he has only five convictions in the adult court, three are for aggravated robbery (with associates). It was evident at the commencement of MARC that he had gained some understanding of Christian beliefs during his upbringing. MARC was completed in Wanganui Prison during a 12 month sentence for the robbery offences, and was released after serving half of this term.

## 3.3 Measures

The measures used in this research project are outlined below. Beginning with risk measures to ensure the selection of medium to high risk offenders, these were followed by pre and post intervention assessments of offending behaviour and measures of criminal associations and antisocial attitudes. A social desirability scale was used to give an indication of whether questionnaires had been filled in appropriately, or perhaps had been influenced by a desire to “look good” to the researcher. Risk was measured using the Department of Corrections



computer-based Risk of Conviction/Risk of Imprisonment (RoC\*RoI), and the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). Conviction history was obtained from the police Law Enforcement System (LES), and additional offending could be disclosed by participants on a self-report measure (MSMO). The Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA), and the Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO), probed antisocial attitudes, associates and other factor that could contribute to on-going offending. Finally, the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) was used to check for approval-seeking respondents who might be inclined to inflate test results to present themselves in an overly positive way.

Constraints on the availability of the participants, and a degree of reluctance in filling out questionnaires, meant that assessments were administered on only three occasions. While some participants showed deficiencies in written expression, literacy appeared to be of a sufficient level to understand and complete the various assessment forms. Participant data was collected from LES, MSMO, MCAA, SPSIO and MCSDS at the beginning of MARC, and at intervals 6 and 12 months post-intervention. Data from risk measures (RoC\*RoI and YLS/CMI) was collected only once to ensure that all participants met the criteria of being medium to high risk offenders. As far as possible these assessment documents were kept confidential and anonymous. Names were not recorded, but an identifying number, known only to the participant and researcher, was used to collate the completed measures. In order to minimize errors, the scoring and collating of data from the measurement instruments was checked by an assistant researcher.

### **3.4 Measures of Risk**

In keeping with the “risk principle” outlined in chapter one, it was important in the selection process of this study to be able to determine the risk level of potential participants. Under the risk principle, offenders assessed as being at higher risk of reoffending and imprisonment should be the focus of treatment resources (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; McLaren, 1992). Low risk offenders are viewed as being better off with little or no intervention. While the short MARC course could be viewed as “little intervention,” and therefore appropriate for lower risk



offenders, such participants are likely to stop offending without intervention and therefore it would be difficult to attribute any post-intervention improvement to the influence of the programme.

#### 3.4.1 Risk of ReConviction\*Risk of Imprisonment (RoC\*RoI)

To predict the likelihood of an offender committing further serious offences, the RoC\*RoI tool is used. RoC\*RoI is a computer-based measure used throughout the Department of Corrections within their Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS). The Department website explains that the asterisk (\*) means “multiplied by” and thus the measure involves multiplying an offender’s “Risk of ReConviction” with their “Risk of Imprisonment” (Corrections, 2006f, p. 1). Social and demographics variables, such as age and gender, along with criminal history variables (e.g. age when offending started, time not incarcerated since 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, seriousness of offences and time between offences) are given a mathematical weighting to predict overall risk. Research has shown the RoC\*RoI score to be more accurate than the predictions of trained experts (Corrections, 2006c). Risk of re-conviction along with risk of imprisonment is used in combination to give a better prediction of the seriousness of future offending. A score of 0.00 – 0.49 is considered low risk and indicates a 0 – 49% likelihood of future serious offending. Medium risk offenders score in the range of 0.50 – 0.64 (i.e. a 50 – 64% likelihood of serious recidivism). Those most at risk of further serious offending are found in the high range of 0.65 – 1.00 (i.e. 65 – 100% likelihood of serious recidivism) (Corrections, 2006f; Wilson, 2004).

The Corrections Department readily acknowledges that RoC\*RoI is limited to measuring static variables and that other factors, such as problematic accommodation, employment or financial circumstances, can contribute to increased risk (Bakker, Riley, & O'Malley, 1999). The on-line Community Probation Service (CPS) operations manual instructs that in the case of offenders with convictions for serious violence, child sex abuse, domestic violence, and persistent driving offences, low RoC\*RoI scores may need to be “over-ridden” as these offence types are known to have a high degree of recidivism (Corrections, 2006f).



### 3.4.2 Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)

RoC\*RoI's reliance on static variables make it a standardised instrument that is efficient to use and free from time-consuming evaluations (Bakker et al., 1999). However, its inability to measure dynamic risk factors, such as dysfunctional family circumstances, antisocial associates and substance abuse, could result in it underestimating level of risk for some offenders. As a second risk measure in this research, the Department of Corrections provided the YLS/CMI. This measure is based on dynamic risk factors and has been found to have a moderate correlation ( $r = .55$ ) with RoC\*RoI (Wilson & Rolleston, 2004). The use of this additional risk measure is in keeping with Corrections Psychological Services recommendation that multiple measures of risk be used "to reduce decision error when treatment is being targeted at those in greatest need" (Wilson & Rolleston, p. 3).

YLS/CMI originates from the Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI) developed by Donald Andrews in the early 1980's. In the mid 1990's this was updated by Andrews and Bonta to the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Hodge & Andrews, 2002). While YLS/CMI is geared toward youth offenders, Corrections Psychological Service advised that it could still give an accurate indication of risk for the older MARC participants. This measure is firmly based on the risk, need and responsivity principles outlined in Chapter One, and is derived from Andrews and Bonta's (2003) "Big Eight" factors that are predictive of future criminal behaviour (p. 86).

An interview with the offender, and information from other sources, is used to assess for criminogenic needs in the areas of antisocial attitudes, delinquent peer associations, history of antisocial behaviour, dysfunctional family circumstances, antisocial personality patterns, substance abuse and problematic circumstances at school or work. The sum of scores from each of these key areas in this 42-item assessment gives the overall risk level. A total score of 0 – 8 indicates a low risk of recidivism, 9 – 22 a moderate risk, and over 22 a high risk of future offending (Hodge & Andrews, 2002). In this study the sources of information were largely restricted to the participant and their previous conviction list. Additional information from other sources may have uncovered more factors that could have contributed to a higher overall score.



However, keeping within what was authorised by the Ethics Committees, and having limited access to official information, prevented a more comprehensive analysis.

### **3.5 Measures of Anti-social Attitudes/Associates and Criminogenic Thinking**

#### **3.5.1 Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO)**

Using a social problem solving model, Corrections psychologist, Paul Whitehead, has developed the SPSIO as a screening instrument for selecting candidates for the Departments' cognitive skills ("Straight Thinking") programme. Social problem solving has to do with the behavioural and cognitive strategies used to deal with everyday problems. As deficits in this area have been linked to offending behaviour, Straight Thinking was developed as an intervention to improve an offender's ability to solve problems in a non-criminal way. Whitehead (2000) describes SPSIO as "a psychometric test that measures an individual's criminogenic thinking around six core psychological constructs" (p. 1). These constructs are identified as: *impulsivity*, *avoidance*, *positive problem orientation*, *negative problem orientation*, *rational problem solving* and *antisocial distortions and criminal companions*. The first five are sub-constructs of the social problem solving construct, developed through the work of Maydeu-Olivares and D'Zurilla (1995, 1996, cited in Whitehead, 2002). In order to better orientate the social problem solving inventory for use with criminal offenders, Whitehead has added the sixth construct, which he describes as a measure of *antisocial distortions and criminal companions*. While this added construct makes up almost a third of the questions (30 of the 99) in the SPSIO assessment, only two questions directly relate to criminal companions ("My friends break the law" and "My friends don't see that there is any real problem with me breaking the law"). Criminal attitudes and antisocial ways of thinking is clearly the focus of the sixth construct, and therefore in the MARC research the title of this measure has been abbreviated to *antisocial attitudes*.

SPSIO is a 99-item Likert scale self-report inventory. In addition to *antisocial attitudes*, the SPSIO constructs that seemed most indicative of criminogenic thinking were *impulsivity* and *negative problem orientation*. While *antisocial attitudes* is used as a key indicator of improved thinking in the results section, scores for *impulsivity* and *negative problem orientation* are also included. Whitehead (2000) describes *impulsivity* a way of problem solving that involves acting



on impulse or emotion without considering the best solution to a problem (e.g. “if it feels good, do it” and “I often act on the first idea that comes to my head”). *Negative problem orientation* describes a level of negative belief used in dealing with everyday problems (e.g. “problems get me down” and “I never get a good deal in life”). *Antisocial distortions* give an indication of antisocial attitudes and criminally orientated ways of thinking (e.g. “rules are made to be broken” and “no one pushes me around and gets away with it”).

Testing within the Department of Corrections has verified the reliability and validity of the SPSIO measure. It has been shown to reliably discriminate between groups of pro-social and anti-social respondents across all six test areas. Initial field trials used Correctional staff for the pro-social group and offenders referred to Straight Thinking for the antisocial group. From this study, cut-off criterion scores were established for each of the six scales (Whitehead, 2000). Later testing showed test-retest reliability across subscales as ranging from .64 (*positive problem orientation*) and .93 (*antisocial distortions*), and 77% of SPSIO items had test-retest reliability within their respective subscales of above .84. Both internal and external convergent validity, as well as discriminant, criterion and face validity of the SPSIO scales has also been demonstrated (Whitehead, 2003).

In selecting offenders for the Straight Thinking programme, the SPSIO measure used the criterion score of each category as a thresholds beyond which a respondent showed evidence of criminogenic thinking. A score equal to or deviating from the criterion score in a negative direction indicated that the candidate has a skill deficit on that particular social problem solving construct. In order to visually present the MARC results, skill deficits on each of the constructs are represented by the amount of negative deviation from the SPSIO thresholds. Beginning from a position 20 points below the threshold, bar-graphs are used to show whether the participant has scored above the threshold (indicating problematic or criminogenic thinking). Due to the *antisocial distortions* construct being the most relevant to this research, it has been highlighted with a bolder colour on the bar-graphs in the results section.



### 3.5.2 Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)

MCAA was developed by Jeremy Mills and Daryl Kroner in the late 1990's in response to the weight of research making the connection between antisocial attitudes and associates, with antisocial behaviour. In a meta-analysis of a number of predictors of criminal behaviour, it was found that antisocial attitudes/associates had the strongest correlation with criminal conduct (Gendreau, Goggin, ChanteLoupe & Andrews, 1992, cited in Mills & Kroner, 2001). Mills and Kroner noted that the inter-relationship between antisocial attitudes and anti-social associates is also well-supported in research literature. A number of studies have found that where a person's attitudes are reinforced by the norms of their peer group, the relationship between attitude and behaviour is much stronger. This suggests that antisocial attitudes are more likely to be expressed in criminal actions when these attitudes and actions are the norm within the participant's circle of friends.

The MCAA scale is comprised of two parts. Part A is a self-report, quantifiable measure of criminal associates, indicating the frequency and time spent with criminal associates and their level of criminality. Combining this information produces the "*Criminal Friend Index*," giving each respondent a rating from 0 – 64 that is indicative of the level of their criminal associations. Part B is a 46-item questionnaire where respondents answer by agreeing or disagreeing with each item. It is designed to measure the four domains of *attitudes towards violence*, *attitudes towards entitlement*, *antisocial intent* and *attitudes towards associates*. Apart from the associates' domain, with a maximum score of 10, the other domains have a maximum score of 12 (indicating strength of antisocial attitude). Upon examining the items on the *attitudes towards associates* domain it was evident that they were mainly factual statements, relating to actual involvement with criminal friends, rather than attitudes per se. Items such as "*I know several people who have committed crime*," and "*I have committed a crime with friends*," do not change over time, even when a participant is no longer associating with these criminal friends. For these reasons this domain was not included in the MCAA measure of antisocial attitudes presented in the result section.

The following descriptions of the three antisocial attitude domains used in this study are taken from the user manual. The *violence scale* gives an indication of attitudes that are supportive of



violence. It shows a willingness to use violence to obtain a desired goal. The *entitlement scale* measures attitudes that focus on the right to take whatever they want, based on the egocentric belief that they are taking what they deserve. The *antisocial Intent scale* measures the potential for future anti-social actions, by assessing perceptions of what will guide future behaviour (Mills & Kroner, 2001). The sum of these three scales gives the MCAA level of antisocial attitudes presented on the bar-graphs in the results section (maximum score 36). Also included on these graphs is the level of involvement with criminal associates, taken from the MCAA *criminal friend index*.

Studies conducted with both Canadian offenders and university students demonstrated acceptable reliability of the MCAA measure, as well as convergent, discriminant and criterion validity. This, along with other research, supports the reliability and validity of this instrument as a measure of antisocial attitudes (Mills & Kroner, 2001). Internal consistency, as measured by pre- and post-co-efficient alpha results, ranged from  $\alpha = .63$  for the Entitlement subscale to  $\alpha = .89$  on the total score for Part B. MCAA has also been found to perform well as a predictor of recidivism (Mills, Kroner, & Hemmati, 2004).

### **3.6 Measures of Offending**

#### **3.6.1 Law Enforcement System (LES) – Criminal and Traffic Conviction History**

Previously known as the “Wanganui Computer,” the LES database of criminal and traffic convictions has been in operation for over 25 years. It provides the Police, Corrections, and the Courts with a record of everyone convicted in a New Zealand court of a criminal or traffic offence. The LES printout records the offence, the date it occurred, the sentence date, the sentencing court, the result, and some basic information about the offender (date of birth, gender, ethnicity, occupation). One of the challenges in doing research with offenders is their high level of mobility. However, the LES record provides a measure of criminal convictions occurring before and after MARC, even when the participant cannot subsequently be located. While this printout gives an indication of frequency and seriousness of offending, in some cases it may represent only a small portion of total offending.



Finding a credible way to represent the level of criminal offending across time proved to be a difficult task, with little available by way of precedent. To simply score number of offences committed by an individual within a timeframe ignores the wide variation of seriousness inherent in different types of criminal action. As a high-risk offender moves away from a criminal lifestyle in response to an intervention, it is likely that there will be some residual offending of a less serious nature which would mask a positive outcome when number of reconvictions is all that is measured.

After unsuccessfully attempting to find the source of a British “Gravity of Offence Table” (Appendix Q), or locate a New Zealand equivalent, it was decided (at the suggestion of Corrections psychologist, Paul Whitehead) to develop a New Zealand table for use in this research. Using the British model as a guide, categories of offences were given a gravity rating of 1 – 20 based on considerations such as the severity of penalty normally imposed, degree of harm to victims, level of social disapproval for this type of crime (Appendix R). While determining the gravity score for each offence category involves a degree of subjectivity, these scores were applied in a consistent manner over the pre- and post-MARC measures of offending. This should therefore give a reasonably reliable indication as to whether the rate and seriousness of offending has changed over time.

### 3.6.2 MARC Self-Report Measure of Offending (MSMO)

When efforts to find a suitable self-report measure of offending proved unsuccessful, a simple tool was developed by the researcher for use in the MARC project. A list of 26 of the most common categories of offending was devised from the offending history of the participants and from experience of working in the Corrections field. This measure asks participants to estimate the frequency of their offending in any of the 26 categories over the previous six months (see Appendix S). The accuracy of this measure depends on the willingness of the participant to make such disclosures. In order to allay fears that this information could be used against them, the anonymous and confidential nature of the document was emphasised. Generally it was found that participants were willing to make thorough self-disclosures and seemed to trust the assurances of confidentiality.



The MARC Gravity of Offence Table, used with the LES data, was also used to graph the rate and severity of offending indicated by this measure. In order to prevent excessive weighting being given to certain repetitive and common types of offences, such as drug involvement and breaching court orders, a maximum score was assigned to these categories for repeat offending over a six month period (Appendix R).

### **3.7 Measure of Desirable Responding**

#### **3.7.1 The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS)**

In measuring anti-social attitudes and associates through the SPSIO and the MCAA, the validity of results is dependent upon respondents making considered and honest responses to the items. For many years, psychologists have recognised that such tests can be “influenced by factors other than the manifest content of the items” (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964, p. 3). It has been found that personality tests are particularly vulnerable to distortion through socially desirable responding. Put simply, this is the tendency of an individual to describe themselves in favourable socially desirable terms to achieve the approval of others. As well as those prone to “faking good,” some respondents may pride themselves in their tough, anti-social image and tend to embellish their negative responses, i.e. “faking bad” (Crowne & Marlowe, p. 6). Acquiescence is another source of error, with respondents indicating agreement with all items. In order to encourage frank disclosure on the MARC questionnaires, participants were requested to make honest responses with the assurance of a high level of confidentiality. No names were recorded on test forms and a participant number used for collating information was known only to the participant and the researcher. While this may have helped to minimise approval-seeking errors, the Crowne Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) was used as a check for respondents who may tend to answer in a socially desirable way.

Emerging from David Marlowe’s research into socially desirable responding, the 33-item MCSDS was developed in 1960. It is based on items reflecting a good-bad dimension and likely to be untrue of most people, yet with minimal pathological or abnormal implications. For example, “I’m always willing to admit it when I make a mistake”, “I always try to practice what I preach”, and “I never resent being asked to return a favour” (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964, pp.



23-24). Reliability testing of MCSDS during its development returned a satisfactory result, with an internal consistency coefficient of .88 and a test-retest correlation of .88. In order to check for acquiescence errors, the scale uses reverse keying. Of the 33 items, 18 of the desirable responses are keyed true and represent “good” and culturally sanctioned things to say about oneself. The remaining 15 desirable responses are keyed false, with approval-seeking respondents expected to deny common undesirable characteristics. Out of a maximum of 33, the mean score for a cross-section of the North American population is around 15. By way of comparison, 80 male Californian prisoners had a mean score of 16.73, and 285 female job applicants (told that scores would be considered in hiring) had a mean score of 24.62 (Crowne & Marlowe, pp. 211-212).

### **3.8 Progression of Treatment**

The following is a brief outline of the MARC programme. These sessions represent a presentation of the Christian worldview in terms of how it can solve problems and transform a damaged life. It is readily acknowledged that references to “right and wrong”, “good and evil”, and “truth” are from a Christian perspective. Participants are free to accept or question this point of view. Sessions follow the following sequence.

#### **3.8.1 Session One: Introduction – The Thorn Bush**

The MARC sessions begins with presenting a problem solving model called “Tracing Surface Problems to Root Causes” (Appendix A). Using an analogy of a thorn bush, choices made by ourselves and others are likened to sowing seeds in the ground. Some seeds (choices) produce thorn bushes. The most visible part of these undesirable weeds is “surface problems” (bad habits, behaviours, actions). After identifying their own surface problems on a worksheet (Appendix B), the participant ponders how effective it is to solve these problems by “pruning off the thorns.” Going to the next layer of “surface causes,” the participant is shown how branches of the thorn bush represent emotions and cognitions. Having identified some negative thoughts and feelings on the worksheet, the participant looks at how these influence problematic behaviour. While a change of thinking will tend to change behaviour, the participant is asked to consider whether chopping the thorn bush off at ground level will bring a lasting solution.



Below ground level are three “root problems.” These are biblical constructs that feed negative thoughts and emotions, and are seen as the hidden drivers of unacceptable behaviour. Root problems have come from the “seeds” of wrong moral choices. Showing participants how to identify and resolve root problems and their causes on a spiritual level is the essence of the MARC programme.

### 3.8.2 Session Two: The Root of Bitterness

The biblical construct of “a root of bitterness” (Hebrew 12:15) is explained in simple terms (e.g. holding onto hurt and abuse of the past – staying in the victim role – holding hatred for those who have wronged me – wanting a payback – resentful – bearing a grudge). Examples are given of how bitterness can build up over time through painful experiences, disappointments and abuse. As our lives fill up with bitterness (Appendix C – “The Barrel of Bitterness”), it becomes a destructive force against ourselves and others. The participant is then given an opportunity to identify some of the most hurtful things that have happened to him. The process of releasing bitterness through forgiveness is explained. This includes concepts such as: forgiveness is a choice not a feeling; the guilty party may still need to face legal consequences for their actions even after being forgiven; God can give special power called “grace” to enable us to forgive, and God is able to heal our “broken heart” (Eph. 4:31-32, James 4:1,6, Luke 4:18).

### 3.8.3 Session Three: The Root of Moral Damage

This session looks at two types of law that govern the universe. It begins with a discussion of “physical laws,” or “laws of cause and effect” with examples in the field of physics (e.g. gravity, aerodynamics), chemistry and other sciences. From a Christian perspective, the world is also governed by “moral laws,” or “laws of choices and consequences.” Moral choices, like seeds, can take time before the consequences (germination) become evident (Appendix G). The moral law is summarised in the “Ten Commandments.” These are discussed, and then the Moral Damage Checklist (Appendix H) is used to help the participant identify “bad seeds” they may have been sown.



#### 3.8.4 Session Four: The Root of False Foundations

Using the analogy of our lives being like a building, this session begins with a discussion of the importance of “foundations.” The well-known biblical parable of the “wise man” (who built his house upon the rock) and the “foolish man” (who built his house upon the sand) is reviewed (Matt. 7:24-27). Further discussion centres around what is a “firm foundation” and what it means to build our lives on “shifting sand.” The biblical tripartite model of man consisting of “body, soul and spirit” (1 Thess. 5:23) is illustrated along with the understanding of our spirit being the dwelling place or throne room of God (1 Cor. 6:19, Eph. 3:16, 1 John 4:4). The “soul” is also conceptualised as tripartite, comprising of “mind, will and emotions” (Appendix D). The “will,” where choices are made, was designed to be under the direction of God through his rule in our spirit. When God’s rule is rejected, our spiritual foundation is lost, our mind and emotions then vie for control of the will and we become highly susceptible to invasion by evil influences (Eph. 2:2) (Appendix E). Jesus came to rescue us from spiritual death and give us a solid foundation upon which to build our lives (Appendix F).

#### 3.8.5 Session Five: Moral Law and the Hopeless Pit

The following concepts are discussed: Law is needed to govern human behaviour; Laws must have sanctions (consequences) or they become merely good advice; The punishment must fit the crime; The moral law (Ten Commandments) is contained in the “ultimate law,” namely, love God with all you heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself (Deut. 6:4-5, Lev. 19:18, Matt. 22:37-40); The ultimate law must be upheld by an ultimate sanction, namely “eternal death” (Ezek. 18:20, Rom. 6:23). When we break the ultimate law we find ourselves trapped in a pit of our own making, and are powerless to save ourselves. A wall of sin separates us from God. We can attempt to get out of the “hopeless pit” by building “false ladders” (Appendix I). Due to his love and mercy, God has a rescue plan (Appendix J). This session ends with a brief introduction to the MARC “Twelve Steps to Freedom” model (Appendix K).

#### 3.8.6 Session Six: Step One – Getting Out of Denial

We attempt to excuse and avoid the consequences of our wrong-doing with cognitive distortions such as “minimising, justifying and denial.” The first step to get out of the hopeless pit is to



stop this cover-up by taking responsibility for our moral violations (Prov. 28:13). The biblical concept of the two roads, “the broad road” and “the narrow road” (Matt. 7:13-14), is explained. One of these roads may be easier and more popular, but it has a tragic destination. Repentance involves a change of thinking, followed by a decision to go another way. It requires humility and an acknowledgement of the seriousness of our predicament. It starts with admitting that we are in a trap of our own making and powerless to save ourselves (Ps. 34:18) (Appendix L).

### 3.8.7 Session Seven: Step Two – Believing there is a Way Out

True stories and redemptive analogies are used to illustrate the difficult biblical concept of “atonement.” Discussing these stories and associated questions helps bring understanding of the central Christian theme of God’s redemption of mankind. What motivated John Griffith to sacrifice his only son, Greg, to save a trainload of people from certain death? How can a person, guilty of serious law-breaking and under a sentence of death, be allowed to go free? How did the heroic sacrifice of Bessie Smith enable her fiancé, Basil Underwood, to walk free from Cromwell’s court-ordered execution (Appendix P)? How did the much greater sacrifice by God’s only son, Jesus Christ, brutally executed at the hands of angry men, become sufficient payment for my wrong-doing, enabling me to escape eternal judgement and walk free? Taking Step Two involves deciding whether to believe the biblical account of this historic event (Rom. 10:16-17) (Appendix M).

### 3.8.8 Session Eight: Step Three – Preparing to Choose God’s Way Out

This session is about ensuring the participant clearly understands what is involved in choosing “God’s way.” A shallow decision for God, without understanding of what is involved, will quickly be reneged on. How clearly does the participant understand and accept the following biblical truths?

That he is trapped in his own “desolate pit” (Psalm 40:2). That he, along with the rest of mankind, has “gone astray” and “turned, everyone, to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). He is now under God’s sentence of death (Rom. 3:23). God loves him so much that a huge price was paid to provide a “substitute sentence” for the penalty he deserves (Rom 5:8). He can now choose to receive God’s rescue package and avoid being punished for sin



and lost forever (John 1:9, 3:16). But while this is a free gift, there is a cost involved. The gift is not just about wiping the slate clean, but it is about restoring the forgiven person back to God. This involves giving up the sins of the past, and adopting a whole new way of living. It requires surrender of the heart (mind, will and emotions) to the transforming power of God, allowing God's Spirit to take up residence in the human spirit (Rom. 12:1-2, 1 Cor. 6:19-20, Appendix F).

Step three provides a checklist for the participant to determine whether they are ready to make this crucial choice. It finishes with an optional prayer where the participant can ask God to help them go further (Appendix N).

### 3.8.9 Session Nine: Steps Four to Seven – Confess, Renounce, Surrender

Throughout the MARC sessions a horticultural analogy is used to show how problems are like “weeds” that need to be removed by the roots. Using Jesus’ “parable of the soils” (Luke 8:4-15), it is noted that removing rocks and weeds is the first part of getting the soil ready for the “seeds” of a new beginning. When a person is willing to listen and carefully consider biblical truth, then the “soil” is being turned over in preparation for spiritual transformation. However, if the soil is not fully prepared, then the seed cannot flourish. Steps four to seven explain what is involved in making a genuine Christian commitment. The MARC course is likened to receiving a toolbox. While participants may not yet be ready to use the tools of regeneration found in Christ, they leave the course with spiritual equipment for the future. For those who are sure they are ready, there is a prayer of repentance in the “toolbox” that can be declared during this penultimate session (Appendix O).

### 3.8.10 Session Ten: Step Eight to Twelve – Learning to Walk with God

The MARC sessions concludes by revealing what Christians believe to be the key to lasting change. It covers the following biblical themes:

After the brutal execution of Jesus on a wooden cross, an amazing miracle took place. Three days later he was alive again and communicating with his followers. This was to show the world that he was not just another religious martyr to be remembered and



revered, but he truly was the “Son of God,” the great “I Am,” “the Word” become flesh, God incarnate (John 1:14, 8:58, 14:6). Not only had he made atonement for our sins to wipe the slate clean, but he would now be there to walk with us into our future. As we allow him to lift us out of the “miry bog,” the “desolate pit” (Ps. 40:2), he begins the transforming work of renewing of our minds (Rom 12:2). Jesus is alive, we can talk with him, know him and receive power from him to live right and fulfil our destiny (John 10:27, Acts 1:8, 2 Pet. 1:3).

In order to become established in our new life (2 Cor. 5:17), we must foster a relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, bible reading, and fellowship with other Christians. Learning to hear God’s voice, and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, lifts the Christian way of life from being merely a helpful religious and cultural framework, and transforms it into a daily adventure with the living God (Jer. 29:11, 1 Cor. 2:9).

The MARC participants are left with the challenge of a compassionate God who is pursuing them with love and truth, and who will continue to do so until the end (Luke 19:10, Rom.2:4, 1 Tim. 2:4). It is now up to them to choose what they will do with what they have heard. While on-going support is offered, it is their choice to request this.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

This research project was carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the New Zealand Psychological Society Code of Ethic, 2002. Ethical approval was granted by the Massey University Ethics Committee and the Central Regional Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Health. Approval was also gained from the Department of Corrections to undertake research with Corrections clientele. All participants received an Information sheet (Appendix T) and signed the consent form (Appendix U).

Issues that needed to be addressed before approval was given by the Central Regional Ethics Committee included giving assurance that there would not be any form of coercion in the



recruitment process and that a spiritual mentor or church support group would be available to participants after the programme. They recommended that the follow-up period be extended from six to 12 months. The Department of Corrections requested that a two-year follow-up period be considered, but accepted that this may not be possible due to the time constraints of a Masters Thesis. Assurance was required that MARC would only be offered to offenders who were ineligible for Corrections programmes and that volunteers would be free to withdraw participation without penalty. In order to ensure the robust analysis of risk in selecting candidates, Corrections made available the RoC\*RoI and YLS-CMI measures.

Initial Corrections approval allowed for MARC volunteers to come from the Community Probation Service (CPS), but later approval was extended to allow delivery to inmates within the Public Prison Service (PPS). Although application for ethics approval began in March 2005, CPS approval was not obtained until July and PPS programme facilitator security requirements were not completed until early November. These delays meant that delivery of the MARC programme to the seven volunteers was not completed until February 2006.



## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Overview

It was proposed that the brief 10-hour MARC intervention would begin a process of spiritual change that would be evidenced by cognitive and behavioural change. Spiritual change within the Christian worldview is seen as the process of God awakening the dormant spirit of an unregenerate person (Eph. 2: 1-5; 3: 16-17; 4: 22-24). While this change is hidden and cannot be directly measured, it is evidenced by “fruit” revealed in the thoughts and actions of the person (Matt. 7: 16, 20; Gal. 5:22). The MARC research has used measures of anti-social attitudes and companions (SPSIO and MCAA), and offending behaviour (LES and MSMO), as visual markers of change.

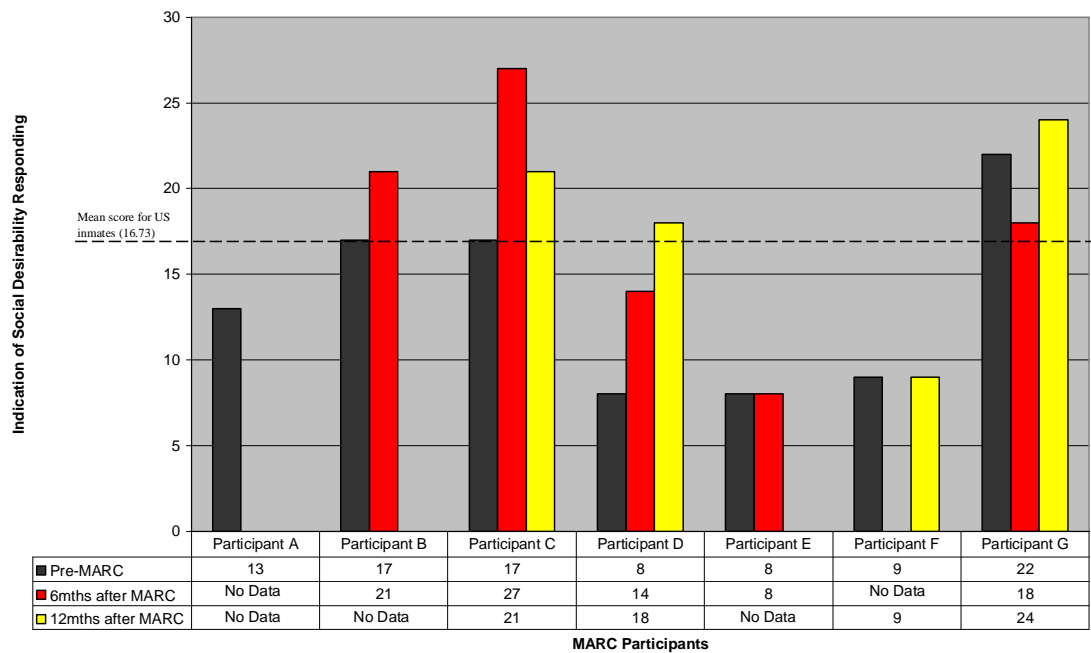
Due to the single case A-B design favouring the use of visual inspection to reveal any marked or “potent” intervention effects (Barlow & Hersen, 1984, p. 291; Kazdin, 2003), the MARC results have been presented in a visual form using bar graphs. In order to visually represent the offending measures (LES and MSMO), and the SPSIO measure, data was converted to a form that could be presented graphically. The process of converting this data for visual presentation was explained under each measure in the previous chapter. The main purpose of these graphs is to look for the amount of change occurring across time, from the pre-MARC assessments at the commencement of the programme to follow-up measures done six and twelve months after MARC.

*The following graphs have been colour coded with black identifying pre-MARC scores, red identifying scores six months after MARC and yellow identifying scores 12 months after MARC. Bolder colours are used to highlight “antisocial attitudes” as the key indicators of cognitive change on the SPSIO bar-graphs. Also, a bold line at the 20-level highlights the SPSIO threshold, indicating where criminogenic thinking begins to be identified. Range and mean score for the MARC sample is shown on both the SPSIO and MCAA graphs.*



#### 4.2 Measure of Desirable Responding from Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS)

Two participants showed significantly elevated scores on the post-MARC MCSDS measures, and one had elevated scores both pre- and post-MARC (Figure 3). This indication of possible desirable responding errors is discussed on a case by case basis along with the results that follow. When presented with the MCSDS assessment after MARC it is possible that some participants viewed it as relating to the six month post-MARC period, rather than relating to life in general. If this were the case, it would tend to elevate their score.



**Figure 3. Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS)**  
*(Maximum possible score is 33 – Mean score for US inmates = 16.73, MARC mean = 15.87)*



### 4.3 Participant A

*Post-intervention data on this person is incomplete. At the six month follow-up they could not be located, and at 12 months they were back in prison and declined to participate. Re-conviction data from LES was the only available information.*

#### 4.3.1 Brief Profile

New Zealand European/Pakeha, aged 25; active gang member; raised in a dysfunctional family; began shoplifting at age 8 – 10; first contact with the police was at age 12; has 45 convictions in the adult court; received eight terms of imprisonment; offending includes theft, burglary, driving whilst disqualified, drug possession and manufacture, male assaults female, breach of court orders, interference with and taking of motor vehicles; attended MARC prior to release from prison in May 2006.

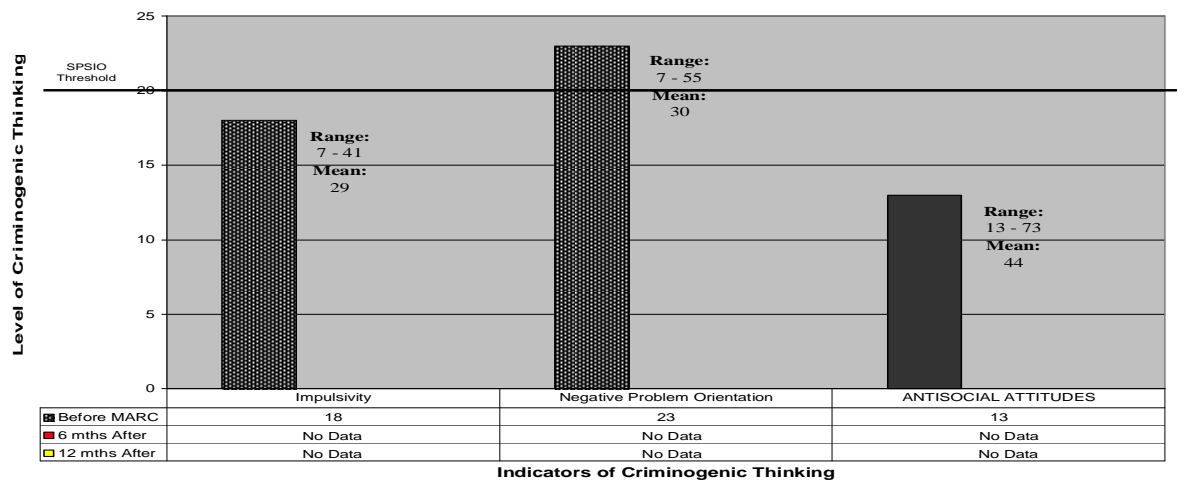
#### 4.3.2 Risk Rating – High

RoC\*RoI (at 07/11/05) gives a high risk score of 0.734 (i.e., 73% likelihood of future serious offending). This high risk rating is confirmed by the YLS/CLI score of 26 (23-42 being the high risk range).

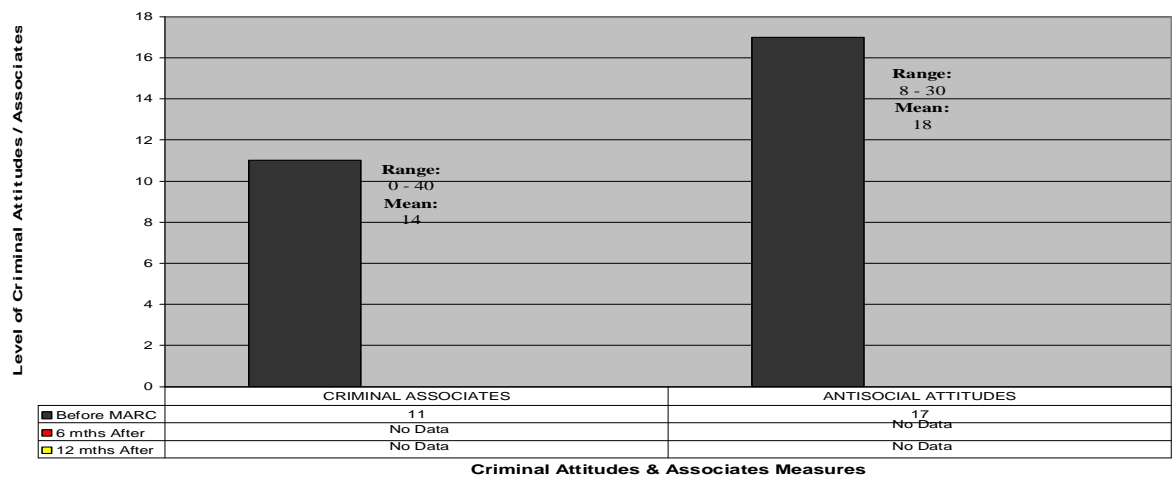
#### 4.3.3 Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA)

The pre-MARC SPSIO assessment showed little evidence of any criminogenic thinking (Figure 4), with scores well below the mean for MARC participants on all three measures and only *negative problem orientation* being above the SPSIO threshold (indicating negative thinking in relation to problem solving). However, the MCAA showed an elevated level of antisocial attitudes (close to the mean for the MARC group). It also showed that Participant A has frequent contact with a number of criminal companions (Figure 5). In view of the re-imprisonment of this offender and his unwillingness to participate in a follow-up assessment, it is unlikely that there has been any significant change in these areas.





**Figure 4. Participant A – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking**

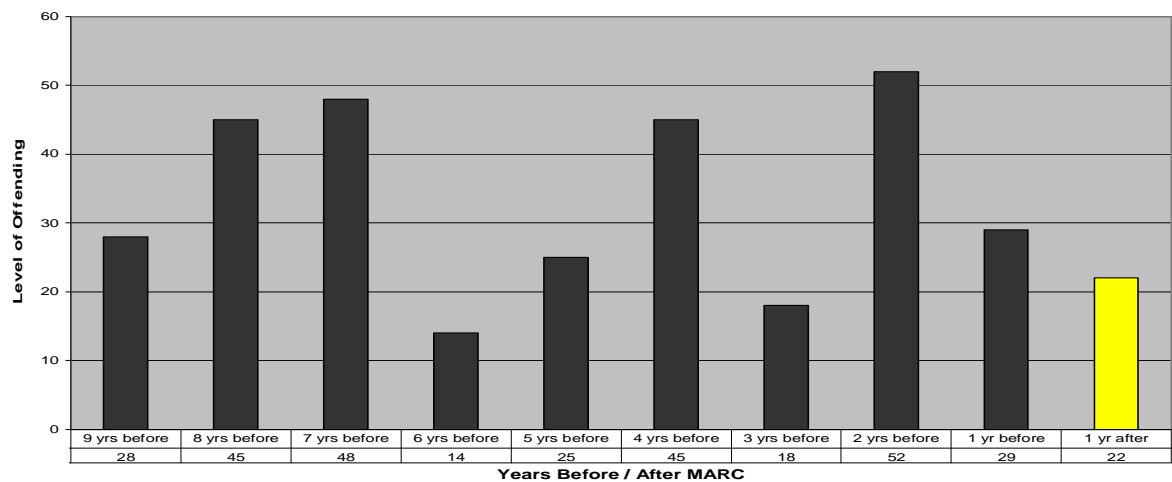


**Figure 5. Participant A – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)**

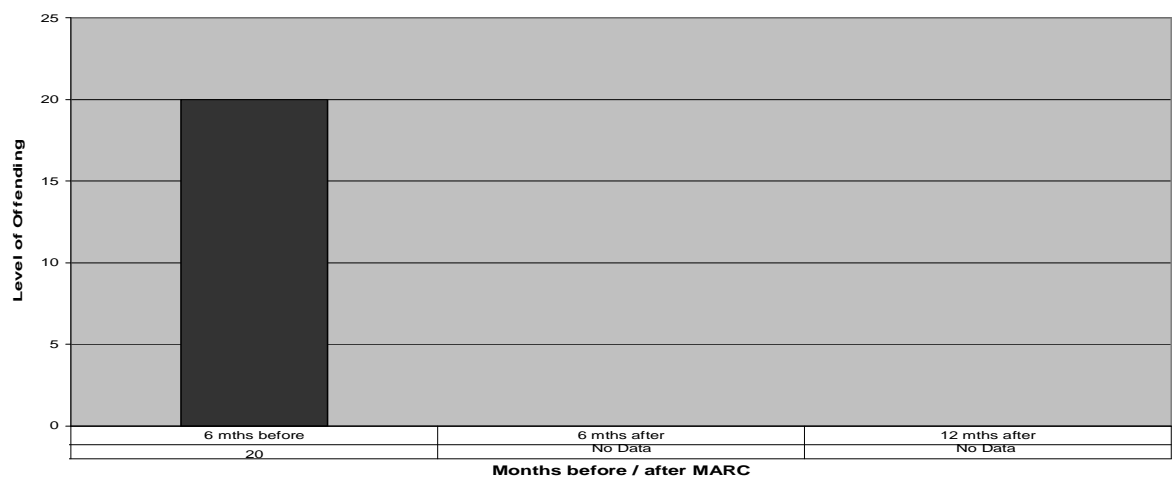
#### 4.3.4 Re-offending (LES & MSMO)

Both LES and MSMO give a similar level of offending prior to attending MARC. Although LES shows a small drop in seriousness/frequency of convictions 12 months after MARC, this is not enough to suggest a marked intervention effect (Figure 6). His reoffending involved theft and unlawful taking of motor vehicles, resulting in re-imprisonment in November 2006.





**Figure 6. Participant A – Level of Offending (from LES conviction data)**



**Figure 7. Participant A – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO)**

#### 4.3.5 Summary

Participant A has a deeply entrenched pattern of criminal offending spanning almost a decade. While the flow of the MARC course was disrupted by further offending and remands in custody, this person eventually completed the programme over a seven-month period. There was also some disruption in the administering of the pre-MARC assessments. Of particular note is the MCSDS measure, which was filled in five months after the SPSIO and MCAA measures. At that stage there was no evidence of desirable responding, but the approval motive could have been present at the beginning of MARC before Participant A's re-imprisonment. The unusually



low score for *antisocial attitudes* on the SPSIO, well below the SPSIO threshold for problematic thinking, indicates that he may have been seeking to make a good impression at that time.

Participant A began MARC with the hope that he could avoid going back to prison and could work toward gaining access to his children. Pre-mature attempts to reconcile with his estranged partner led to a domestic assault and incarceration. He was later cleared of this charge, but within days of release from prison a gang fracas put him back in custody facing another assault charge. It was at his request that the MARC course was eventually resumed months later within the prison. While sometimes appearing unresponsive and overwhelmed with discouragement, there were other times when he showed a strong interest in the course and a desire to break his cycle of offending. Upon receiving his graduation certificate he noted that this was the first time he had completed a rehabilitative programme. Although 6 and 12 month follow-up data was largely unavailable, further convictions and re-imprisonment indicates that as yet there has been little change in Participant A since attending MARC.

While attending the MARC course it was evident that Participant A had issues of rejection, abandonment and depression. Some prison session had to be postponed on days when he was feeling “too down” to attend. It is possible that his sense of abandonment has been heightened recently with his mother and other family members moving to Australia. Although his gang involvement provides him with a sense of belonging, it also appears to be a major contributor to his on-going criminal lifestyle. During MARC he expressed a desire to break ties with the gang, but as yet he has been unable to do so. Toward the end of the course he commented that he had found it helpful learning about releasing bitterness and embracing forgiveness. It is hoped contact with him can be re-established at some future date.



## 4.4 Participant B

*While Participant B completed the 6-month follow-up assessments, twelve month data is incomplete due to the participant being unavailable.*

### 4.4.1 Brief Profile

New Zealand Māori, aged 26; gang connections, but not a gang member; family history of internal strife and alcohol abuse, but a degree of stability; offending began at 14 with burglaries and selling drugs; expelled from school at 16; has 17 convictions in the adult court for offences that include theft, burglary, driving with excess breath alcohol (5), driving whilst disqualified, drug possession and supply; completed MARC prior to release from prison in December 2005.

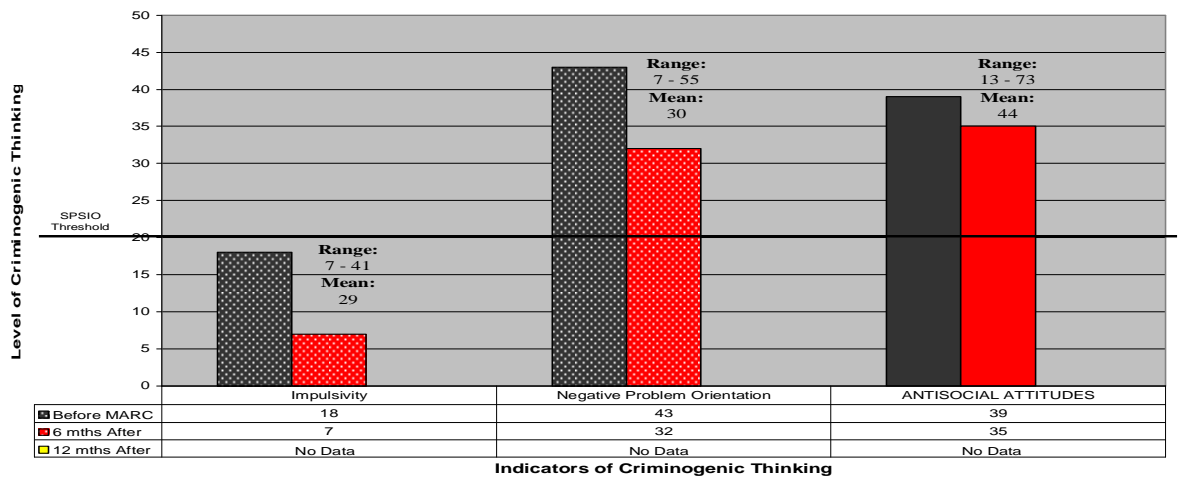
### 4.4.2 Risk Rating – Medium

RoC\*RoI (at 30/08/05) gives a medium risk score of 0.612 (i.e., 61% likelihood of future serious offending). This medium risk rating is confirmed by the YLS/CLI score of 21 (note: this is only one point below the high risk category).

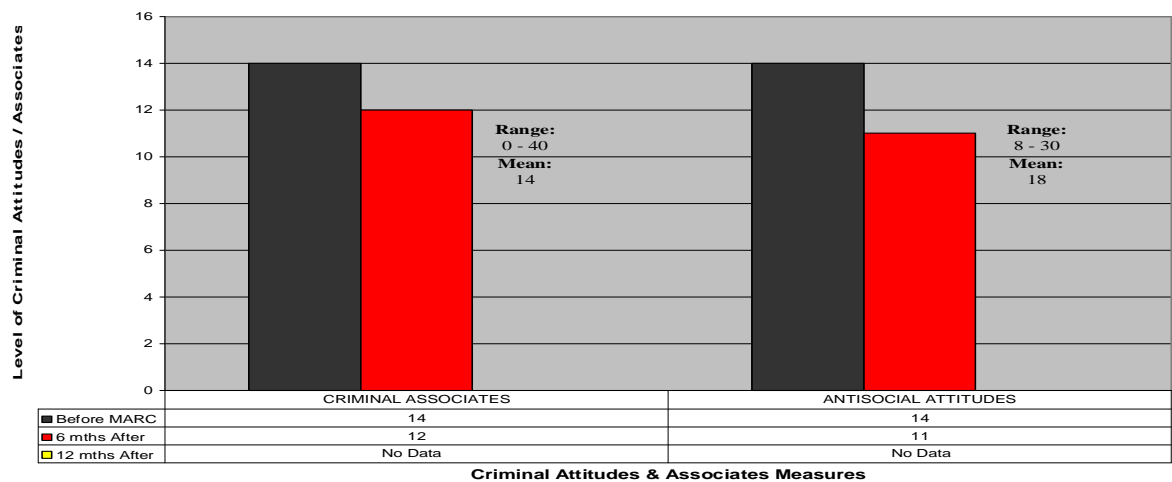
### 4.4.3 Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA)

SPSIO assessment showed a high level of antisocial attitudes that reduced slightly (by 4 points) 6 months after MARC (Figure 8). Greater improvement occurred on *negative problem orientation* and *impulsivity* measures, indicating a more positive and considered approach to solving problems. MCAA also revealed elevated levels of antisocial attitudes and criminal associations, with some reduction on both at the 6-month follow-up (Figure 9).





**Figure 8. Participant B – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking**

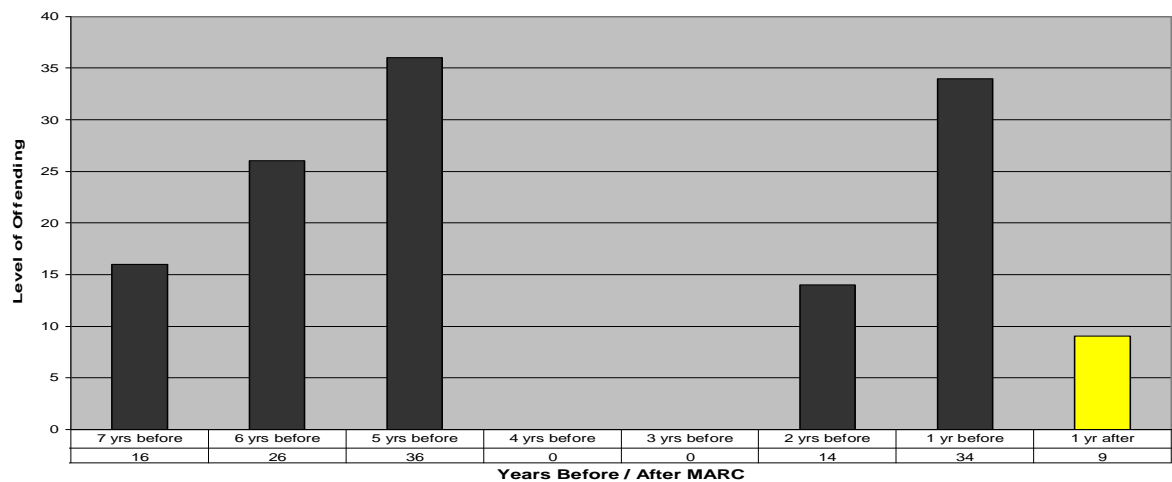


**Figure 9. Participant B – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)**

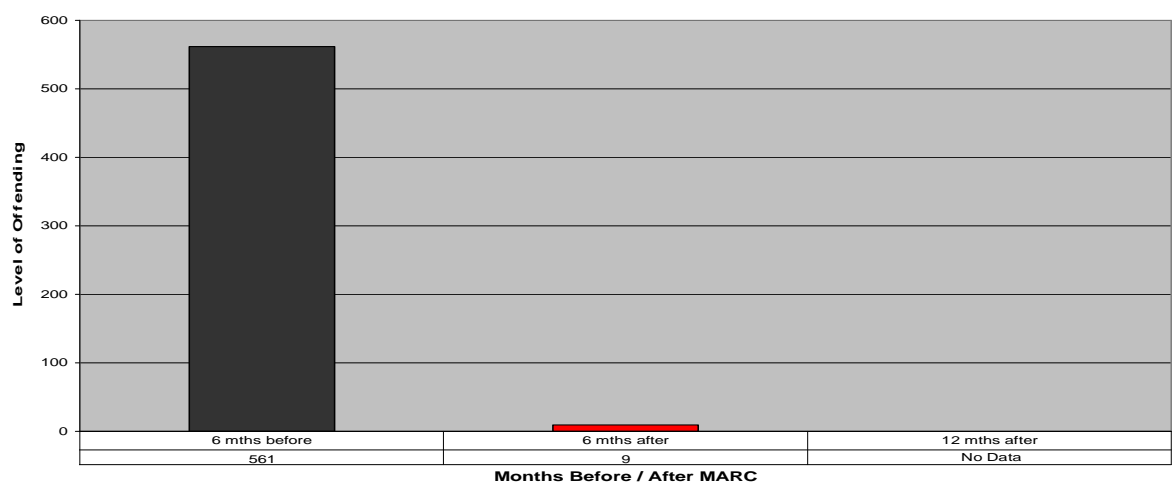
#### 4.4.4 Re-offending (LES & MSMO)

Through the self report MSMO measure, Participant B acknowledged that his pre-MARC level of offending was much higher than what is indicated by his convictions. Although LES convictions show a two year gap in offending several years ago, the participant admitted that undetected offending occurred during this period. His disclosure on the MSMO self report measure showed frequent drink-driving, driving whilst disqualified, dangerous driving and drug use prior to attending MARC (Figure 10). However, both MSMO and LES show a marked reduction in offending over the six month period after MARC and no convictions were recorded on LES in the subsequent 6 – 12 month period (Figure 10 & 11).





**Figure 10. Participant B – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)**



**Figure 11. Participant B – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO)**

#### 4.4.5 Participant feedback

*What are the main things you learned from the programme?*

“It is more clear to me to know how to go about things in keeping out of crime and choosing your friends....My sister-in-law and wife are encouraging me to go God’s way but not ready yet. I wasn’t brought up that way.”

*In what ways has the programme helped you?*

“Been avoiding crime since being released.”



#### 4.4.6 Summary

A medium risk offender, this participant appeared motivated to bring his offending to an end. While the elevated post-MARC MCSDS score could indicate the influence of desirable responding, evidence of change was verified by his partner and the impartial LES measure. SPSIO and MCAA showed only small improvements in the level of criminogenic thinking, anti-social attitudes and associations, but the LES and MSMO measures indicated a significant drop in convictions and self-reported offending in the months following MARC. Only one conviction for disqualified driving marred the record during the first six months after release from prison, however, it was not possible to get the 6 – 12 month MSMO self report measure.

Follow-up with this participant was more difficult due to being located six hours drive from the researcher. While attempts to interview him for the 12-month follow-up were unsuccessful, contact with his partner and his mother revealed that he was working long hours in steady employment with his father. At that time some tension existed between Participant B and his partner, resulting in a temporary separation. She expressed concern about his level of alcohol consumption and possible cannabis use. More recent contact with the partner indicated that he is back home, and that there had been an improvement in their relationship.

### 4.5 **Participant C**

#### 4.5.1 Brief Profile

A New Zealand Māori, aged 25; seeking to sever his long-term gang involvement; abusive and violent upbringing; left school at 13 and joined a gang; put out of home and soon became involved in crime; 41 convictions since age 16 include theft, burglary, common assault, breach of court orders, driving excess breath alcohol, male assaults female, threatening to kill/do grievous bodily harm, escaping custody and wilful damage; completed MARC prior to release from prison in January 2006.

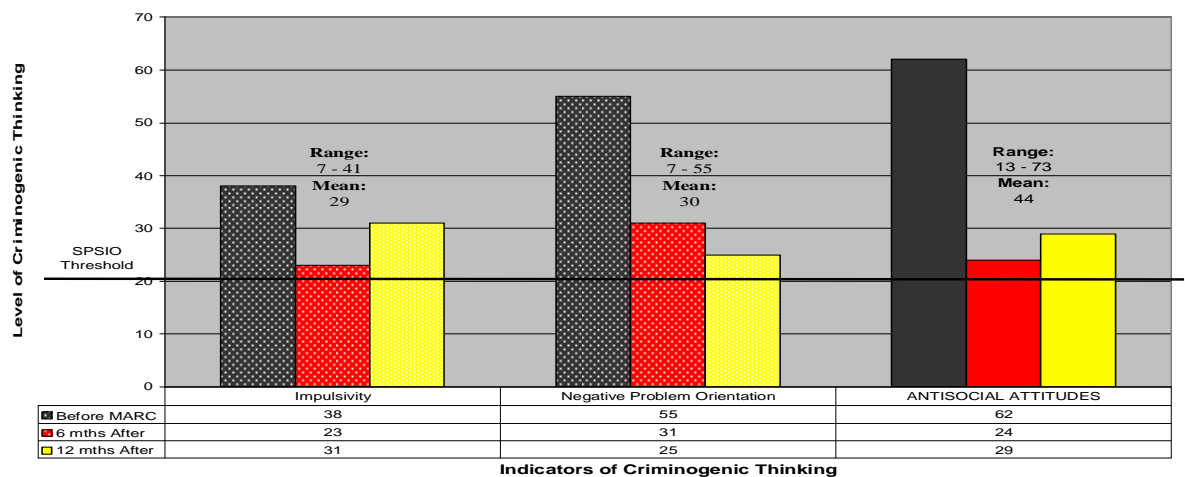


#### 4.5.2 Risk Rating – High

RoC\*RoI (at 11/11/05) gives a high risk score of 0.738 (i.e., 74% likelihood of future serious offending). This high risk rating is confirmed by the YLS/CLI score of 29.

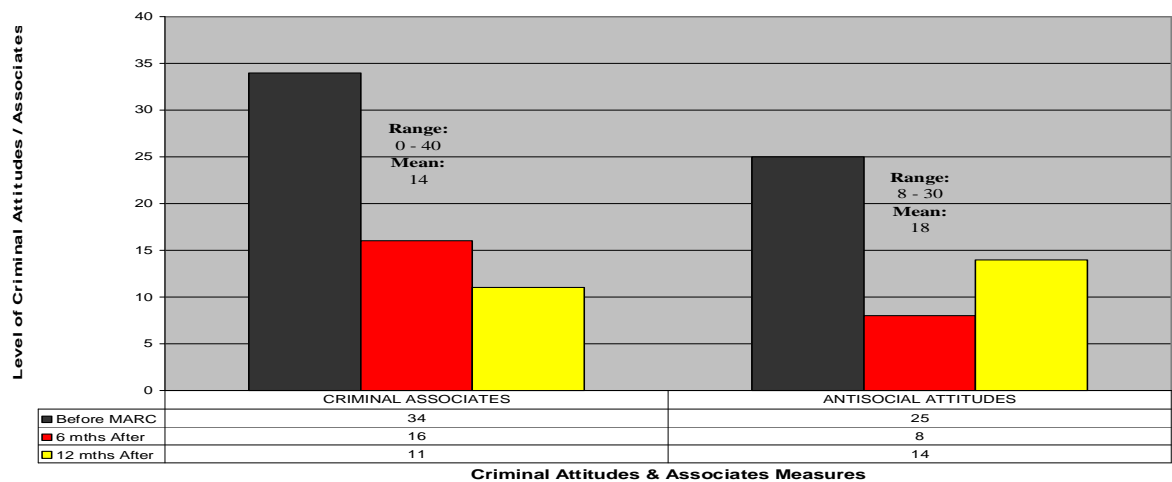
#### 4.5.3 Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA)

Prior to MARC the key SPSIO indicator of *antisocial attitudes* was well above the SPSIO threshold, indicating strongly antisocial ways of thinking. As well as this measure showing a significant reduction over the two post-MARC periods, the other two indicators of criminogenic thinking showed improvement following the MARC intervention (Figure 12). MCAA also showed marked improvement in antisocial attitudes and reduced contact with criminal companions, confirming his stated intention of avoiding gang association (Figure 13). However, elevated scores on the post-MARC MCSDS social desirability measure could indicate that Participant C's positive responses were influenced by a desire for social approval (Figure 3).



**Figure 12. Participant C – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking**



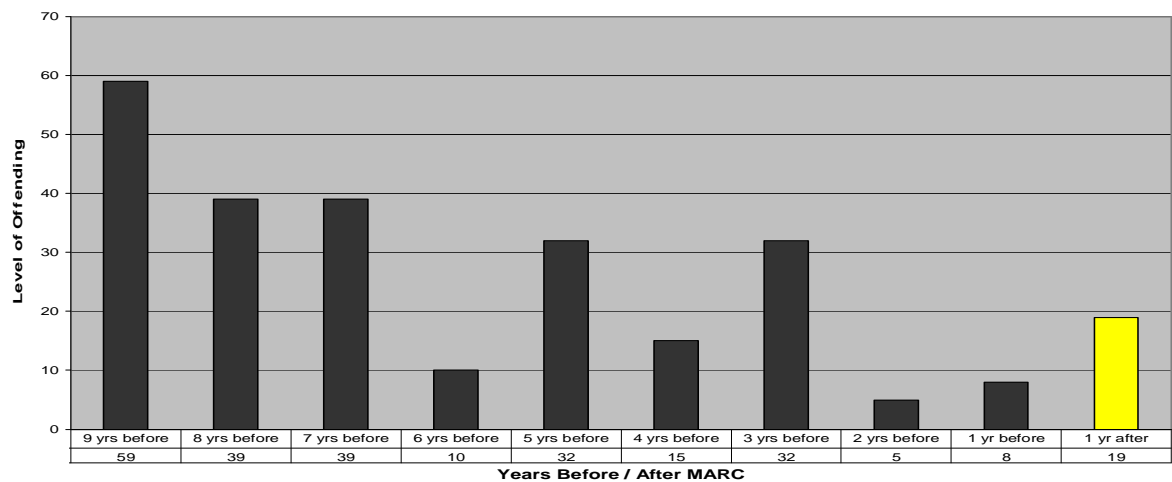


**Figure 13. Participant C – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)**

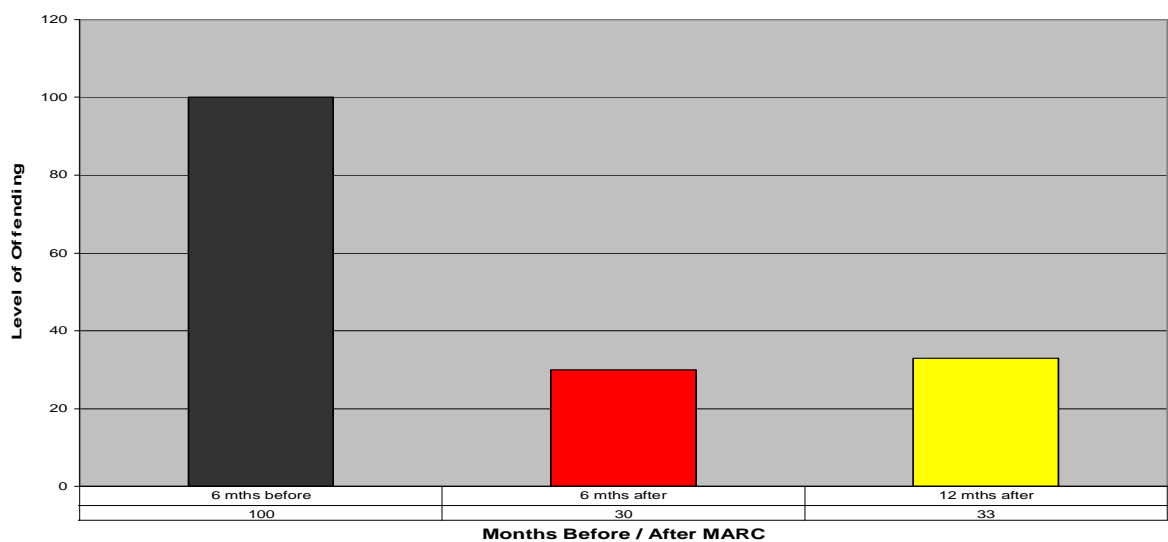
#### 4.5.4 Re-offending (LES & MSMO)

The self report MSMO measure shows that the pre-MARC level of offending was significantly higher than what was indicated by Participant C's LES convictions. Acknowledgement of habitual drug use, domestic violence and regular non-compliance with probation requirements, resulted in this high estimation of offending (Figure 15). While MSMO showed a marked reduction in offending in both six month periods after MARC, this is not reflected in the LES convictions (Figure 14 & 15). Participant C maintained that his offences since MARC were a consequence of his previous gang involvement. He claimed that he was forced to "take the rap" on two minor theft charges, and was "in the wrong place at the wrong time" when arrested for disorderly behaviour and fighting in public in separate gang-related incidences. His self reported level of offending since MARC mainly relates to his on-going cannabis habit.





**Figure 14. Participant C – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)**



**Figure 15. Participant C – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO)**

#### 4.5.5 Participant feedback

*What are the main things you learned from the programme?*

“Respect, communication skill, how to be open, trust, bible and met a good friend (Jeff).”

*In what ways has the programme helped you?*

“Jeff helped me to be open. Learn right choices in life and follow God’s way. I’m still learning my bible. Good things take time.”



#### 4.5.6 Summary

Participant C's high risk rating indicated that his offending behaviour was entrenched and would be difficult to change. However, he appeared to make a sincere response to all aspects of the MARC course and was the only participant who went beyond Step 3 on the MARC 12-step progression (Appendix K). From the beginning of MARC he expressed a desire to break from his previous long-term gang involvement. Apart from a few set-backs since release from prison, he appears to be achieving this goal. At our last meeting he had established himself in regular employment, had reconciled with his father and had adopted a more conventional appearance by removing his dreadlocks. He had also resumed regular contact with four of his six children.

Although MCSDS may cast some doubt on the attitude change indicated by the SPSIO and MCAA measures, Participant C's probation officer, as well as his partner, was able to confirm a marked improvement in this area. Participant C has yet to break his long-standing cannabis addiction, but is seeking admission to a residential drug rehabilitation programme for the purpose of ending this habit. This was also confirmed by his probation officer. It is noted that he did not attempt to hide his drug offending after MARC on the MSMO self-report measure. While he has made a break from his long-term gang involvement, some residual offending has occurred during the process of ending this association. He informed that he intends to move to another location, to distance himself from the gang, once he has completed drug treatment.

### 4.6 **Participant D**

#### 4.6.1 Brief Profile

A New Zealand European/Pakeha, aged 25; stable upbringing with supportive parents, but perhaps insufficient boundaries; performed poorly and in trouble at school, left at age 15; consuming beer, spirits and cannabis from age 12; since 18 he has had nine convictions in the adult court, including dangerous driving, driving with excess breath alcohol (3), possession of cannabis oil and cultivating cannabis (large scale); completed MARC in the community in November 2005.

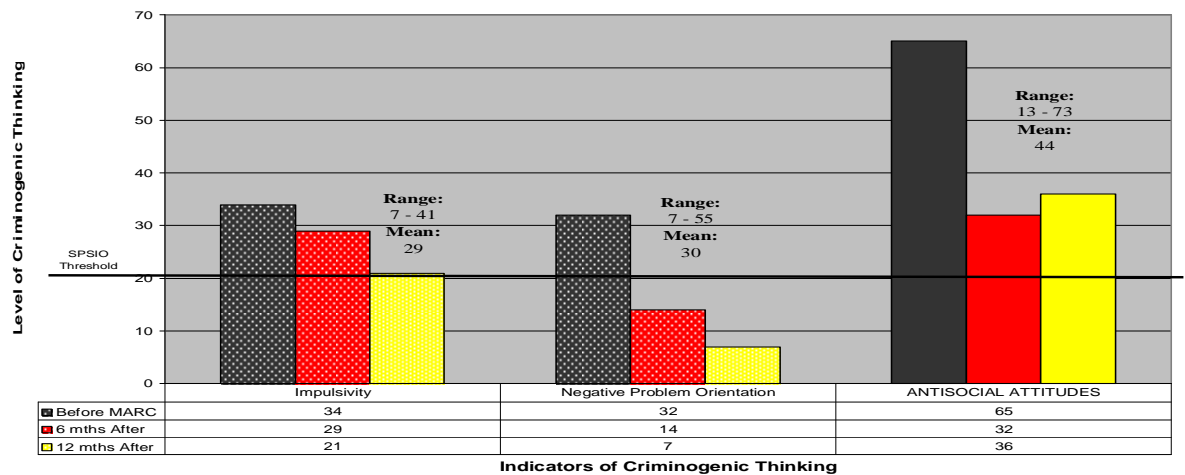


#### 4.6.2 Risk Rating – Medium

RoC\*RoI (at 02/06/05) gives a medium risk score of 0.581 (i.e., 58% likelihood of future serious offending). This medium risk rating is confirmed by the YLS/CLI score of 18.

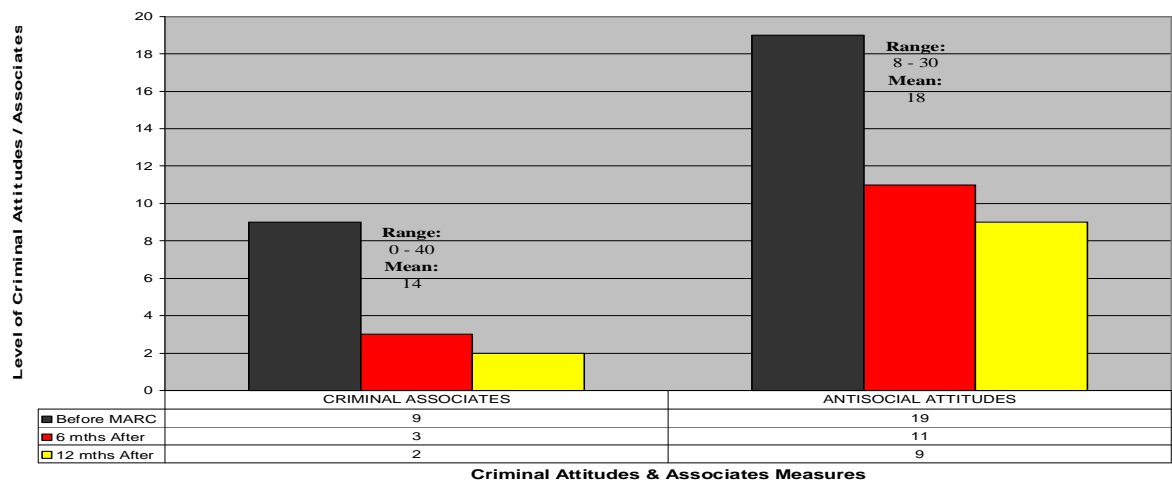
#### 4.6.3 Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA)

*Antisocial attitudes*, the key SPSIO indicator of criminogenic thinking, showed a marked reduction that was sustained across the two post-intervention periods (Figure 16). *Impulsivity* and *negative problem orientation* levels showed continuous improvement, indicating a more positive outlook and the ability to consider consequences before acting. This was confirmed by his comments at the 12-month follow-up (see 4.6.5 below). The MCAA also showed a marked reduction in antisocial attitudes and the level of association with criminal companions (Figure 17).



**Figure 16. Participant D – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking**

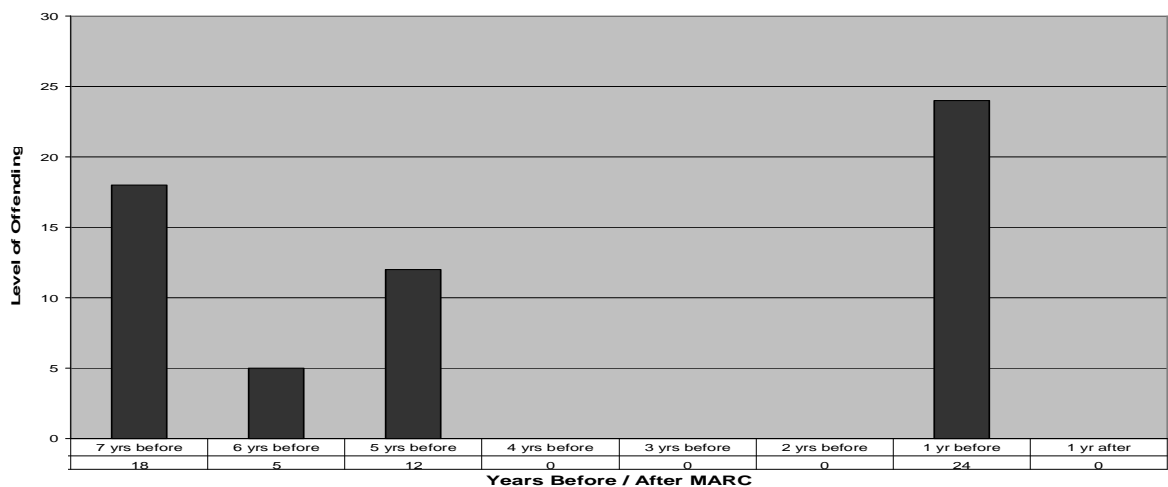




**Figure 17. Participant D– Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)**

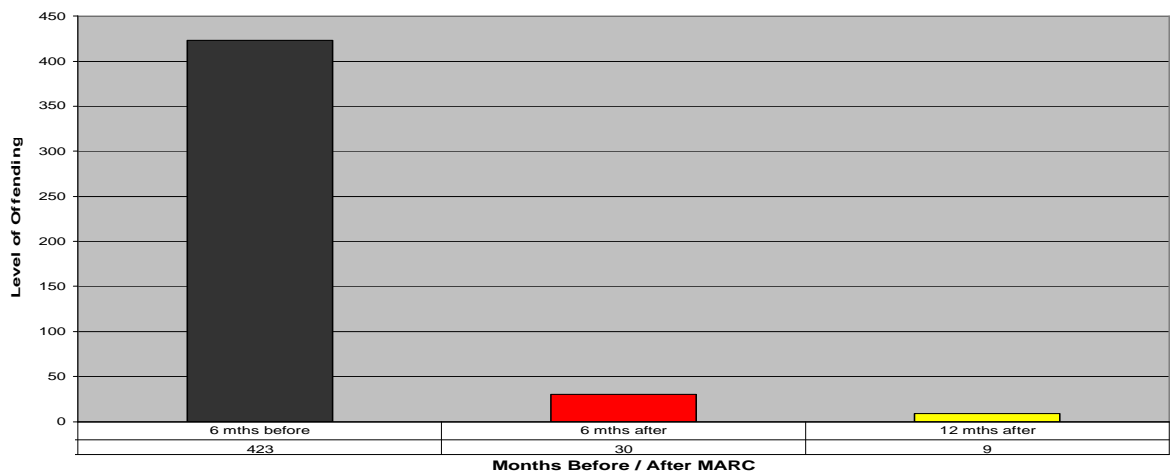
#### 4.6.4 Re-offending (LES & MSMO)

Participant D's self-report MSMO measure showed that prior to MARC he was offending at a much higher level than indicated by his LES convictions. He acknowledged a high level of drug use (both cannabis and other drugs), cultivation and manufacture of illegal drugs, frequent drink driving and dangerous driving, and some violent episodes (Figure 18). Although his LES convictions show a three year gap in offending, he acknowledged that undetected drug and drink driving offending occurred during this period. Since attending MARC he has had no convictions and his self-reported level of offending has dropped to a minimal level (Figure 18 & 19)



**Figure 18. Participant D – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)**





**Figure 19. Participant D – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO)**

#### 4.6.5 Participant feedback

*What are the main things you learned from the programme?*

“To think about things more before I act – that there are more choices out there than the first thing that comes into my head – that there are more people getting hurt by my action than just me.”

*In what ways has the programme helped you?*

“To cut down on my drug problem and alcohol. I think about things more than I use to.”

#### 4.6.6 Summary

Prior to attending MARC this medium-risk offender had a high level of undetected offending. He also had frequent contact with criminal companions and showed high levels of antisocial/criminal attitudes. He attended MARC after a short prison sentence for drug offending. During the programme he appeared motivated to change his attitudes and bring his offending to an end. While there is evidence of marked intervention effects on all measures, it is noted that this participant’s medium RoC\*RoI risk rating was the lowest of the MARC sample, perhaps indicating that he was more amenable to change. He had the benefit of a stable home environment and regular employment after release from prison.

At the 12-month follow-up Participant D had moved out of his parents’ home and was living with his partner in a recently purchased house. He reported that he had reduced his drug use to a



minimal level and was enjoying a more responsible way of life. This is reflected in his lack of offending. While he showed little interest in fully embracing Christian beliefs, he acknowledged that MARC had helped him to think more carefully about the consequences of his actions and greatly reduce his use of alcohol and drugs.

## **4.7 Participant E**

*Twelve-month follow-up data was incomplete due to the participant being unavailable to complete assessments.*

### **4.7.1 Brief Profile**

A New Zealand European/Pakeha, aged 20 years; abandoned by his parents at a young age; committed his first burglary at age 5 and first incarcerated at age 14; has since served six terms of imprisonment; an active gang member; no fixed abode, when not in jail; his 42 convictions include dangerous driving, driving while disqualified, wilful damage, breach of court orders, possession of offensive weapons, unlawfully taking motor vehicles, burglary, wilful trespass, shoplifting and receiving; attended MARC prior to release from prison in late January 2006.

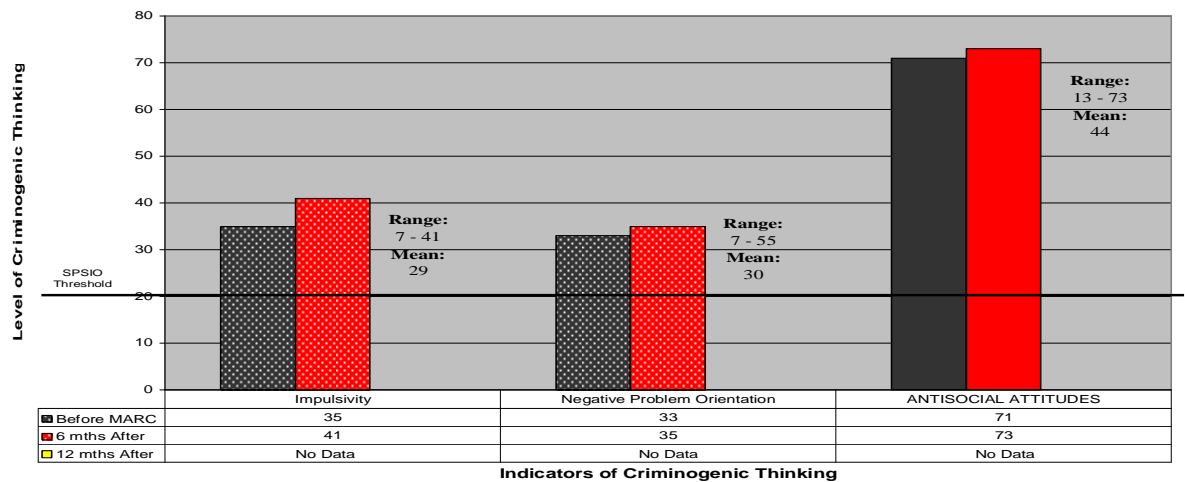
### **4.7.2 Risk Rating – High**

RoC\*RoI (at 19/02/06) gives a high risk score of 0.818 (i.e., 82% likelihood of future serious offending). This high risk rating is confirmed by the YLS/CLI score of 25.

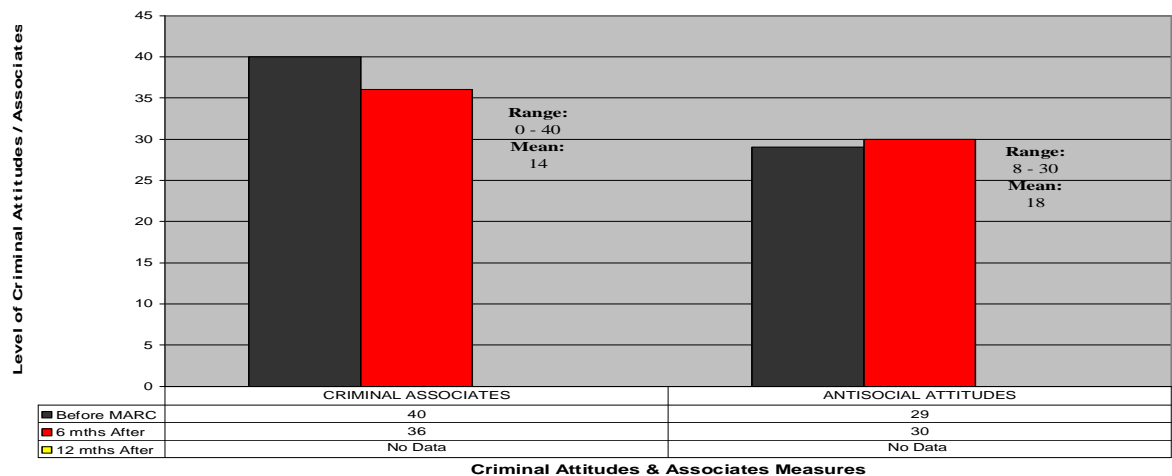
### **4.7.3 Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA)**

Out of the seven MARC participants, Participant E showed the highest levels of antisocial attitudes on both the SPSIO and MCAA measures. His score for criminal association was also at the top of the range. While there was a slight reduction on the MCAA criminal associates' measure, there was no evidence of any significant change in attitudes/criminogenic thinking when assessed six months after attending MARC (Figure 20 & 21).





**Figure 20. Participant E – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking**

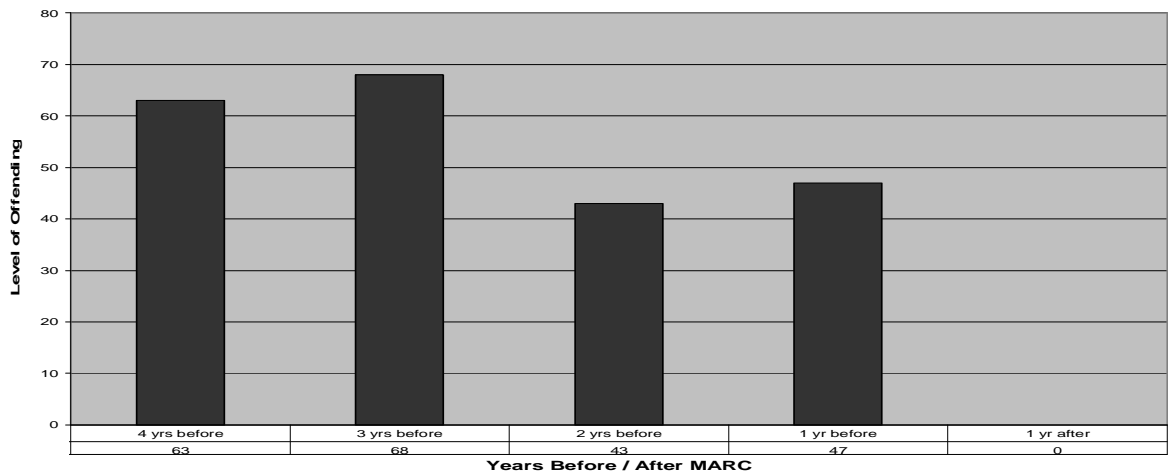


**Figure 21. Participant E – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)**

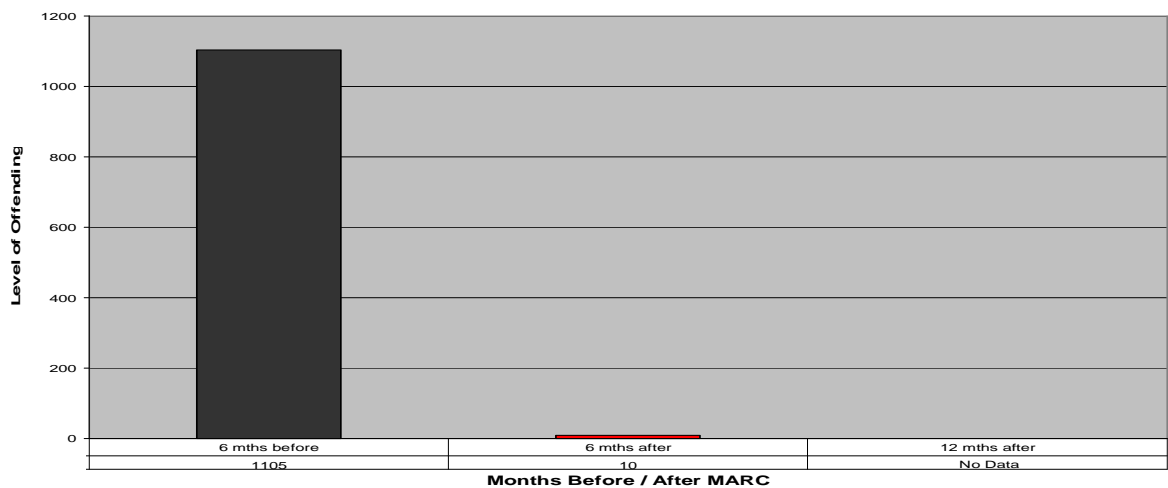
#### 4.7.4 Re-offending (LES & MSMO)

Through the self-report MSMO measure, Participant E acknowledged a very high level of undetected offending. He admitted to a lifestyle of almost daily offending involving selling drugs, damaging of property, disqualified and dangerous driving, disregard for court orders, high levels of theft, fraud and dealing in stolen goods, along with some serious assaults, burglaries and robberies (Figure 22). Since attending MARC he has had no further convictions and his self-reported offending had dropped to a minimal level (Figure 22 & 23).





**Figure 22. Participant E – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)**



**Figure 23. Participant E – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO)**

#### 4.7.5 Participant feedback

*What are the main things you learned from the programme?*

“That there’s always another option to every answer I come up with. And everything I do comes back to my thinking and the choices I may make, good or bad.”

*In what ways has the programme helped you?*

“Same as above.”



#### 4.7.6 Summary

A high-risk offender and committed gang member, throughout the MARC course Participant E seemed unmotivated to make any changes to his well-established criminal lifestyle. He appeared to be attending the programme as a diversion from the monotony of prison life. Toward the end of MARC an explanation was given of the biblical concept of being on a “short rope” and being accountable to God for “truth” received (Prov. 17: 10-11, Luke 12:47-48). He was cautioned that continued offending may lead to swift consequences. A few days after release from prison, Participant E was involved in a gang vendetta that left him in hospital with serious injuries. While he has since recovered from these injuries, it appears that he has not returned to his previous high level of offending.

Of the seven MARC participants, this person had the highest RoC\*RoI risk rating and highest level of criminogenic thinking on the SPSIO and MCAA measures. His entrenched criminal lifestyle was also evident by the high pre-MARC scores on the LES and MSMO offending measures. Living an itinerant existence, which involves staying for short periods with extended family, gang associates and friends, this participant has nowhere that he calls home. With some difficulty he was tracked down at the six-month follow-up, and agreed to fill in the assessments provided that he was taken out for lunch. At the 12-month follow-up he was more elusive. This is apparently due to the fact that he is wanted by the Police, who have decided to charge him with offences that occurred at the time of his hospitalisation. If convicted of these offences, his offending for the 12 months after MARC will still be well below previous levels. While this participant shows a substantial reduction in offending on both the LES and MSMO measures, he has yet to show improvement in antisocial attitudes. What happens over the next twelve months will indicate whether there have been lasting gains from his attendance on MARC.

### 4.8 **Participant F**

*Post-intervention data on this person is incomplete. At the six-month follow-up he could not be contacted, but at 12 months he was serving a short prison term which enabled a full assessment to be carried out.*



#### 4.8.1 Brief Profile

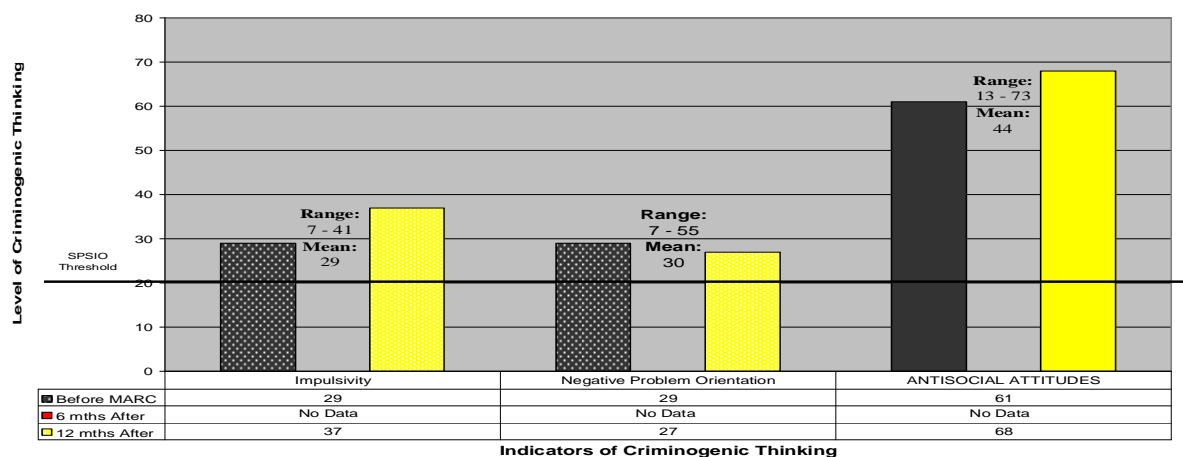
New Zealand European/Pakeha, aged 19 years; grew up in an unstable home environment, with frequent moves and difficulties at school; experienced violence from his first stepfather during early childhood; minimal contact with his biological father; second stepfather committed suicide when he was aged 16; mainly unemployed since leaving school; has 17 convictions in the adult court and has served two short terms of imprisonment; offences include unlawfully taking a motor vehicle, thefts, breach of court orders, dangerous driving, disorderly behaviour likely to cause violence, cultivating cannabis, possession of utensils (for drugs) and disqualified driving; completed MARC while under Corrections supervision for common assault.

#### 4.8.2 Risk Rating – Medium/High

RoC\*RoI (at 09/06/05) gives a medium risk score of 0.636 (i.e., 64% likelihood of future serious offending). This medium risk score is at the top end of this grouping and the YLS/CLI score of 26 places him in the high-risk category.

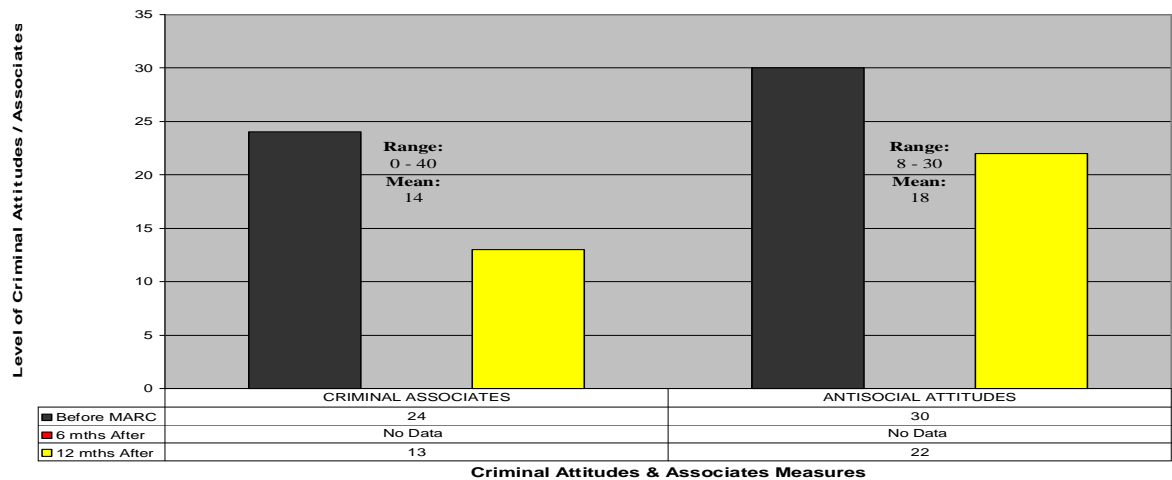
#### 4.8.3 Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA)

The high level of antisocial attitudes indicated on the SPSIO measure, well above the SPSIO threshold and near the top of the range, had not decreased when Participant F was assessed 12 months after MARC. However, the MCAA measure showed a 27% reduction in antisocial attitudes and a 46% reduction in involvement with criminal associates (Figure 24 & 25).



**Figure 24. Participant F – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking**

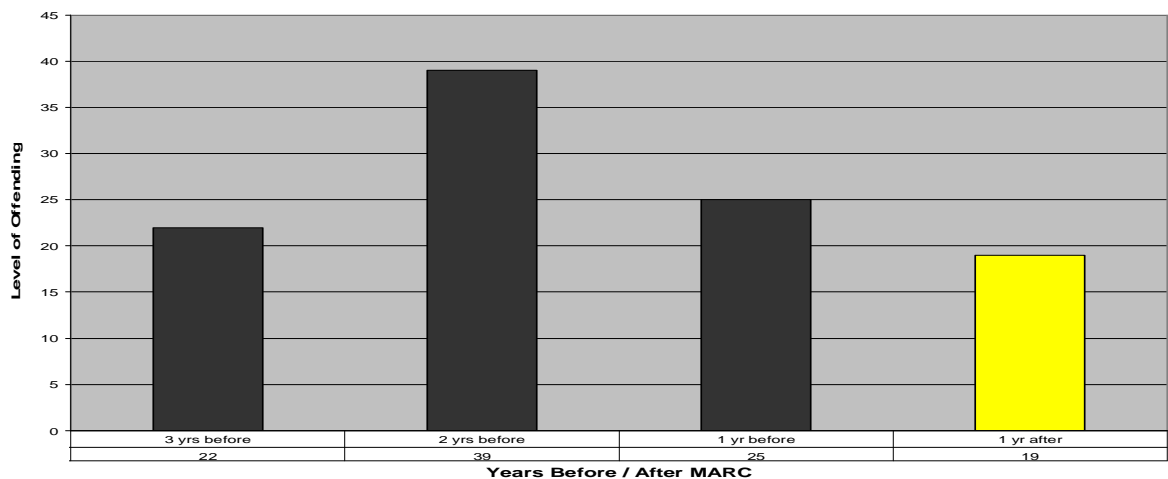




**Figure 25. Participant F – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)**

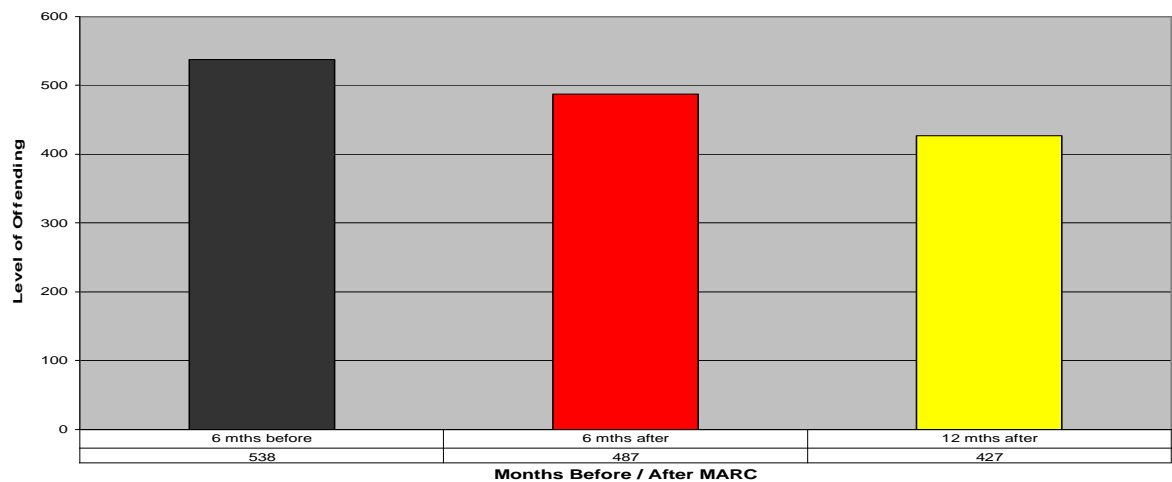
#### 4.8.4 Re-offending (LES & MSMO)

The self report MSMO measure, showed that Participant F was offending at a much higher level than indicated by his LES convictions. In addition to regular use, cultivation, manufacture and supply of cannabis, he acknowledged frequent disqualified and drink driving, and some involvement with stolen property. Twelve months after MARC a small reduction in offending was recorded on both measures. While perhaps signalling a downward trend in criminal activity, this could not be seen as indicating a marked intervention effect (Figure 26 & 27).



**Figure 26. Participant F – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)**





**Figure 27. Participant F – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO)**

#### 4.8.5 Participant feedback

*What are the main things you learned from the programme?*

“I learnt that people can change if they really want to.”

*In what ways has the programme helped you?*

“It hasn’t changed or helped me a lot, only because I don’t really want it at the moment.”

#### 4.8.6 Summary

A medium/high risk offender, Participant F completed most of the MARC course prior to his twentieth birthday and was second youngest of the seven participants. His offending for the three years prior to MARC had been at a high level and had given him a poor reputation in his small rural community. Although owning his own house and receiving support from his mother, his evident immaturity perhaps hindered his readiness to fully respond to MARC. It appeared that MARC was chosen as a convenient option, with few other programme choices available in his rural area.

During the MARC course Participant F was reasonably reliable in attendance and participated well in the programme. However, he made it clear as the course progressed that he was not ready to make major changes. Although he had not previously had any direct exposure to Christian teaching, he reported that since MARC he has taken an interest in reading the bible.



This was confirmed by his mother. At the 12-months post-MARC assessment it was evident that he was contemplating change, but was still not ready to action what he had learned. While the MCAA measure showed a marked reduction in involvement with criminal associates, and some attitude change, his reoffending and re-imprisonment indicates that there have been only minor gains since attending MARC.

## 4.9 Participant G

### 4.9.1 Brief Profile

A New Zealand Māori, aged 19; upbringing appears to have been reasonably stable and supportive; lost his father at age 13; began mixing with criminal friends and had his first court appearance at age 16; while only five convictions in the adult court, three are for aggravated robbery (with associates); completed MARC prior to his release from prison in February 2006.

### 4.9.2 Risk Rating – High/Medium

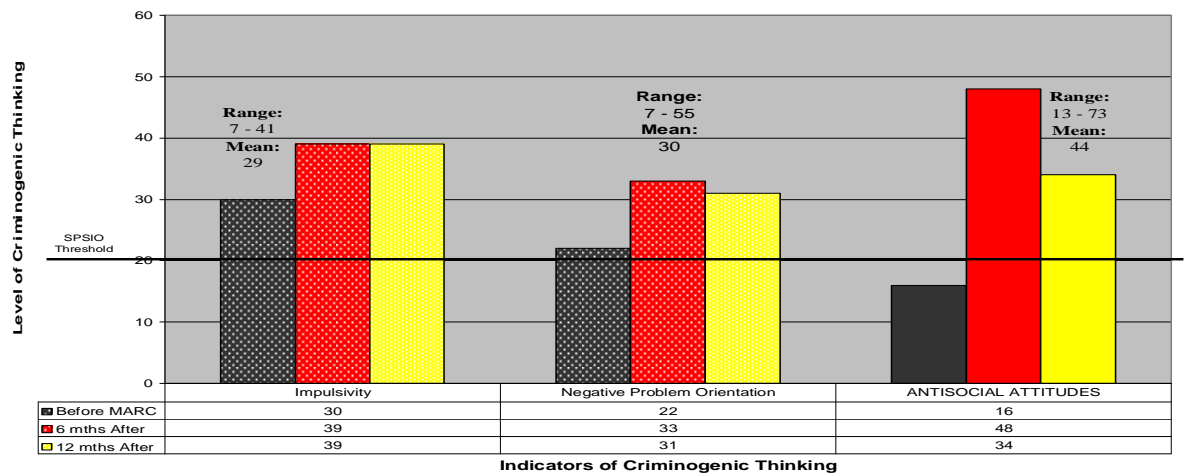
RoC\*RoI (at 11/11/05) gives a high risk score of 0.678 (i.e., 68% likelihood of future serious offending). The YLS/CLI gives medium risk score of 15.

### 4.9.3 Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA)

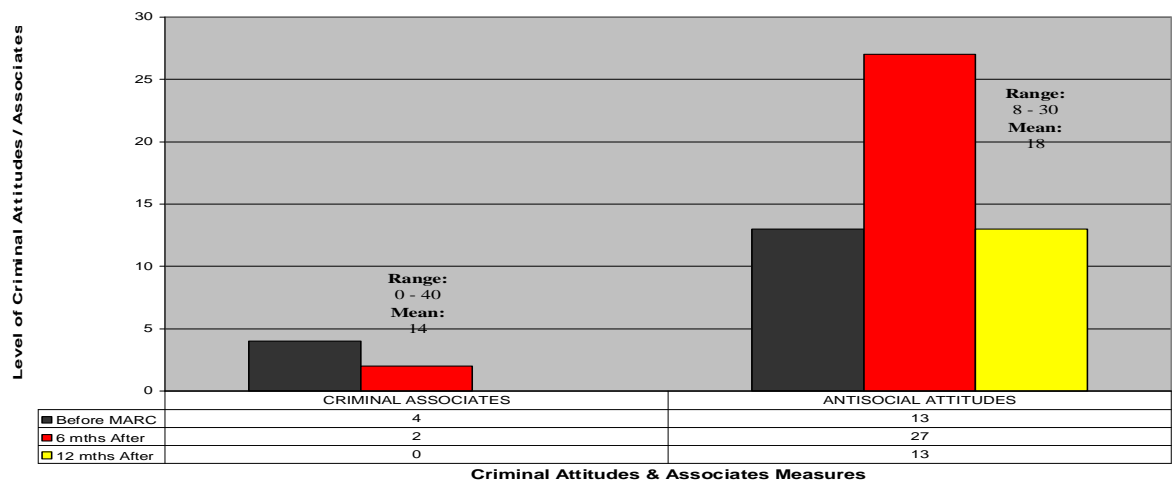
Above average pre and post-MARC scores on the MCSDS social approval measure (Figure 3) indicate that the SPSIO and MCAA attitude and criminal associates measures may have been influenced by the motive of desirable responding. Comments made by Participant G during the pre-MARC assessments particularly showed a desire to communicate that he was really a “good person” who did not belong in prison. At the six-month follow-up he was back in prison awaiting sentence for a domestic assault. It was evident that he was feeling angry and frustrated. This is reflected in the elevated scores on the SPSIO and the MCAA *antisocial attitudes* measures (Figure 28 & 29). These elevated scores showed some moderation at the 12-month follow-up. However, his criminogenic thinking indicated by the *impulsivity* and *negative*



*problem orientation* measures did not show improvement. The biggest change indicated on the MCAA measure is Participant G's apparent move away from criminal companions (Figure 29).



**Figure 28. Participant G – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking**



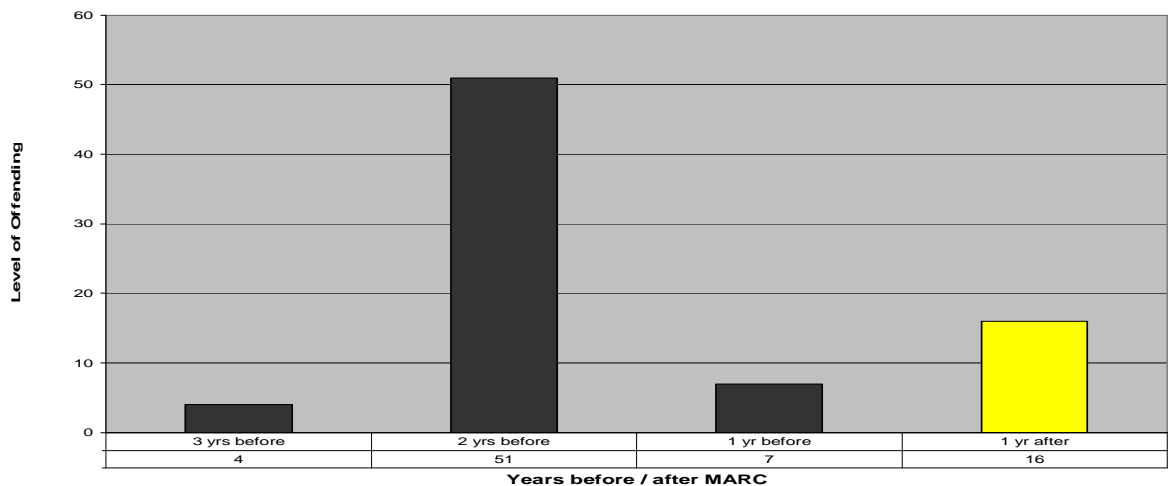
**Figure 29. Participant G – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)**

#### 4.9.4 Re-offending (LES & MSMO)

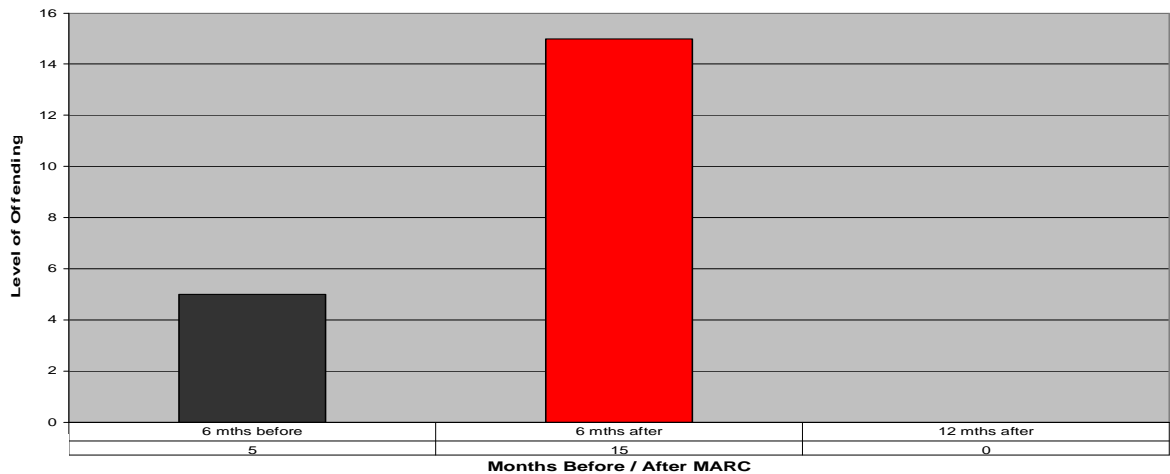
Participant G's serious offending, resulting in his prison sentence, occurred over a year prior to incarceration. A few months after release from prison, Participant G found his partner "in bed with another man." His angry response to this resulted in him being charged with two counts of common assault and one of resisting police. This gives an elevated post-MARC score on both



the LES and MSMO measures. Since this domestic incident there has been no indication of any further offending in the following six months (Figure 30 & 31).



**Figure 30. Participant G – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)**



**Figure 31. Participant G – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO)**

#### 4.9.5 Participant feedback

*What are the main things you learned from the programme?*

“How to control my thoughts and feelings. Not to do crime again. Don’t put others before yourself. Things about the bible, Jesus and the Hebrew things I wouldn’t of known if it wasn’t for Jeff. How to maintain a good from the bad. Why not to hold too much bitterness inside



me.”

*In what ways has the programme helped you?*

“Many ways I can tell you. It’s got me reading the bible on a day to day basis, and how to control my anger. It has showed me the ability to not do wrong, but to do good for myself and others.”

#### 4.9.6 Summary

Participant G had the benefit of a supportive family, but began associating with undesirable associates after his father died. Prior to his involvement in three aggravated robbery offences in January 2004, he had one minor conviction in the Youth Court. It took 18 months for the robbery offences to go to trial and Participant G was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment in August 2005. Excess breath alcohol and failing to give name and address on demand were his only offences in the 12 months prior to imprisonment. MARC was undertaken in November / December 2005 and he was released from prison in late February 2006.

Participant G is the youngest of the MARC participants and his frequency of offending is at a low level. However, it was the seriousness of his offending at a young age that has placed him in the “high risk” category. While conducting the pre-MARC assessments, he maintained that he did not deserve to be in prison because he was a bystander rather than an active participant in the robbery offences. He scored highly on the MCSDS desirable responding measure, indicating that his low pre-MARC antisocial attitude score may have been influenced by a motive to “look good” (Figure 3) However, it is noted that his MCSDS score was also high at the 12-month follow-up.

While Participant G was in prison for aggravated robbery, his partner gave birth to their child. Upon release from prison their relationship proved problematic and ended in a violent domestic incident just over four months later. The resulting short term of imprisonment, along with Participant G’s anger and distress over his partner’s unfaithfulness, had the effect of elevating offending and anti-social attitude measures at the MARC six months follow-up. Although improvement was apparent at the 12-month follow-up, the only evidence of any marked intervention effect is the indication that Participant G has ceased involvement with criminal



friends (Figure 29) and has not offended in the 6 – 12 month period after MARC (Figure 31). His move away from criminal companions is seen as significant given the trouble these associations have led him into in the past. While these results may have been influenced by the social approval motive, his mother confirmed that he is now settled back at home and that positive change has been evident.

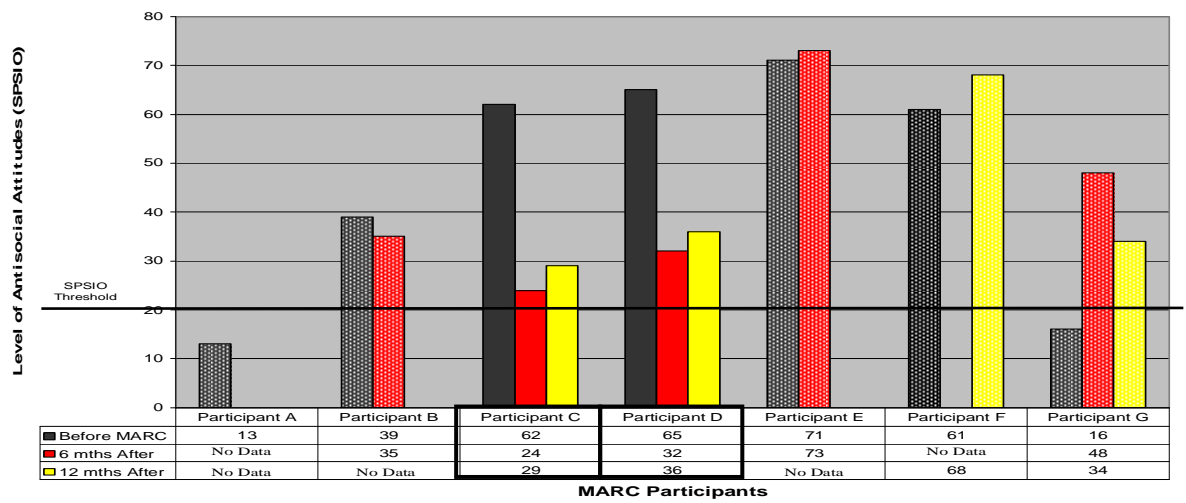
#### **4.10 Summary of MARC Research Results across Participants**

The following graphs take the MARC results and group them across the seven participants for each of the attitudinal and behavioural measures. Again the purpose of this is to aid visual inspection and to highlight any evidence of a marked intervention effect. The focus is on the amount of change occurring across time, from the pre-MARC assessments to follow-up measures done six and twelve months after MARC. Where there has been an improvement of over 40% from the pre-MARC level, the participant's results are highlighted by bolder colours and a border around scores on the bar-graphs. This is intended to visually represent how many participants recorded evidence of a marked intervention effect on that particular measure.

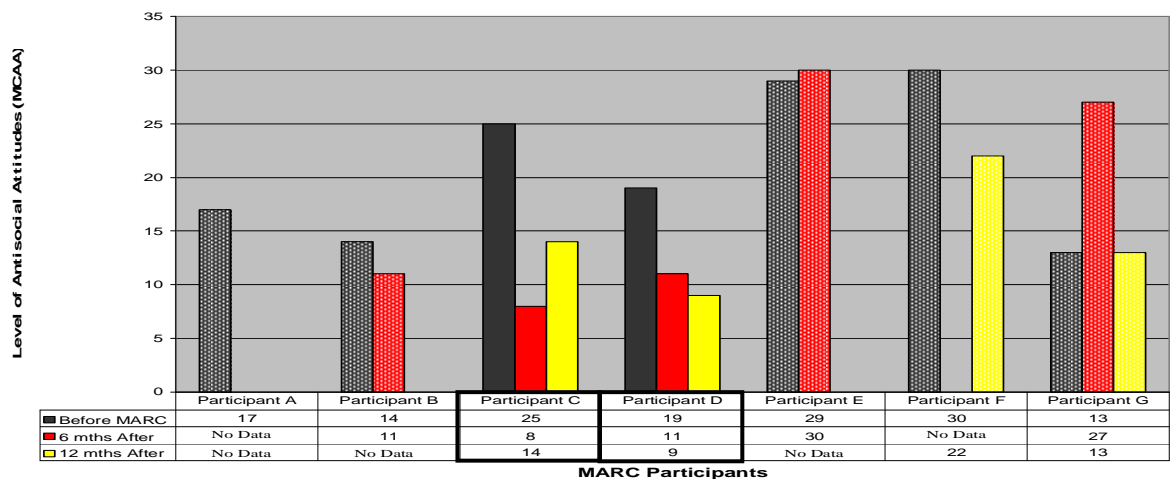
##### **4.10.1 Antisocial Attitudes**

An important difference between the SPSIO and the MCAA measure of antisocial attitudes is that SPSIO uses a Likert scale that allows six choices for each statement from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The MCAA measure, however, only allows the choice of “agree” or “disagree.” Thus if a respondent only slightly agrees with an antisocial statement on the MCAA and circled “agree”, then they would still score the same as if they strongly agreed with the statement. This would tend to give them a higher score for antisocial attitudes. On the other hand, a person who slightly agreed with a statement may circle “disagree” because they do not totally agree with the statement. Despite the differences between the two measures there is a fairly close correlation between them. Of the seven respondents, both measures show Participants C and D as being the only ones recording a marked improvement in attitude following the MARC intervention (Figure 32 & 33).





**Figure 32. Group Level of Antisocial Attitudes on SPSIO Measure**

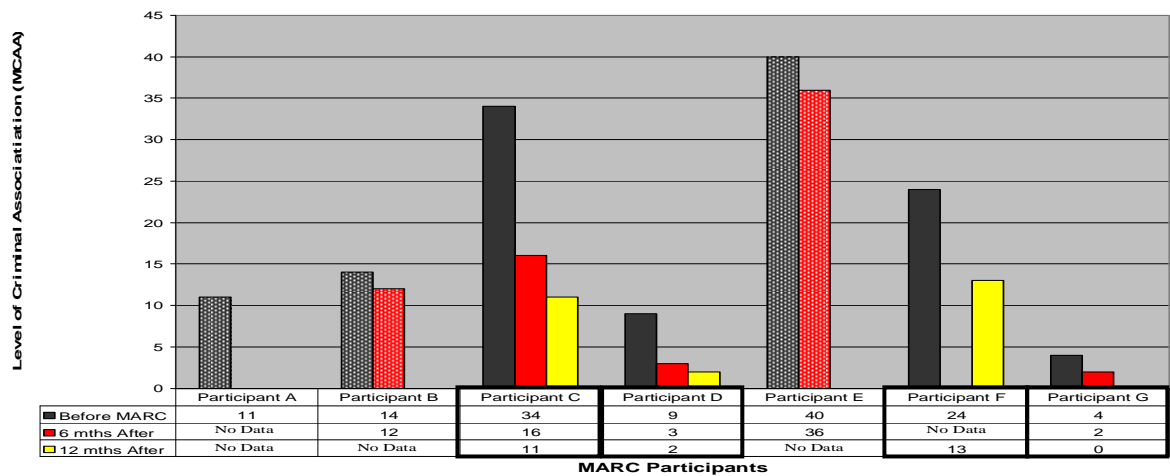


**Figure 33. Group Level of Antisocial Attitudes on the MCAA Measure**

#### 4.10.2 Criminal Association

From an estimate of the degree of criminality and percentage of free time spent with the respondent's four main friends, the MCAA produces a measure called the *criminal friend index*. This gives an indication of the degree of involvement the respondent has with criminal associates. Four of the MARC participants show a marked reduction in criminal association on this MCAA measure (Figure 34).



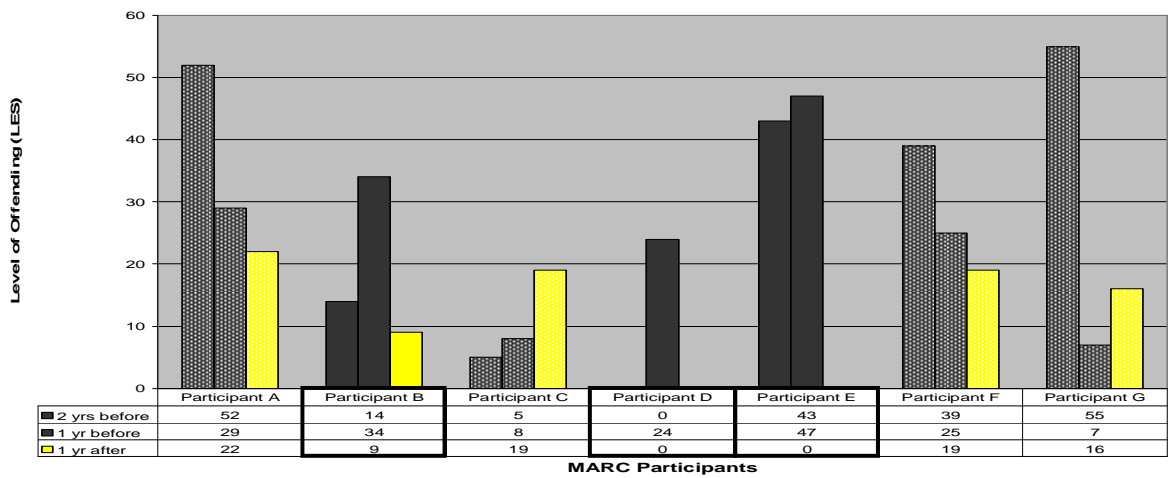


**Figure 34. Group Level of Criminal Association on MCAA Measure**

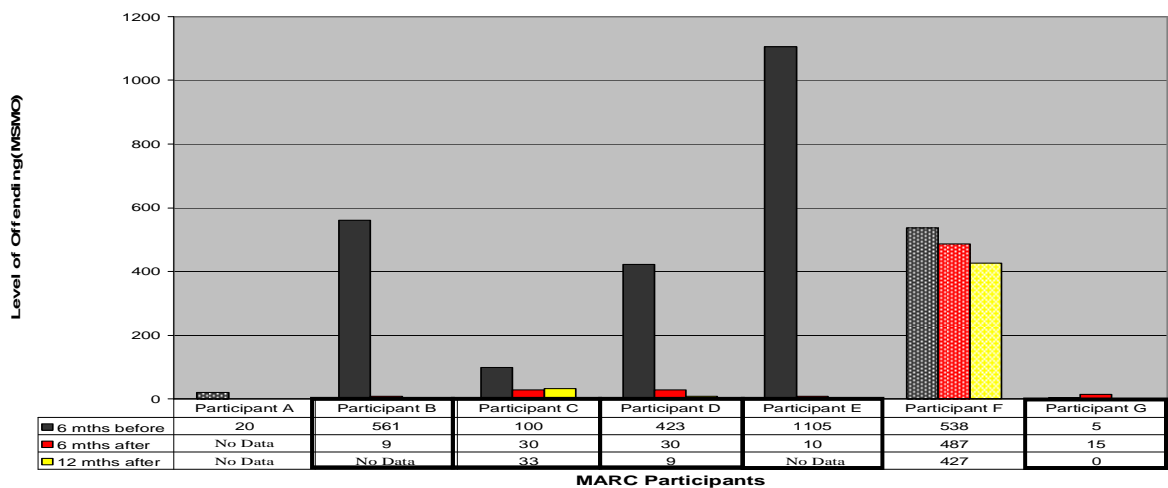
#### 4.10.3 Offending

Using a scoring system based on the MARC Gravity of Offence Scale (Appendix R) for both the LES and MSMO measures, a much higher level of offending was recorded on the pre-MARC MSMO self report measure for most of the participants. The very high levels of pre-MARC self-reported offending is even more significant given that it was for a six month period, compared to 12 months for the LES convictions measure. Participant B, D and E all recorded a marked drop in offending on the LES measure, with D and E showing zero convictions (Figure 35). On the MSMO measure, Participants B, C, D and E recorded a large drop in offending in the six month period after MARC. At the 12-month follow-up Participant C showed that he had maintained this much lower level of offending and Participant D had reduced his offending even further. Unfortunately, data for Participant B and E could not be obtained. Participant G's self-reported offending went up in the six months after MARC, but then reduced to zero in the second six month period (Figure 36).





**Figure 35. Group Level of Offending from LES Convictions**



**Figure 36. Group Level of Offending from the MSMO Self-Report Measure**

#### 4.10.4 The Big Picture

The table below provides a summary of the above results, noting age and risk rating of the participant, and highlighting where there is evidence of a marked intervention effect (i.e. over 40% reduction in antisocial attitudes, criminal association, or offending). The shaded boxes with a “YES” identify where there is evidence of a marked improvement on that particular measure. The percentage of improvement is also recorded in the box. These percentages are calculated by the difference between the pre- and post-MARC levels, divided by the pre-MARC level. In cases where there has been some improvement, but not enough to be regarded as significant, the box contains a “NO”, but the percentage of improvement is recorded.



From this table it can be seen that five of the seven participants recorded a marked post-intervention reduction in offending, four were noticeably less involved with criminal associates and two showed a substantial move away from anti-social attitudes (Table 2).

Participants	Age	Risk Rating		Indication of a Marked Intervention Effect (Percent reduction in antisocial attitudes / criminal associations / offending)					
		RoC*RoI / YLS/CLI	Description	SPSIO	MCAA		LES	MSMO	
				Antisocial Attitudes	Antisocial Attitudes	Criminal Associates	Offending: Convictions (12 months after MARC)	Offending: Self- Report	
				(percent reduction 6 / 12 months after MARC)				6 mths	12 mths
A	25	0.73 / 26	High	Insufficient Data			NO (24%)	Insufficient Data	
B	26	0.61 / 21	Medium	NO (10%)	NO (21%)	NO (14%)	YES (73%)	YES (98%)	No Data
C	25	0.74 / 29	High	YES (90 / 78%)	YES (67 / 43%)	YES (53 / 68%)	NO	YES (70%)	YES (67%)
D	25	0.58 / 18	Medium	YES (73 / 64%)	YES (41 / 52%)	YES (67 / 78%)	YES (100%)	YES (92%)	YES (98%)
E	20	0.82 / 29	High	NO	NO	NO (10%)	YES (100%)	YES (99%)	No Data
F	20	0.64 / 26	Medium / High	NO	NO (27%)	YES (46%)	NO (24%)	NO (9%)	NO (21%)
G	19	0.68 / 15	High / Medium	NO	NO	YES (50 / 100%)	NO	NO	YES (100%)

**Table 2. Summary of Results for MARC Participants – Showing Risk Rating and Indication of Significant Intervention Effect**



## **CHAPTER 5      DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Summary of the Findings**

Results from this study provide some evidence supporting the effectiveness of the brief MARC intervention. Of the seven medium/high risk MARC participants, five showed a marked reduction in offending on the MSMO self-report measure and three on the LES conviction measure. Four recorded a large drop in contact with criminal companions, and two had markedly ameliorated their antisocial attitudes (Table 2). Five participants were able to describe ways they had been helped by the programme during post-MARC assessments. These results are consistent with previous less formal MARC research showing 57 MARC graduates significantly reduced their average number of LES convictions over the three year following the intervention (Figure 1) (Lees, 2002).

While insufficient data hindered the evaluation of Participant A, his further LES convictions and choice to decline involvement in the follow-up process indicated that improvement in criminal attitudes or behaviour was unlikely. Participant F was the only other member of the seven who showed no evidence of a marked reduction in reoffending. However, measures indicated that his offending had dropped by just over 20% and his involvement with criminal associates had reduced considerably. He acknowledged that he had learned from MARC that “people can change if they really want to”, but he had not changed because “I don’t really want it at the moment.”

While the simple A-B design of the MARC research makes it more difficult to establish any causal link between the intervention and subsequent behavioural change, the selection of recidivist offenders with medium/high risk ratings makes it less likely that these participants have changed by non-intervention causes. Such offenders are known to be hard to rehabilitate, resistant to change and requiring lengthy interventions. Although far from being conclusive, any evidence of a marked reduction in the criminality of persistent offenders, using the brief spiritually-based MARC intervention, would also support the hypothesis that spiritual change



facilitates cognitive and behavioural change. It suggests that there is something about MARC that expedited a reduction in offending. If MARC was purely exerting influence on a cognitive level, then criminal research indicates that interventions of 100 hours or more are usually required (McLaren, 1996; Zampese, 1997). It is noted that only two out of seven participants recorded significant change in the cognitive area (i.e. antisocial attitudes) (Table 2), which further suggest that the drop in offending of the other three participants was initiated by other factors. The process of spiritual change and how it may influence behaviour is discussed in the next section.

## **5.2 The Process of Spiritual Change**

With only one of the seven MARC participants making a Christian commitment (Participant C), it raises the question of how MARC could bring spiritual change to others still contemplating whether to embrace a Christian solution to their problems. Although the concept of “spiritual change” may be difficult to define and quantify, for this project it was explained in terms of seven spiritual change factors, namely, the authority of the bible, prayer support, the fear of God, redemptive grace, agapé love, revelation of truth and the awakening of the conscience (see Chapter 2). These were seen as being active on a spiritual level prior to Christian conversion, and capable of producing spiritual and behavioural change long before a person becomes reconciled with God. This change process is evidenced in biblical parables such as the Prodigal Son, who “came to his senses” in a pig pen prior to beginning the journey home to be reconciled with his father (Luke 15: 11-31). As the journey of spiritual change begins for an offender, it is postulated that he is likely to gain a greater sense of conscience and accountability to God, which in turn will have a moderating influence on his criminal behaviour.

Although the mechanisms and measurement of spiritual change go beyond the scope of this research project, a helpful conceptualization of the spiritual change process is given in a journal article by Bill Buker (2003). Drawing upon systems theory, especially the writings of Gregory Bateson, Buker presents the concepts of first-, second-, and third-order change as a framework for understanding spiritual development. While first-order change involves using “commonsense” and “willpower” to change behaviour, second- and third-order change involves



a shift in epistemology that reflects a new way of perceiving (p. 144). This epistemological change involves a transformation in the way a person experiences the world. Second-order change is often triggered by a person “hitting bottom” and admitting “powerlessness” to change, leading to the adoption of new ways of thinking and acting (p. 146). Paradoxically this position of perceived weakness is a position of strength, opening the person to the dynamic of spiritual change. Going beyond this epistemological shift, third-order change involves a process of releasing “inward defiance”, experiencing “brokenness” and taking steps of “genuine surrender” (p. 147). Rather than resulting in passivity, this relinquishing of the will to the rule of God empowers the spirit and energises the soul to think and act in radically different ways (Appendix F).

This conceptualisation fits well with the MARC approach to spiritual development. Through the “thorn bush” and “hopeless pit” analogies (Appendix A & I), the participant is encouraged to move from first- to second-order change. Something more than self-effort and willpower is needed to resolve root problems and get out of the hopeless pit. Using the MARC 12 Steps to Freedom (Appendix K), second-order change can take place on Steps one to three (Appendix L – N), which involve admitting powerlessness to change and adopting new ways of thinking. Most offenders attending MARC are new to the spiritual change process and only progress to this second level. To go to the third level, involving brokenness and surrender, is something that cannot be rushed. Sometimes a person will stay at level two for months, or years, before finally being willing to fully surrender to God. Significant for the MARC research is the notion that second-order change is the beginning of spiritual development and involves both an epistemological shift and behaviour change. This would explain how MARC reduces reoffending, even when most participants do not reach third-order change.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Present Study**

It is readily acknowledged that there was limited ability to control important variables in this research, with the conditions of a true experiment only approximated (Kazdin, 2003). This quasi-experimental A-B single case design means that the study perhaps raises more questions than it answers. While there is evidence of a correlation between treatment and change, it was



not possible to isolate effects of the intervention or establish a clear cause and effect relationship. It is recognised that there are a number of threats to internal and construct validity which could give a plausible alternative interpretation for the research results. Extraneous factors such as selection bias, environmental influences, maturation, limitations of the measures and the therapeutic relationship, could be put forward as an explanation for the positive outcomes. These limitations, along with threats to external validity, are explored below.

### 5.3.1 Selection Bias

If the selection of MARC participants attracted offenders with characteristics predisposing them to change, independent of the intervention, then selection bias would be a factor influencing the results. In view of MARC being a voluntary programme and with most participants successfully completing its requirements, this could indicate that the research sample had a higher level of motivation to change than the general offender population. As already noted, the selection process for MARC involved ensuring that all participants had a medium/high-risk rating. The RoC\*RoI instrument, the primary risk measure used, gives a computer-generated rating based on static factors that are free from subjective interpretation. The average RoC\*RoI score for MARC participants was 0.69, indicating a 69% likelihood of further serious offending. The medium/high risk RoC\*RoI scores were supported by the more subjective YLS-CLI scores, the participants' social history and their high self-reported level of offending. This means that MARC participants were drawn from a group that is noted as being difficult to rehabilitate and resistant to change (Corrections, 2001). Such offenders are less likely to be changed by non-intervention causes. When working with participants who are engaged in a criminal lifestyle, with entrenched habits of offending behaviour, even those motivated to change are unlikely to do so through self-effort or influences in their surrounding environment. In addition to risk rating, candidates for MARC were selected on the basis of geographic location, age and length of prison sentence. Out of 11 suitable candidates presented with the programme, only three declined to attend. While selection bias may have been a factor influencing results, with more motivated offenders being attracted to MARC, on its own it is unlikely to account for the positive results.



### 5.3.2 Maturation

Another possible confounding variable is the maturation of participants. Four of the seven MARC participants were aged 25 – 26 years of age and the other three were aged 19 – 20. It could be suggested that some of the MARC participants were about to “grow out” of their offending at the time of attending MARC, and that their drop in offending was part of a normal maturation process. Research plotting crime rate as a function of age has found it to peak around age 20, and then gradually diminish (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). However, two types of offender have been identified: 1) the “adolescent-limited” which accounts for the majority of young offenders who stop offending by early adulthood, and; 2) the “persister” or “life-course” describing chronic offenders, with an early onset of antisocial behaviour and offending that continues into adulthood, often with increasing seriousness (Andrews & Bonta, pp. 179-180). With the possible exception of Participant G, the MARC participants all showed these hallmarks of persistent offenders. Nevertheless, it is noted that moderate-risk adolescent offenders may stop offending earlier if given treatment to remedy the “damaging effects of their adolescent behaviour” (Zampese, 1997, p. 16). While the maturation factor cannot be ruled out, it is unlikely to account for the change in all five of the participants who showed a reduction in reoffending.

### 5.3.3 History

Perhaps the most significant threat to internal validity in this research is what Kazdin (2003) refers to as “history”, meaning any influence on the offender other than the intervention that could account for the results. With five of the MARC participants being prison inmates and a sixth having been recently released, the drop in offending could be attributed to the prison experience. However, it is well recognised in international research that imprisonment on its own does not reduce reoffending, and for young offenders the prison experience has been found to greatly increase their risk of re-conviction and re-imprisonment (Corrections, 2001). New Zealand Corrections has embraced the findings of Andrews and Bonta (2003), Kaye McLaren (1992) and others that show that “sound, research based, rehabilitation programmes” are needed to reduce reoffending (Corrections, 2001, p. v). With the exception of Participants D and G, all the MARC volunteers had served multiple terms of imprisonment with continued reoffending.



Although the prison experience is unlikely to reduce offending, it is acknowledged that Participant E's experience of being seriously injured while committing a crime seven days after his prison release, requiring several months to recover, is likely to have contributed to his substantial drop in offending. Nevertheless, this traumatic experience could be seen as reinforcing the MARC message that his choices will have consequences and he will reap what he sows (Gal. 6:7).

Attendance on a short Corrections programme after MARC could well have assisted with the positive results of Participant C. An ex-gang member with one of the highest risk ratings, this participant finished MARC expressing a desire to seek further assistance in the change process. Although not ready for church attendance, he showed motivation to address his drug dependency by applying for the Salvation Army Bridge programme. While still awaiting admission to The Bridge, Participant C successfully completed Corrections' Structured Individual Programme (SIP) after release from prison. When interviewed 12 months after attending MARC, he indicated that SIP had built upon the change that had occurred during MARC.

#### 5.3.4 Therapeutic Relationship, Experimenter Expectancies and Desirable Responding

An important consideration in identifying the limitations of the MARC research is the possibility that the one-on-one contact of the MARC facilitator, and/or his expectations of how participants will respond, could produce the positive outcomes independent of the programme content and its spiritual basis (Lambert, 2004). While the research methodology cannot rule out this possibility, again the brief nature of the intervention and the entrenched patterns of behaviour of the MARC participants indicate that this is an unlikely explanation. If this were the case then other short interventions should work equally as well. It is more likely that facilitator expectations, coupled with the social approval seeking motive of some participant, could influence them to fill in measurements instruments inaccurately in order to put themselves in a more favourable light. By using the Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) an indication was obtained of whether this had been a factor (Figure 3). While three participants were possibly influenced by the approval motive (Participants B, C and G), the impartial LES



conviction data and/or comments from family and probation officers was used to verify their positive outcomes.

#### 5.3.5 Measurement Limitations

In addition to possible errors from desirable responding, the measurement instruments had other limitations. In the Corrections field the most salient measure of programme effectiveness is reduced reoffending. However, both measures of offending in this research have limitations. While convictions on the LES database are the most common measure in Corrections' research, it only records offending that has been detected by Police and has resulted in a successful prosecution. Conviction history of some MARC participants showed periods where offending appeared to stop, but during assessment participants admitted that undetected offending occurred during these periods. The MARC Self Report Measure of Offending (MSMO) gave offenders the opportunity to disclose their actual level of offending, but the weakness of this measure is its reliance on the honesty of offenders for its accuracy. Participants were assured of the confidential nature of this disclosure and most acknowledged a much higher rate of pre-MARC offending than was evident on their LES conviction list. Using LES and MSMO together gives an opportunity to more accurately represent pre- and post-intervention levels of offending. Going a step further, the MARC research also used a Gravity of Offence Scale (Appendix R) to include seriousness of offending in the estimation of pre- and post-MARC levels of offending.

#### 5.3.6 Threats to External Validity

As already noted in the Method section, a major limitation of the single-case design is the generality of findings. Will the results of one case be relevant to another? Replication studies with similar results are needed to give strength to the findings. In the MARC research the single case study experiment has been replicated seven times, with five of the seven participants showing evidence of significant behaviour change (reduction in reoffending). Barlow and Hersen (1984) contend that replicated single-case studies, where similar results are obtained with similar clients, can be a more effective way of determining treatment efficacy than the experimental group and no-treatment control group design. By examining the individual characteristics of each participant it may be possible to determine which type of participant



responds best to the intervention. Group studies tend to ignore individual differences, and the statistical analysis of results can mask the fact that the intervention was effective for certain cases.

Other external validity issues include whether the MARC intervention would be effective with female offenders, or with younger or older age groups. From the mix of New Zealand European and Māori participants, both appeared to respond equally well to the programme, but the research has not determined whether the intervention would be effective for offender volunteers from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds. With the research facilitator also being the developer of the programme, the question also arises as to whether others could be trained to present the programme just as effectively.

Perhaps the most important unanswered question of this research is whether the change detected over 12 months will be sustained in the long term. This was one of the issues of most concern to both the Department of Corrections and the Central Regional Ethics Committee when examining the methodology of this study. While the earlier MARC research also had design limitations, its positive results using LES convictions of 57 programme graduates over a three year post-MARC period helps give support to MARC's external validity (Lees, 2002).

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

Some of the initial inspiration for this research project came from a section in the Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behaviour Change which commented on the need for more research into spiritually-based change. It refers to the substantial research literature documenting the relationship of spiritually-based change to physical and mental health, and comments that "the field of psychotherapy research has hardly touched this potential source of therapeutic effects" (Lambert, 2004, p. 817). One of the difficulties of the current project has been to find comparable studies, particularly in the Corrections field, as a reference point for this research. On this issue the Handbook remarks that "given the large number of clients who subscribe to a religious belief system, and the importance of such a system to their functioning, it is surprising to see the degree to which discussions and research are missing from the literature on



psychotherapy process and outcome” (p. 817). However, the growing body of research into faith-based prison ministries, along with the recent development of theoretical concepts for use in evaluating faith-based programmes (Harden, 2006), seems to indicate that this field is gaining greater recognition.

While the single-case study methodology of the current research was neither able to prove cause and effect relationships between the intervention and successful outcomes, nor isolate mechanisms of change inherent in the MARC programme, the replicated single-case study design is seen as effective way to generate new hypotheses, which later can be subjected to more rigorous research (Barlow & Hersen, 1984; Kazdin, 2003). As well as providing evidence to support the effectiveness of the MARC intervention, the positive outcomes of the current study advance the hypothesis that facilitating spiritual change can be an effective way to expedite cognitive and behavioural change. The apparent success of the spiritually-based MARC intervention, with its brief format and target group of hard-to-change medium/high risk offenders, suggests that further investigation of this hypothesis is warranted.

In response to recommendations from the Department of Corrections and the Central Regional Ethics Committee, the follow-up time frame of the current research was extended from 6 to 12 months, and the Participant Consent Form (Appendix U) was amended to allow for follow-up assessments to occur up to 24 months after MARC. Although this goes beyond the constraints this Masters’ research, the researcher expressed a willingness to do a two-year follow-up assessment of MARC participants if requested to do so by the Department of Corrections.

## **5.5 Clinical Implications for the Community**

### **5.5.1 Brief Format Makes MARC Accessible and Attractive to Offenders**

While MARC’s brief 10 session format has substantially less opportunity to exert influence than comprehensive 18 month faith-based prison programmes, its positive outcome adds to earlier research showing that brief bible-based interventions can be effective (Johnson et al., 1997). The condensed nature of MARC enabled it to be made available to inmates on short sentences, who would otherwise have missed out on attending a rehabilitative programme. The two who



completed MARC in the community lived away from a main centre and would also have missed attending a programme had MARC not been available. With a limited 60-bed capacity, the Rimutaka faith-based unit can only cater for a select few and is likely to attract those who have already begun to seek spiritual change.

Although there was no survey to determine why offenders volunteered to attend MARC, it was evident that its spiritual approach was not the main attraction. During the recruitment phase it appeared that the brevity of the course, its availability, flexibility and its one-on-one format were the factors that were most appealing. Most of the volunteers had little or no understanding of the Christian worldview and by the end of 10 sessions were only just beginning to understand the Christian approach to solving problems. While they have yet to reach a place of wanting on-going Christian support, several indicated that they were now regularly reading the bible (presented to them at graduation). During the limited time-frame of MARC, the programme seeks to lay an initial spiritual foundation that could later lead to a more in-depth transforming Christian encounter. The current research provides some evidence that, even as a stand-alone intervention, the preliminary spiritual groundwork of MARC is capable of producing significant results.

### 5.5.2 Why Christians Volunteer for Prison Service

In addition to the biblical worldview providing Christians with common redemptive tools for offender rehabilitation, it also encourages a close identification with those in prison. Understanding this aspect of the Christian mandate helps explain why Christian organisations have a long history of involvement in the welfare of prisoners, and how ministries like Prison Fellowship International (PFI) are able to mobilise thousands of volunteers to work alongside these often difficult and dangerous people (Bolkas, 2002; McDaniel et al., 2005). The bible identifies all humans as “law-breakers” and “sinners,” and yet a people of immense value to a loving God who has gone to great lengths to redeem this fallen race (Isaiah 53:6, Rom. 6:23, John 3:16). This view enables Christian volunteers to treat inmates as equals and show compassion irrespective of how objectionable their offending. Furthermore, Christians believe they have a biblical directive to visit those in prison, with Jesus declaring in this regard “inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matt. 25:40).



### 5.5.3 Effective Moral Development, Cross-Cultural Appeal and Informed Consent

The recent release of 2006 census information reveals that since the last census New Zealanders identifying with the Christian religion has dropped 5% to around 55% of the population, i.e., 2.1 million people (TVNZ, 2006). This is down from 90.1% in 1966 (Henrickson, 2007). While media reports highlight this as on-going evidence of the decline of the Christian faith in this country, these figures show that the Christian worldview still holds a place of prominence in New Zealand society. Many see the decline of traditional Judeo-Christian values as the main contributor to the growing criminality, violence and family breakdown of western society (Colson & Pearcey, 1999; Crime Prevention Action Group, 1992). Among the principles of effective offender interventions, research has identified the importance of fostering moral development and reinforcing “pro-social” values (McLaren, 1992; Trotter, 1994). Closely linked to the hypothesis of this research is the view that Judeo-Christian values are most effective in changing behaviour when they are prayerfully presented in their biblical and spiritual context. MARC is not just about imparting Christian values, but about connecting the participant with the divine source of those values. It is suggested that this spiritual approach to moral development, with the presenting of pro-social values in the context of the love, justice and redemption of the God of the Bible, was the key to MARC bringing about behaviour change in a short time-frame.

In referring to the prominence of the Christian worldview in the history and value-base of New Zealand society, it is not intended to imply that Christian organisations should have an exclusive role in faith-based ministries to offenders. However, it is proposed that inherent within the Christian worldview are spiritual change factors (see Paragraph 2.5) that have a particular appeal to offenders seeking a fresh start. These change factors are seen as having the power to begin moderating offending behaviour, even before a person embraces the Christian way of life. Unique to the Christian worldview is the belief in the transforming power of biblical truth (John 8:32, Luke 4:18), centred on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. While the naturalistic view of multiculturalism (see Paragraph 1.5 and Table 1) is likely to favour a more generic approach to moral development and promoting pro-social values, MARC seeks to give offenders the option of receiving a biblically authentic, undiluted presentation of the Christian remedy for aberrant behaviour.



Globally there is evidence that the Christian worldview has cross-cultural appeal, with indigenous Christian churches existing within most nations and ethnic groups. While Christianity may have declined in the west, the most rapid growth of the Christian church is now in non-western countries. The bible continues to be the world's most translated book, with at least a portion now available to over 98% of the world's population (St. John in the Wilderness, 2007; Wikipedia, 2007). Over the years the MARC programme has received a favourable response from offenders of various ethnic backgrounds, but mainly Māori, European and Pacific Island. A wide cross-cultural acceptance is also evident with the PFI ministry, which is now active in 110 countries ([www.pfi.org](http://www.pfi.org)).

Critics of MARC and other faith-based programmes may see it as a vehicle for promoting religion to disadvantaged and vulnerable clientele, under the guise of a rehabilitative intervention. Such criticism would be legitimate if participants were somehow coerced into the programme, without informed consent and freedom to withdraw, and were then pressured to make a Christian commitment or join a church. This is not the case. Although the Christian worldview includes a priority of "spreading the gospel", MARC takes a cautious approach to offenders wanting to embrace the Christian faith, seeking to ensure that they fully understand the nature of the commitment and the lifestyle change that such faith will entail (Appendix K – O). On the basis of informed consent, MARC aims to provide an introduction to Judeo-Christian values and the transforming power available to those who chose to live by these values. It would be helpful to prospective participants if non-faith-based offender programmes, based on worldviews such as naturalism and secular humanism, also sought informed consent by being up-front about their philosophical underpinnings.

#### 5.5.4 Empirically-Validated Faith-Based Programmes – A Cost-Effective Option

Whereas the Corrections Department allocates around \$40 million to run rehabilitative programmes in prisons and through the Community Probation Service (Kay, 2006), most Christian faith-based programmes are delivered at a minimal cost to the taxpayer, using volunteers and charitable donations. While this volunteer service is a limited resource, it is likely that there is potential for greater availability of such faith-based programmes within New Zealand Corrections facilities. For this to happen there is a need for the development of



comprehensive, “user-friendly”, non-coercive programmes that are attractive and culturally respectful of the New Zealand offender population. Where possible these programmes need to be empirically validated through formal research and subject to on-going development and improvement. High standards in the training, certifying and supervision of facilitators would be essential in maintaining programme integrity. During the 13-year history of the MARC intervention, these ideals have been at the forefront of its development. It is hoped that the experience gained and information documented in this research will assist the future development of faith-based programmes.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

While MARC has never been an official Corrections programme, its development within the Department of Corrections since 1993 was permitted on the proviso that it continued to be aligned with principles of effective intervention and demonstrated successful outcomes. Throughout its 10-year history within Corrections it operated as a community-based sentencing option for medium to high risk offenders, and was often chosen as a last resort before imprisonment. Focusing on moral development, problem solving and new ways of thinking, MARC used a biblical approach to challenge criminal ways of thinking and maladaptive core beliefs. With the aid of Christian mentors, participants were encouraged to revise antisocial values and gain a sense of shame over their wrong-doing. An engaging presentation of biblical concepts such as moral law, sin, alienation, cleansing, forgiveness and restoration provided the basis for the participant to begin the process of spiritual change. Moving from shame to hope, an offender’s significance and value as a human being was affirmed through gaining understanding of God’s redemptive rescue plan.

In proposing the largely unrecognised construct of “spiritual change” as a key factor in reducing offending of MARC participants, it is acknowledged that this hypothesis goes beyond the conventional tenets of mainstream psychology. Given the inconclusive nature of this study and possible alternative explanations for the results, it is unlikely to greatly advance the recognition of the spiritual dimension within psychology. However, it is hoped that it will add to this under-researched area of knowledge and encourage others to go further in investigating the



mechanisms and potency of the spiritual change process. Given the evidence of MARC's effectiveness, along with its brevity, flexibility and low-cost of implementation, it is also hoped that this intervention could be further developed and made available as a faith-based option for those unable to attend established Corrections programmes. This would require further research to confirm MARC's effectiveness, the training of Christian volunteers, and a commitment on the part of the Department of Corrections to allow MARC to be implemented in a wider arena. It is noted that Corrections has already made a commitment to a holistic approach to offender programmes, with the spiritual dimension being at the forefront of initiatives such as Tikanga Māori, the Māori Focus Units and the Rimutaka Faith-Based Unit (Corrections, 2006a).

With previous analysis indicating MARC to be an effective community-based measure, the current research suggests that MARC is also an effective pre-release programme for prison inmates. The simplicity and brevity of the MARC programme, along with its empirical validation and high level of participant completion, advance it a cost-effective faith-based option that could be implemented more widely.



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## *APPENDICES*

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## Appendix A. MARC Problem Solving Model

Adapted from an Institute in Basic Life Principles model (Gothard, 1992)

<b>TRACING SURFACE PROBLEMS TO ROOT CAUSES</b> <b>Making Right Choices (MARC) – Problem Solving Model</b>		
<b>SURFACE PROBLEMS</b>  <b>Behaviour / Actions</b> <i>Things going wrong that others can see</i> (Consequence of Choices)	<i>Bad Habits: Smoking / Alcohol / Drugs / Gambling / Pornography / Family Strife / Broken Relationships / Troublesome Friends / Abuse: physical/sexual/verbal / Occult / Evil influences</i>	<b>Outbursts of Anger</b> <b>Fights / Violence</b> <b>Criminal Offending</b> <i>Other Problems: Money / Work / Health / Sleep / Sexual</i> <b>Hurting myself</b> <b>Attempted Suicide</b>
 <b>SURFACE CAUSES</b>  <b>Thoughts / Feelings</b> <i>Sometimes hidden from others</i>	<b>Angry / Frustrated / Vengeful / Guilty / Ashamed / Fearful / Worried / Depressed / Anxious / Proud / Superior / Insecure / Envious / Jealous / Lonely / Unhappy / Bored / Depressed / Despairing / Suicidal</b>	<b>Pushed Down / Rejected / Confused / Misunderstood / Stupid / Foolish / Rebellious / Lustful</b>  <b><u>Distorted Thinking / False Ideas:</u></b> <b>Minimising</b> – it's not too bad <b>Justifying</b> – it's not my fault <b>Denial</b> – it's not a problem
 <b>ROOT PROBLEMS</b>  <b>Character / Values / Core Beliefs</b> <i>Going against God's principles and commands can result in bad habits and POOR CHARACTER</i>	<b>Bitterness</b> <b>Holding onto hurt and abuse of the past.</b> Staying in the victim role. Holding hatred for those who have wronged me. <b>Wanting a payback.</b> Resentful. Bearing a grudge.	<b>Moral Damage</b> <b>Damage to my character and values due to moral failure.</b> The world is governed by <b>Physical Laws</b> (Cause and Effect) and <b>Moral Laws</b> (Choices and Consequences) <b>Breaking Moral Laws causes great damage now and for my future.</b>
	<b>False Foundations / Temporal Values</b> Building life on shaky ground, shifting sand – things that won't last. Seeking short-term happiness. Wanting what others have. Being greedy. Looking for quick ways to feel good, even if it is wrong. Having goals that won't satisfy. <b>Valuing THINGS more than GOD.</b> <b>HAVING NO SOLID FOUNDATION</b>	
 <b>ROOT CAUSES</b>  <b>Principles / Moral Law</b>	<b>Going against Life Principles</b> <b>E.G.</b> Being dishonest & selfish. Rejecting how God made me. Rebelling against authority. Not forgiving others. Not seeking God's special plan for my life. Failing to love God & others.	<b>Breaking Basic Moral Laws</b> <i>Have no other gods before Me...</i> <i>Do not make for yourself idols</i> <i>Do not use God's name as a swear word</i> <i>Set aside the Lord's day each week</i> <i>Honour your father &amp; mother</i> <i>Do not murder</i> <i>Do not have sex outside of marriage</i> <i>Do not steal – Do not lie</i> <i>Do not crave for what other have</i>

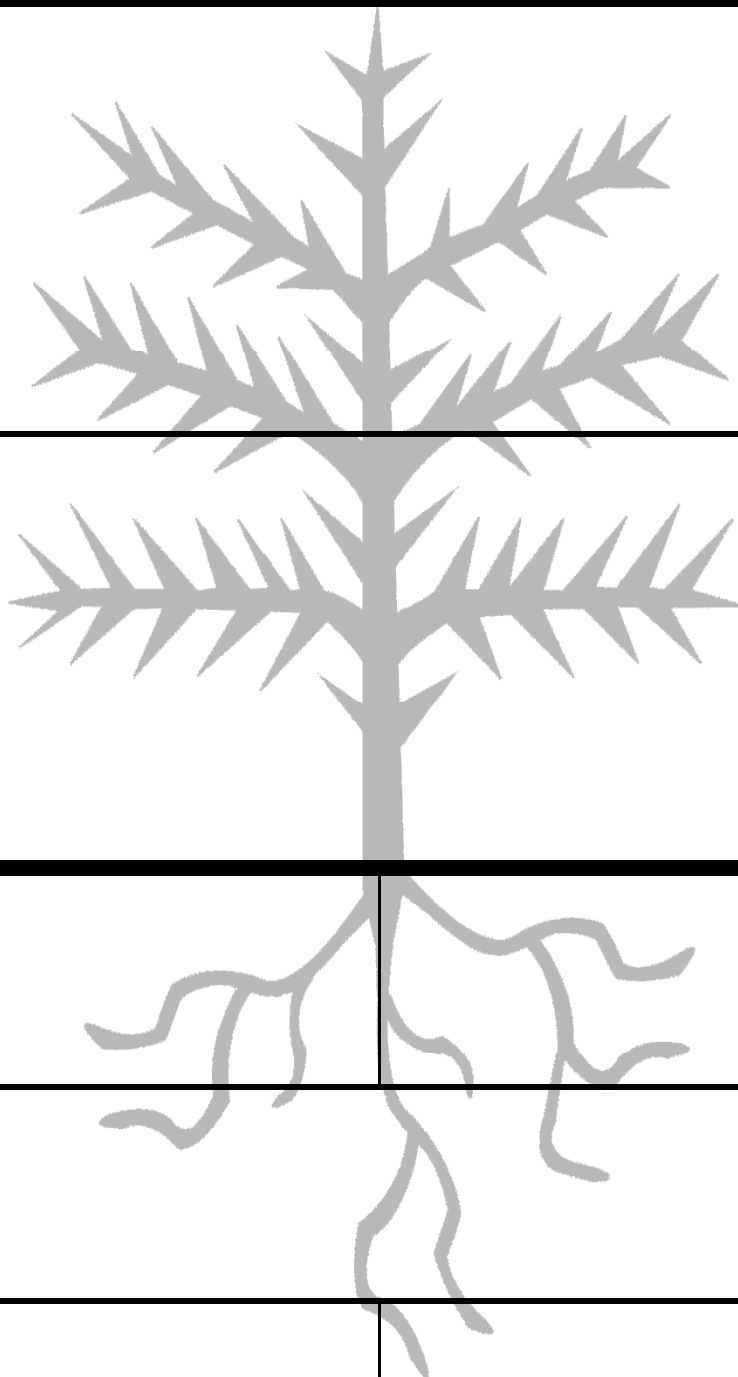


## Appendix B. MARC Problem Solving Worksheet (Session 1 – 4)

**TRACING SURFACE PROBLEMS TO ROOT CAUSES****Making Right Choices (MARC) – Problem Solving Worksheet**

Name:

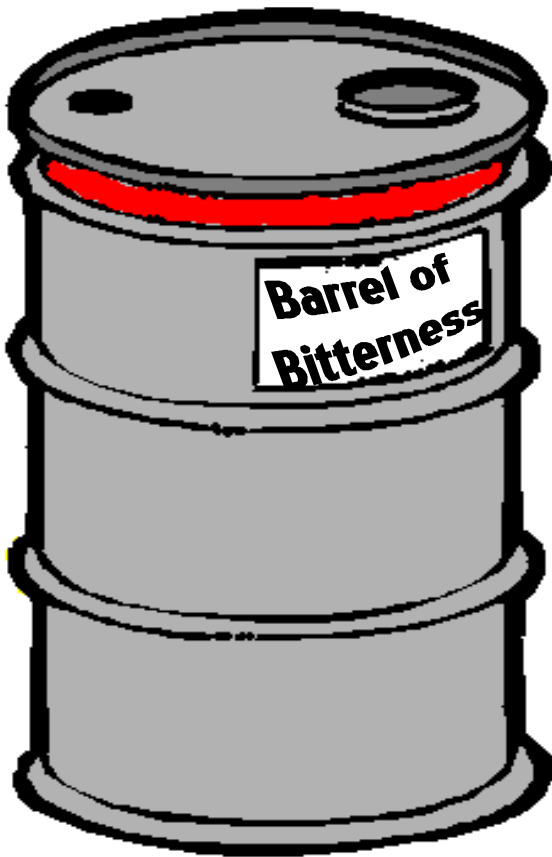
Date:

**SURFACE  
PROBLEMS****Behaviour / Actions***Things going wrong that  
others can see***SURFACE CAUSES****Thoughts / Feelings***Sometimes hidden from  
others***ROOT PROBLEMS****Character / Values /  
Core Beliefs****ROOT CAUSES****Principles / Moral Law**



# Barrel of Bitterness

**Bitterness**—Holding onto hurt and abuse of the past. Staying in the victim role.  
Holding hatred for those who have wronged me.  
Wanting a payback. Resentful. Bearing a grudge. Failing to Forgive.



Some of the most hurtful things that have happened to me:

- 
- 
- 
- 

**Acts 8:23** *For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity (moral failure)."*

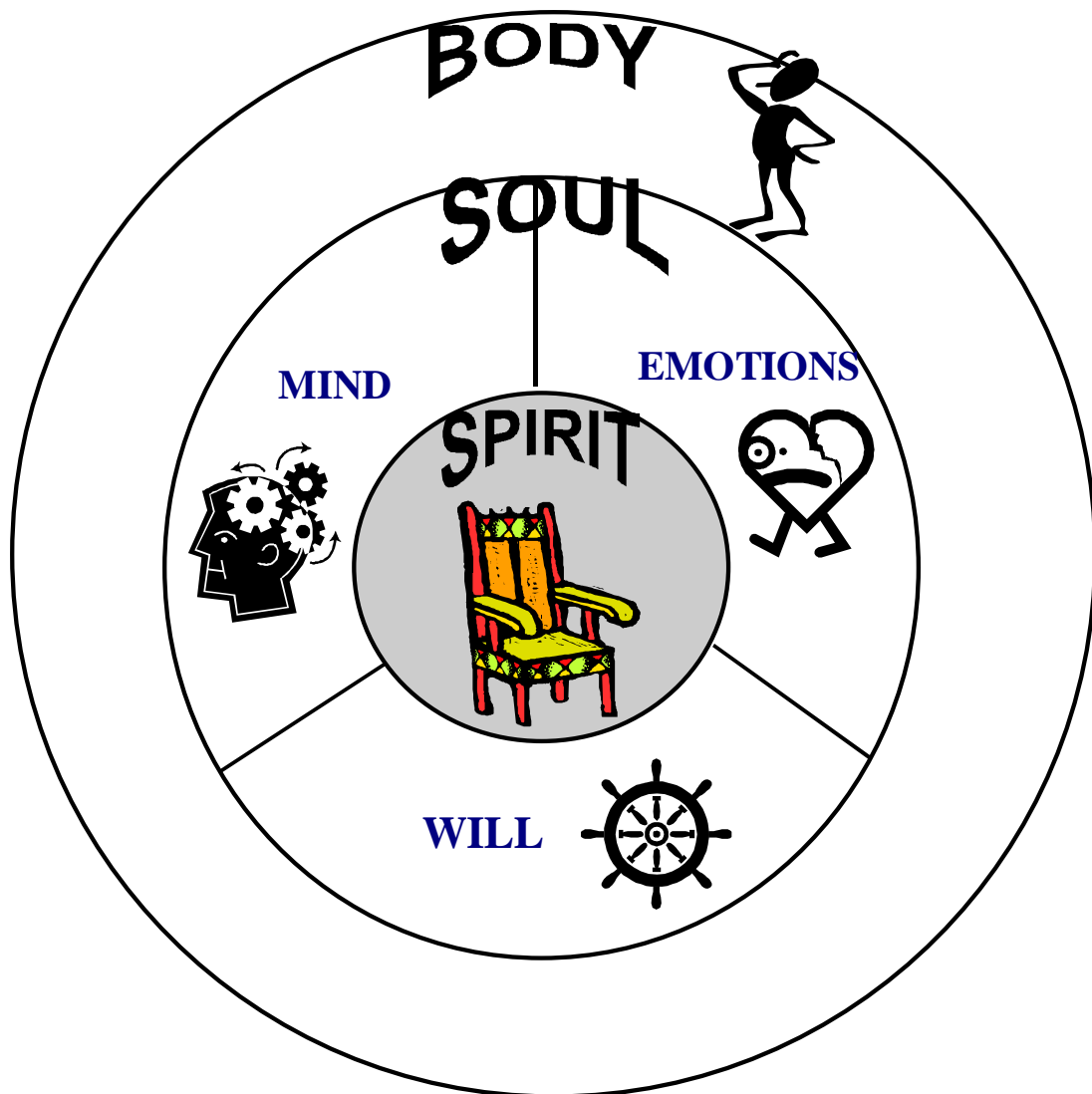
**Hebrews 12:15** ....looking carefully lest anyone *fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*



Appendix D. The Tripartite Model of the Human Person (Session 4)

## THE HUMAN SPIRIT

### DESIGNED TO BE THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD



### Who is sitting on the throne of my life—myself or Jesus?

**God says:** ...“I live in a high and holy place, but also **with him who is contrite (broken) and lowly (humble) in spirit** ...” Isaiah 57:15 (NIV)

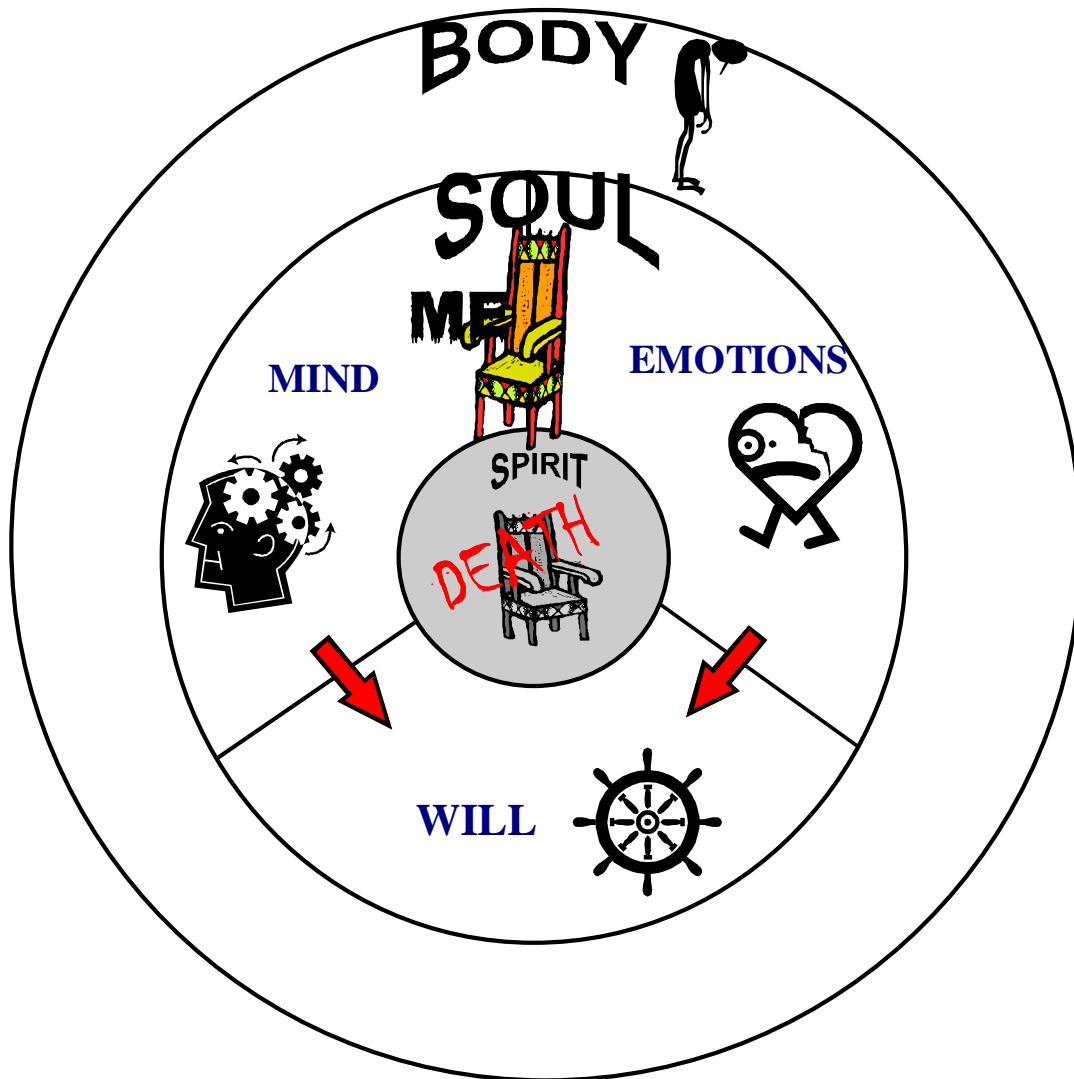
**The True Foundation:** “... that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith being **rooted and grounded in love.**” Ephesians 3:17 (NKJV),



## Appendix E. False Foundations (Session 4)

## FALSE FOUNDATIONS / TEMPORAL VALUES

ME on the throne → the spirit dies and the soul rules



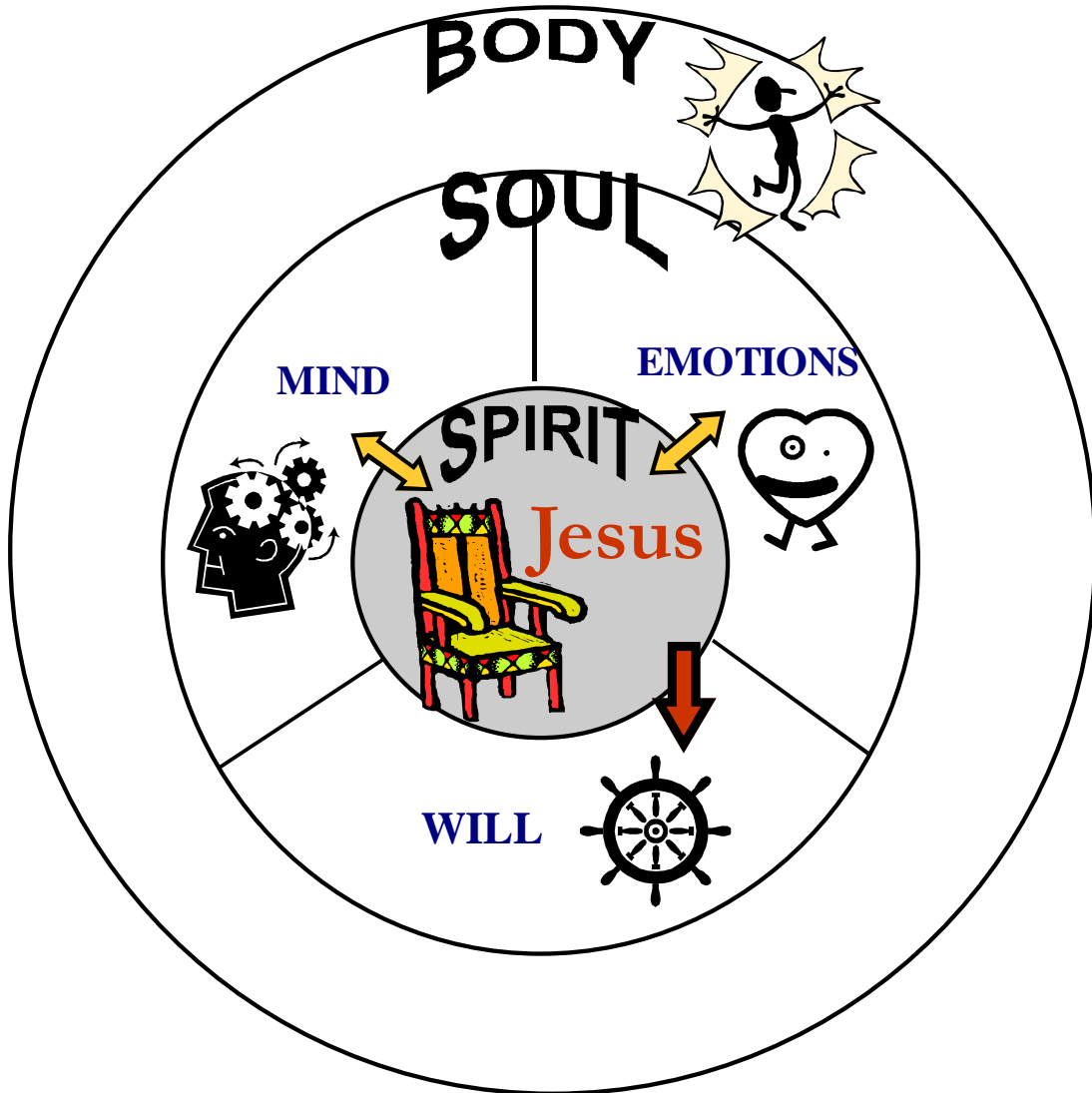
**CONFLICT** occurs between my **MIND** and **EMOTIONS** as to who will control the **WILL**—the whole **BODY** suffers

The Bible says: ... “Once you were *dead* because of your disobedience and your many sins. You use to live in sin....obeying the devil.... following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. (Ephesians 2:1—3, NLT)

“...when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to *death*.” (James 1:15)



## JESUS CAME TO RESCUE US FROM SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL DEATH



**When I am washed clean of sin and  
JESUS IS ON THE THRONE—everything is in harmony**

The bible says: ... “But God is so rich in mercy, and He loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, HE GAVE US LIFE...”

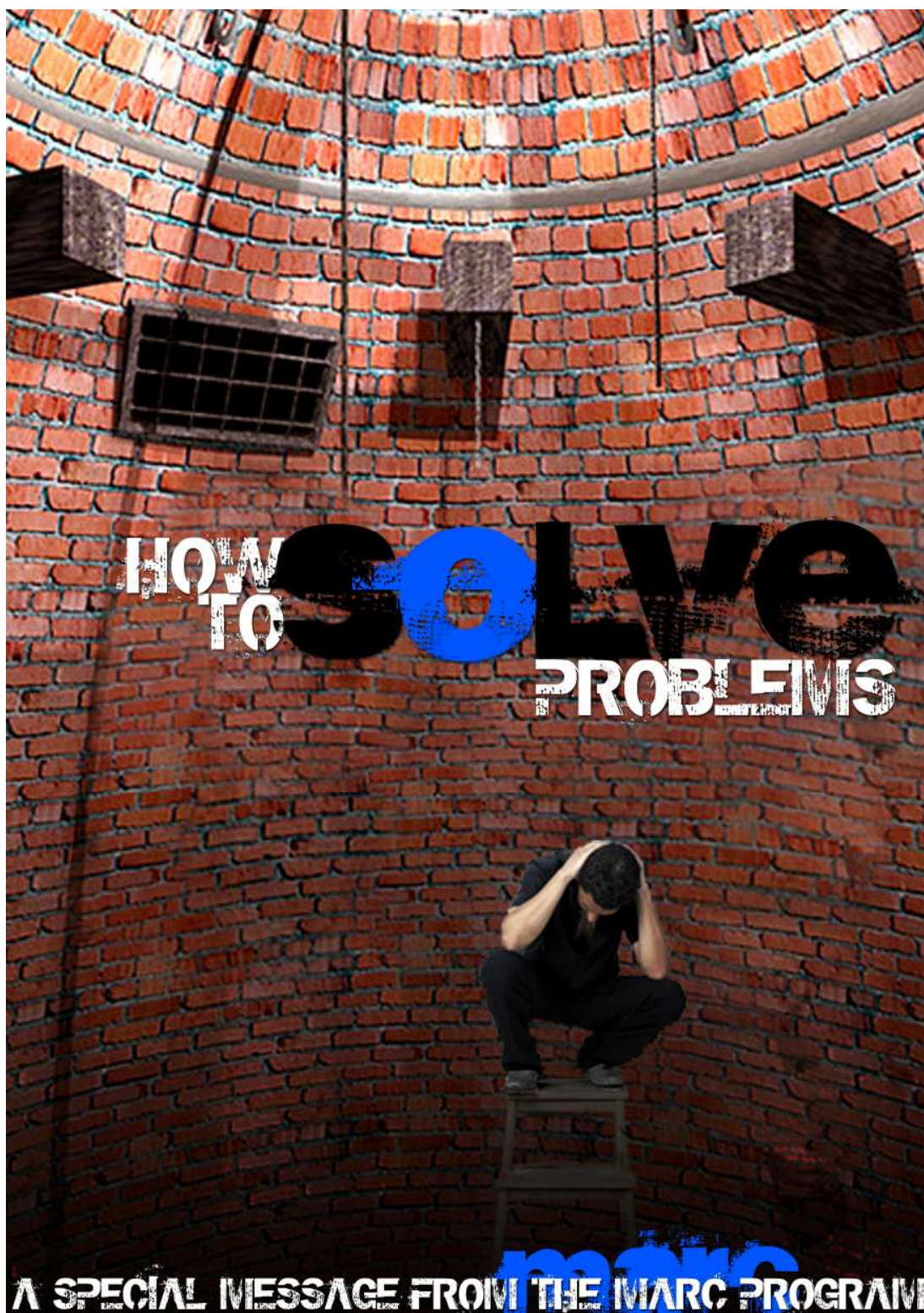
(Ephesians 2:4—NLT)

“...be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...”

(Ephesians 3:16-17—NKJV)



Appendix G. MARC Booklet – How to Solve Problems (Session 3)





we all have problems...

...sometimes small and irritating



...sometimes large and overwhelming.



We live in a world full of problems  
...War, Violence, Crime, Family Strife,  
Broken Relationships, Bad Habits,  
Disease, Sickness, and Death.



Many **problems** are caused by violating **Physical Laws** (Laws of **Cause** and **Effect**)



Eg: My car **crashed** because I was going **too fast** for the wet conditions.

I played with **fire** and got **burnt**.



I became **sick** because I ate **too much**.





But what about problems such as:

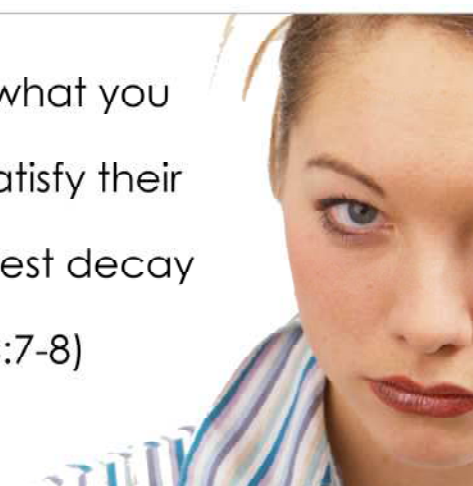
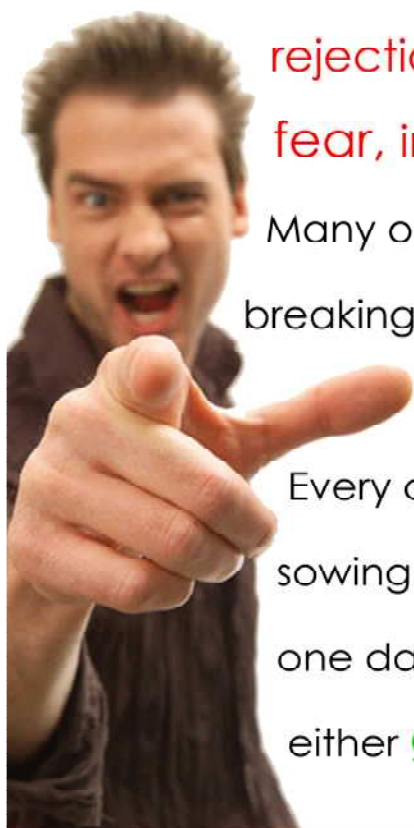
Anger, hatred, lust, guilt, depression,  
rejection, rebellion, envy, jealousy,  
fear, insecurity, anxiety?

Many of these problems are caused by  
breaking moral laws

(Laws of Choices and Consequences).

Every choice I make is like  
sowing a seed in the ground...  
one day I will reap a harvest,  
either good or bad.

...you will always harvest what you  
plant. Those who live to satisfy their  
own sinful nature will harvest decay  
and death... (Galatians 6:7-8)





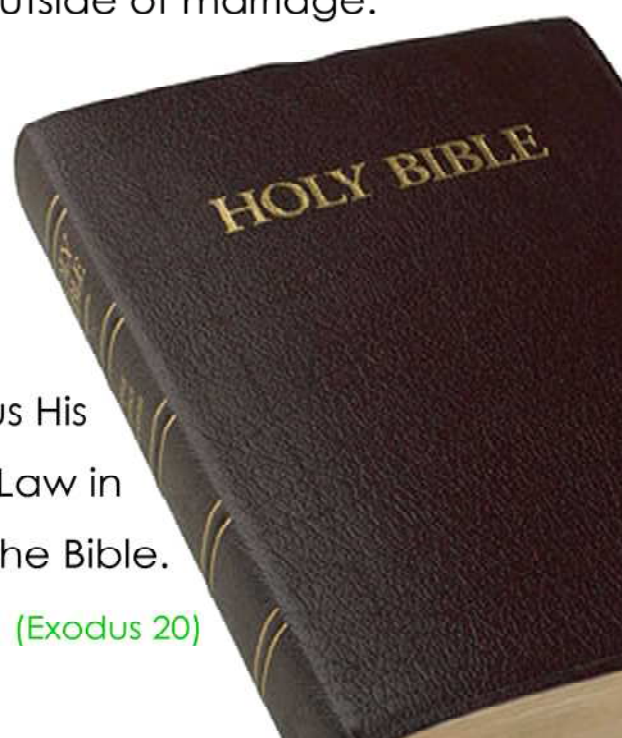
The Moral Law is summarised in  
what is commonly called  
**the ten commandments.**

Here is a brief outline of these laws:

1. Have no other gods before Me.
2. Do not make for yourself idols.
3. Do not use God's name carelessly.
4. Remember God's special day each week.
5. Honour your parents.
6. Do not murder.
7. Do not have sex outside of marriage.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not lie.
10. Do not crave for what others have.

God gave us His  
Moral Law in  
the Bible.

(Exodus 20)





## Appendix H. MARC Booklet – The Moral Damage Checklist (Session 3)

To solve our problems we must first identify the **root cause**

**Take the following test** to see if you have sown any “bad seed”  
(Mark the box when the answer is “yes” to the following questions)

- ☐ **1. Rebellion and rejection of God** – Did I neglect to put God at the centre of my life, failing to seek His will on a daily basis?
- ☐ **2. Making false gods** – Did I allow possessions, activities, relationships or false ideas to compete for God’s rightful place in my life?
- ☐ **3. Dishonouring God’s name** – Did I dishonour God’s name through my words or actions (eg using God’s name as a swear word)?
- ☐ **4. Having wrong priorities** – Did I neglect to set aside the Lord’s Day, failing to make it a day of worship, rest and spiritual refreshment?
- ☐ **5. Dishonouring parents** – Did I fail to honour my parents—forgiving them, serving them, being patient with them and treating them with respect?
- ☐ **6. Harming the life or well being of another** – Did I carry out actions, or show an attitude, that would harm the life of another person?
- ☐ **7. Muddying the water** – Did I allow my heart to become stained by sexual lust, misusing what God intended for within marriage?
- ☐ **8. Taking what is not mine** – Did I take money or property that did not belong to me – from family, friends, strangers or government?
- ☐ **9. Misleading others / telling lies** – Did I fail to tell the truth and deliberately seek to cheat or give a false impression through my words or actions?
- ☐ **10. Craving for what others have** – Am I discontent with what I have, often focusing on gaining more possessions or benefits?





## Appendix I. MARC Booklet – Being in a Hopeless Pit (Session 5)

### being in a hopeless pit

When we break God's Moral Law we get **Guilt, Bad Habits, Poor Character, and Broken Relationships**.

But even worse we have placed ourselves under **God's judgement**.

The **penalty** of Law-Breaking (sin) is **eternal death**. *The wages of sin is death...* (Romans 6:23)

We are trapped in a pit of our **OWN making** and are **powerless to save ourselves**.

*...we are all prisoners of sin...* (Galatians 3:22)

But we often try to build ladders to get out of the pit.

There are three things people do to build **FALSE LADDERS**:

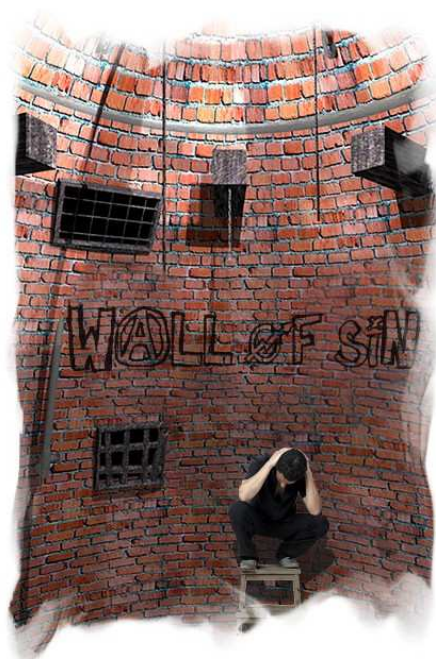
1. **Good Works**—we think that if we are good enough it will make up for wrong we have done.
2. **Religion**—we try to earn favour with God by becoming involved in religious activity.
3. **False Beliefs**—we adopt false ideas about God or deny His existence. Some believe that the moral law does not exist and they are free to live as they please.

We think that we can solve our problems

**our way rather than God's way.**

A **wall of sin** separates us from God and blinds us to the truth.

*"It's your sins that have cut you off from God...."* (Isaiah 59:2)



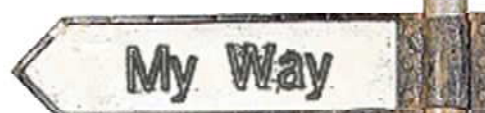


We have all chosen to go our own selfish way rather than God's Way.

All we like sheep have gone astray;  
We have turned, every one, to his own way.

(Isaiah 53:6)

There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12)



The Bible teaches that God loves us and does not want us to be punished for sin and lost forever:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

**God has a rescue plan:**

"...the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us..." (Galatians 1:4)

God has put down a ladder for us:

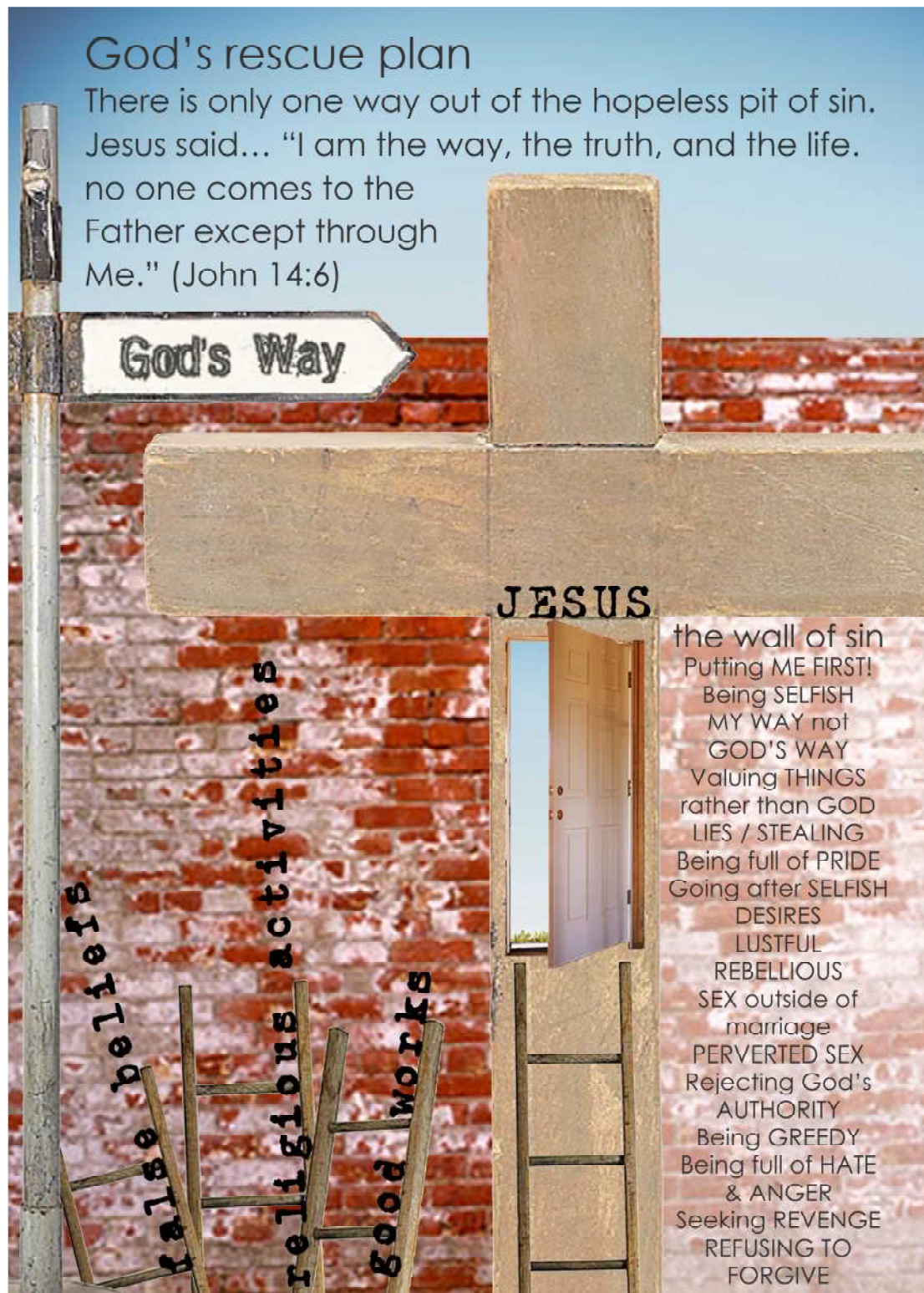
"He brought me up out of the pit of destruction... and He set my feet upon a rock, making my footsteps firm." (Psalm 40:2)

However, we still have the choice to stay in the pit or take God's ladder. (John 1:12 and John 3:19-20)





## Appendix J. MARC Booklet – God's Rescue Plan (Session 5)





## Appendix K. MARC Booklet – 12 Steps to Freedom (Sessions 6-10)

# twelve steps to freedom

**repent and believe:** Get out of denial, turn around and seek after God.

1. I **admit that I am in a trap** of my own making and am powerless to save myself.
2. I **believe that God has made a way out** of the trap and can give me a new start.
3. I **count the cost, turn around**, and prepare to surrender my life to God.

**confess and renounce:** Own up and reject all wrong-doing.

4. I **make a thorough list of wrong** things I remember doing.
5. I **confess my sins** to God and a trusted person, renouncing all wrong activities.
6. I **confess any bitterness** and resentment of others, **choosing to forgive** those who have hurt me in the past.

*He who conceals his sins does not prosper,  
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds  
mercy. (Proverbs 28:13-NIV)*



**surrender:** Let go of selfish ways and choose to fully submit to God.

7. I **surrender my life to God**, receiving forgiveness and the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

**walk in faith:** Learn to trust and obey God every day, and keep on track.

8. I make a list of the people I have wronged and admit my wrongdoing to these people, **making restitution** wherever possible.
9. I make a practice of **promptly confessing any further sin** in my life, seeking prayer and counselling to break any on-going sinful habits.
10. I seek to **develop a relationship with Jesus Christ** through daily reading of the Bible, prayer and learning how to hear His voice.
11. I seek to **walk in the power of the Holy Spirit** and apply the principles of the Bible in every part of my life.
12. I seek the **fellowship of other like-minded Christians** and share the truth I have found with those still trapped by sin.



**Appendix L. MARC Booklet – Getting Out of Denial (Session 6)****step 1: getting out of denial**

I admit that I am in a trap of my own making  
and am powerless to save myself.

- ☐ I am responsible for my actions
- ☐ I have made choices to do wrong (sin)
- ☐ I have filled my mind with wrong thoughts
- ☐ I have lots of negative feelings
- ☐ I have let hurtful experiences make me angry and bitter
- ☐ I have let bad habits grow in my life
- ☐ I have broken God's moral law
- ☐ I have built my life on a shaky foundation
- ☐ I am no longer making excuses for my wrong behaviour
- ☐ I am guilty
- ☐ I deserve to be punished
- ☐ I am reaping what I sow
- ☐ I am destroying myself
- ☐ I need to find a way out of this trap

*The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart,  
And saves such as have a contrite (humble) spirit.*

**(Psalm 34:18)**

I take Step One by admitting to the above statements:

Signed: ..... Date: .....



**Appendix M. MARC Booklet – Believing there is a Way Out (Session 7)****step 2:** believing there is a way out.

I believe that God has made a way out of the trap and can give me a new start.

- ☐ There is an all-powerful God who make the world
- ☐ God knows everything about me
- ☐ God loves me
- ☐ God wants the very best for me
- ☐ My wrong choices (sins) are blocking God out of my life
- ☐ I need mercy and forgiveness for breaking God's law
- ☐ God's son, Jesus Christ, came to this world for me
- ☐ He died a brutal death on a wooden cross for me
- ☐ His death was a substitute for the punishment I deserve
- ☐ I can now choose to turn around and go in a new direction
- ☐ I can be forgiven and set free from my past
- ☐ I can get rid of my load of sin and guilt
- ☐ I can have a new start in life

I take Step Two by believing in the above statements:

Signed: ..... Date: .....



## Appendix N. MARC Booklet – Preparing to Choose God’s Way Out (Session 8)

### step 3: preparing to choose God’s way out

I count the cost, turn around, and prepare to commit my life to God.

- ☐ **My life is at a cross-roads**, I want to turn my life around, have a fresh start and change for the better
- ☐ **I want to be free** from the sin and guilt of my past
- ☐ **I want to be forgiven**, and have a clean mind and heart
- ☐ I know **God is calling me** to follow His way
- ☐ I understand that this will **cost me everything**:
- ☐ I need to **transfer ownership** of myself, my time and my possessions to God
- ☐ I need to **give up the right to rule** my own life and make God the boss
- ☐ I need to **give up my pride and selfishness**
- ☐ I need to **give up my bitterness** and resentment of others
- ☐ I need to **give up my bad habits** and wrong relationships
- ☐ I want to get ready to **humble myself** and seek God’s forgiveness for my rebellion and sin
- ☐ I want to **prepare myself to receive Jesus Christ** and His substitute sentence for the punishment I deserve



#### **I pray this prayer of preparation:**

*God, I want to know you. I ask you to **open my eyes** to see how wrong and sinful my life has been. Help me now to **humble myself** and prepare to turn my life over to you. Help me to be **honest and thorough** in preparing to confess my sins and to receive your gift of salvation. Amen.*

Signed ..... Date: .....



## Appendix O. MARC Booklet – Confess, Renounce, Surrender (Session 9)

### step 4 – 7: prayer of repentance,

#### Confession and Surrender.

*The following is an example of a prayer that you could pray when you are ready to surrender to God – you can use your own words.*

- Dear God, **I admit that I am a sinner.** I have broken your moral laws and realise now that I have been a wicked person in your sight. I have held onto painful experiences and allowed bitterness to rule in my heart, refusing to forgive those who have wronged me.
- I have told lies. I have stolen things. I have entertained lust and immoral thoughts. I have carried out actions and developed habits to gratify my sinful desires. I have been unkind and hurtful toward others and have deliberately damaged or misused property.
- At times I have been rebellious and not honoured my parents, and I have had a bad attitude and been a poor influence on others.
- I have disregarded your holy name and have not kept your special day. I have craved for things that others have. I have made an idol of doing my own thing, having fun and seeking possessions. In addition I confess the following sins.....
- **I have pushed you out of my life and refused to let you have your rightful place on the throne of my heart.**
- I now realise that I am a lost and sinful person. I have broken your laws and deserve your righteous judgement for my wicked ways.
- At this moment I am heading towards the just consequences for my wrong-doing and am powerless to save myself. I have sown bad habits in my life and will reap heartache and destruction. When I die I will then reap eternal consequences for my sin and be separated from you forever in a place called Hell.
- **God, please have mercy on me!** I know that you love me and sent your son Jesus to save me. I have done nothing to deserve this. My wickedness was the reason for him dying on the cross. My sin drove the nails into his hands. By his brutal death he took the punishment for my evil ways. I can now be forgiven.



- I now confess my sins before God and will seek prayer from others. I now **renounce and turn away from every one of my past sins**. I ask God to take back my heart from the power of Satan, who has gained a measure of control over my life as I have given into my sinful desires. I now trust in the shed blood of Jesus to wash me clean of all my sin and to give me a new heart.
- With God's help I will stop every bad habit and put sin away from my life, never to return to my evil ways. And if I stumble along the way, I will quickly come back to the place of repentance and get my heart right with God again.
- On my knees **I now submit myself to God**. I receive Jesus into my heart. I allow him to take his rightful place on the throne of my life.
- Dear Lord Jesus I ask to be filled and **empowered by your Holy Spirit** to be your faithful servant. Through your enabling life in me I will follow you and seek to please you in all that I do, with **no turning back**. I will also seek to help others come to know your salvation.
- I trust in the promises of your Word (the bible) and believe that right now I have been given a new start in life – I have been "born again."
- You have taken me as a son / daughter into your family. By the suffering of Jesus **I am healed and forgiven**. All the angels in heaven are now rejoicing over my salvation.
- Praise God! **Thank you Jesus for saving me!** Amen.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

If you have prayed this prayer from your heart, you are now a Christian and part of God's family.

**Step 8—12** is all about developing a relationship with God, learning to obey Him and to walk in faith. Taking these steps will show that your life now truly belongs to God.

**For further help** contact Jeff Lees: [MARC12steps@gmail.com](mailto:MARC12steps@gmail.com)





## **Appendix P. Examples of Redemption Analogies**

### **Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight**

The following story, which is supposedly true, comes from the time of Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Civil War in England back in the 1600's. A young soldier, Basil Underwood, had been tried in military court and sentenced to death. He was to be shot at the "ringing of the curfew bell." His fiancée, "Bessie" Smith, climbed up into the bell tower several hours before curfew time and tied herself to the bell's huge clapper. At curfew time, when only muted sounds came out of the bell tower, Cromwell demanded to know why the bell was not ringing. His soldiers went to investigate and found the young woman cut and bleeding from being knocked back and forth against the great bell. They brought her down and, the story goes, Cromwell was so impressed with her willingness to suffer in this way in behalf of someone she loved that he dismissed the soldier saying, "Curfew shall not ring tonight" (Thorpe, 1887).

Paul says in Romans 5, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God loved us so much that while we were still outcasts, deserving the death penalty for our sin, He became a man and tied Himself, not to the clapper of a bell, but to a cross, and He bled and died for sinners like us.

### **The Drawbridge Operator and His Son**

A man had the duty to raise a drawbridge to allow the steamers to pass on the river below and to lower it again for trains to cross over on land. One day, this man's son visited him, desiring to watch his father at work. Quite curious, as most boys are, he peeked into a trapdoor that was always left open so his father could keep an eye on the great machinery that raised and lowered the bridge. Suddenly, the boy lost his footing and tumbled into the gears. As the father tried to reach down and pull him out, he heard the whistle of an approaching train. He knew the train would be full of people and that it would be impossible to stop the fast-moving locomotive, therefore, the bridge must be lowered!

A terrible dilemma confronted him: if he saved the people, his son would be crushed in the cogs. Frantically, he tried to free the boy, but to no avail. Finally, the father put his hand to the lever that would start the machinery. He paused and then, with tears he pulled it. The giant gears began to work and the bridge clamped down just in time to save the train. The passengers, not knowing what the father had done, were laughing and making merry; yet the bridge keeper had chosen to save their lives at the cost of his son's.

In all of this there is a parable: the heavenly Father, too, saw the blessed Saviour being nailed to a cross while people laughed and mocked and spit upon Him and yet, "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" that we might be saved (Hewett, 1988).



## Appendix Q. Gravity of Offence Table

(from an unknown British source)	Gravity		Gravity
010 DEATH/INJURY DANGEROUS DRIVING	12	090 CRIMINAL DAMAGE	8
011 Causing injury by dangerous driving		091 Criminal damage £2000-£7499	
012 Manslaughter/death by dangerous driving	18	092 Criminal damage £7500+	11
		093 Possession wi to commit c/damage	8
020 MURDER/MANSLAUGHTER/VIOLENCE		094 Threat wi to commit c/damage	5
021 Offensive weapon/air gun offence	6	095 Arson	13
022 ABH	8	096 Arson wi to cause harm	18
023 GBH (Section 20)	13		
024 Possession of explosives rearms	14	100 OTHER MOTORING (INDICTABLE)	
026 Cruelty/neglect/assault children	12	101 Forgery VEL/MOT/Reg mark	3
027 Threat to murder/jeopardising life	14	102 Forging dr licence/insurance	4
023 Assault on police causing wound	13	103 Dangerous speed or manner	5
023 Wound with intent (section 18)	16	104 Dangerous driving	12
028 Murder or attempted	20		
029 Manslaughter	19	110 DRUGS OFFENCES (INDICTABLE)	
		111 Possession cannabis	7
030 SEXUAL OFFENCES		112 Cultivate/supply cannabis	14
031 Indecency between males	1	113 Possess amphetamines/intent supply cannabis	11
032 Indecent assault	12	114 Supply amphetamines	17
033 USI (both Juveniles)	3	115 Possess heroin/cocaine/int supply amphet	13
033 USI (adult under 25 with 15 yr old)	4	116 Supply heroin/cocaine	18
033 USI (adult with patient or girl < 15)	17	117 Export/Import/produce drugs	17
034 Buggery / assault wi buggery	18		
005 Gross indecency	15	120 OTHER OFFENCES (INDICTABLE)	
036 Indecent assault on child	16	121 Bomb hoax	8
037 Living on immoral earnings	18	122 Conspiracy (gravity 1-6 offence)	15
038 Rape	19	122 Conspiracy (gravity 7+ offence)	16
036 Buggery/incest involving child	20	123 Violent disorder	15
		124 Kidnapping/terrorism	17
040 BURGLARY		125 Blackmail	17
041 Trespass with intent	7	126 Riot	18
042 Going equipped/burglary <£300	8	127 Affray	12
043 Burglary £300-£1499	10	128 Pervert the course of justice	16
044 Burglary £1500-£3999	13		
045 Burglary £4000+	15	130 MOTORING (SUMMARY)	
046 Burglary dwelling house	14	131 Excess alcohol / fail to provide spec	8
047 Aggravated burglary	17	132 Other road traffic offences	2
		133 TWOC (no damage)	7
050 ROBBERY		134 TWOC (damage)	8
051 Assault with intent to rob	17	135 Driving whist disqualified (age)	5
052 Robbery X150	18	136 Driving whist disqualified (points)	9
053 Robbery £150+	19	137 Driving whist disqualified (alcohol)	9
060 TAKING / THEFT MOTOR VEHICLE		140 DRUGS OFFENCES (SUMMARY)	
061 Being carried (no damage)	3	141 Information on prescribing / supply	3
062 Being carried (damage)	6		
065 Theft of motor vehicle	11	150 OTHER OFFENCES (SUMMARY)	
066 Aggravated TWOC	14	151 Common assault / threatening behaviour	5
		152 Fear / provocation Violence / harassment	4
070 OTHER THEFT AND HANDLING		153 Drunk / disorderly / loitering	1
071 Theft / handling / receiving c£100	4	154 Indecent exposure	4
072 Theft / handling / receiving £100-£299	5	155 Obstructing police officer	6
073 Theft /handling /receiving £300-£999	6	155 Assaulting poise officer	9
074 Theft / handling / receiving £1000-£1999	8	156 Criminal damage <£100	3
075 Theft / handling / receiving £2000-£7499	11	157 Criminal damage £100-£299	4
076 Stealing by employee <£750	7	158 Criminal damage £30a-£99A	6
076 Stealing by employee £750	12	159 Criminal damage £1000-£1999	8
077 Theft from OAP c£750	9		
077 Theft from OAP £750+	15		
078 Theft / handling / Receiving \$500	14		
080 FRAUD AND FORGERY			
081 Deception <£100	5		
082 Deception £100-£299	5		
083 Fraud/deception £300-£999	7		
084 Fraud deception £1000-£1999	8		
085 Fraud/deception £2000-£7499	10		
086 Fraud/deception £7500+	15		



## Appendix R. MARC Gravity of Offence Table

Offence Category	Gravity	6 mth max. used on MSMO
Possession/use of cannabis / Possession of utensils	3	30
Possession/use of other illegal drugs	5	50
Possession for supply - illegal drugs	8	50
Cultivation of cannabis (summary offence – small quantity)	7	7
Cultivation of cannabis (indictable offence – large quantity)	14	14
Manufacture of illegal Drugs	14	140
Supplying/selling cannabis	10	100
Supplying/selling other illegal drugs	15	150
Theft/Shoplifting (under \$500)	5	
Theft/Shoplifting (over \$500)	8	
False Pretences/Fraud/Dishonest use of Document (under \$500)	5	
False Pretences/Fraud/Dishonest use of Document (over \$500)	8	
Unlawfully interfering with a motor vehicle	4	
Attempted unlawful taking of a motor vehicle	5	
Unlawfully taking a motor vehicle	7	
Theft of a motor vehicle	11	
Receiving (under \$500)	5	
Receiving (over \$500))	8	
Trespassing/unlawfully on property	3	
Enters with intent	5	
Burglary (under \$500)	10	
Burglary (\$500-\$5000)	12	
Burglary by Night	12	
Burglary over \$5000	15	
Robbery	15	
Aggravated Robbery	17	
Disorderly behaviour/Fighting in public place/threatening behaviour	3	
Common Assault/Domestic violence (minor)	5	
Threatens to kill/do grievous bodily harm	7	
Male Assaults Female	10	
Serious Assault/ Assault with intent to injure	15	
Wilful Damage (under \$500)	5	
Wilful Damage (over \$500)	8	
Arson / Fire-setting	13	
Sexual Offences (minor)	8	
Sexual Offences (serious)	15	
Minor Traffic Offences / Careless Driving	2	
Excess breath alcohol - person <20 (under 400mg)	5	
Excess breath alcohol (under 1000mg)	8	
Excess breath alcohol (3rd or subsequent)	10	
Refusing to accompany officer (drink-driving) / Escapes Custody	10	
Excess breath alcohol (over 1000mg)	12	
Dangerous/reckless Driving	8	
Driving while disqualified (1st offence)	7	
Driving while disqualified (2nd offence)	8	
Driving while disqualified (3rd or subsequent offence)	9	
Breach of Supervision/Community Work/Parole	5	50
Fail to answer bail / Obstruct/Resists Police	3	
Possession of a weapon / Carrying imitation firearm	4	




**Appendix S. MARC Self-Report Measure of Offending (MSMO)**

<b>MARC Self-Report Measure of Offending – Confidential and Anonymous</b>																
<b>How many times in the past 6 months have you been involved with any of the following offences? (mark the number with an X)</b>																
Possession of illegal drugs - Cannabis	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Possession of illegal drugs - Other	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Illegal drug use - Cannabis	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Illegal drug use – Other	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Cultivation of Cannabis	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Manufacture of illegal drugs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Supplying or selling illegal drugs - cannabis	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Supplying or selling illegal drugs - other	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Theft or Shoplifting under \$500 worth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Theft or Shoplifting over \$500 worth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
False Pretences/ Fraud/ Dishonest use of a document	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Unlawful taking of a motor vehicle	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Receiving stolen property	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Trespassing / Unlawfully on property	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Burglary / Breaking and entering	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Robbery	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Common assault / Domestic violence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Serious assault involving injury	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Wilful damage of property / Graffiti	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Fire-setting / Arson	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Sexual offences – Indecent exposure / indecent touching of another person	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Unlawful sexual connection / Rape	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Driving over the breath alcohol limit	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Dangerous driving	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Driving while disqualified	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Breach of court orders (eg. Probation / parole / Domestic Protection)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	
Other:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26+	



## Appendix T. MARC Information Sheet for Prospective Participants



**Massey University**  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY  
Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata  
Private Bag 11 222  
Palmerston North  
New Zealand  
T 64 6 356 9099 extn 2040  
F 64 6 350 5673  
[www.massey.ac.nz](http://www.massey.ac.nz)  
<http://psychology.massey.ac.nz>

# MAKING RIGHT CHOICES (MARC)

*A Faith-based Offender Programme and Research Project*

## Invitation to Participate

### What is the MARC programme?

- The MARC programme is a Christian-based approach to solving problems and breaking the habit of offending.
- The programme consists of **ten 60-minute sessions** (i.e. 10 hours).
- Participants attend a personal delivery of the programme in an office setting, with a facilitator and possibly a co-facilitator.
- Attendance at sessions can be weekly or twice weekly, and there is scope to fit sessions around work commitments.

### Where Did MARC come from?

- MARC was developed and implemented at the Tauranga Community Probation Service between 1992 and 2003 by Probation Officer, Jeff Lees.
- Since 1995 MARC has had support from the Arahina Training Centre, Marton, with the provision of volunteer staff and programme resources.
- Over 50 offenders have successfully completed the programme.

### Who can go on MARC?

- Male offender 16—26 years of age.
- Offenders who are happy to attend a programme that is based on a Christian view of the world.
- Priority is given to serious and repeat offenders.
- If you are facing active charges you may be able to do MARC as part of your court sentence.
- If you are unable to do other Corrections' programmes, then MARC may fulfil a supervision



or parole condition to attend a rehabilitative programme.

- **If you volunteer to attend the MARC programme, then you will also need to consent to being part of a research project (see below for more details).**
- Participants need to sign a consent form indicating a commitment to attend the programme and participate in the associated research.

## **The 2005/2006 MARC Research Project**

- The research project looks at the effectiveness of MARC in changing attitudes and habits that lead to offending.
- **Participants will be required to undertake anonymous self-report measures of offending and attitudes before and after MARC. Follow-up measures will be taken at 6, 12, 18 and 24 months after the MARC programme.**
- **An anonymous system will also be used to gather criminal and traffic conviction data to assess frequency and seriousness of convictions before and after MARC.**
- **Great care would be taken to protect the identity and privacy of individuals at all stages of the project.**
- The project is being carried out by Jeff Lees as part of a Master of Science (MSc.) degree in Psychology.
- Supervision for the project is being provided by Dr Patrick Dulin of Massey University Psychology Department.
- MARC participants will be given a summary of the project findings and have access to the full report of the project.

## **Research Project Procedures**

- At the beginning of the programme each participant will select their own confidentiality code which will be used to protect their identity during data collection.
- All programme records and data will be kept in a locked cabinet and disposed of five years after the end of the project.
- Measures of offending behaviour and attitudes before and after MARC will be presented in table format and joined together with results from other participants.
- All participants who complete the programme will be sent a summary of the project findings and can request to view a full report of the project. This will be available through the researcher, referral agencies or Massey University.



## Participant's Rights

*You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:*

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

## Support Processes

- At the beginning and end of each MARC session the feedback will be sought from participants as to their thoughts and feelings about the programme.
- The project will seek to foster involvement from support persons such as Probation Officers, Social Workers, family and caregivers.
- Participants and support persons will be encouraged to report any concerns or adverse outcomes to the principle researcher or the Massey University project supervisor.

## Important things to consider:

- While the MARC programme looks at making change from a Christian perspective, it fully respects the right of individuals to choose their own values and beliefs.
- It is important for applicants to understand and accept that the programme is based on bible principles and a Christian worldview (see summary below).
- The MARC programme seeks to address problem behaviour by identifying and dealing with root causes. This means that participants will be encouraged to look at unresolved issues from their past, and then apply bible-based solutions.
- **It is accepted that some applicants may not be comfortable with this approach and this should be considered carefully before enrolling in the programme.**
- During MARC sessions participants will be presented with Christian solutions to root problems, but will always be free to determine to what extent they embrace these solutions.
- MARC is not affiliated to any particular denomination or church.



## A Summary of the Christian Worldview

### Where do I come from?

- The world was created by a supremely intelligent, all-powerful and loving God.

### Why am I here?

- To live in intimate relationship with God and to experience his love and guidance on a daily basis.

### Where am I going?

- We are given the freedom to choose where we will spend eternity – with God or separated from God.

### What is wrong with the world?

- We have a free will and can choose to obey or disobey God's moral law (10 commandments).
- Our choices have consequences (we reap what we sow).
- Wrong choices (sin) leads to suffering – both for ourselves and others.

### What can we do to fix it?

- We are all law-breakers (sinners) and are powerless to save ourselves.
- Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has provided the means for our salvation.
- We need to confess and turn away from our sin (repent), and receive the gift of salvation.
- As we submit to God our lives are transformed – we gain motivation and power to act in love.

## Project Contacts

*Please contact the researcher or project supervisor if you have any questions.*

### Researcher:

Jeff Lees,  
c/- Arahina Training Centre  
P O Box 192, MARTON  
Mobile 021 1161670 – E-mail [MARC12steps@gmail.com](mailto:MARC12steps@gmail.com)

### Supervisor:


Patrick Dulin  
Massey University  
Private Bag 11 054, PALMERSTON NORTH  
Phone (06) 350 5799 Ext. 2060 – E-mail [p.l.dulin@massey.ac.nz](mailto:p.l.dulin@massey.ac.nz)

### Committee Approval Statement

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, Palmerston North Application 05/32. If you have any concerns about the ethics of this research, please contact Dr John G O'Neill, Chair, Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: PN telephone 06 350 5799 x 8635, email [humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz)”.*



## Appendix U. Participant Consent Form

 <p><b>Massey University</b> COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES</p>	<p>SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata Private Bag 11 222 Palmerston North New Zealand T 64 6 356 9099 extn 2040 F 64 6 350 5673 <a href="http://www.massey.ac.nz">www.massey.ac.nz</a> <a href="http://psychology.massey.ac.nz">http://psychology.massey.ac.nz</a></p>
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### ***Research into a Faith-based Offender Programme (MARC)***

#### **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

- I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- **I agree for the researcher and his assistant to view my history of criminal and traffic convictions before and after the programme. My name and any other identifying information will be removed prior to these documents being viewed.**
- I agree to participate in an anonymous survey of my offending behaviour and attitudes before and up to 2 years after the programme (this would mean having follow-up contact with the researcher at 6, 12, 18 and 24 months after completing MARC).
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

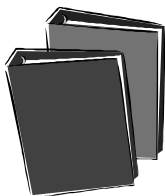
**Date:**

**Full Name - printed**



## The 2005 MARC Research Project

- ◆ Those who volunteer to attend MARC during 2005 will also need to **agree to be part of a research project**.
- ◆ The research project looks at the **effectiveness of MARC** in changing attitudes and habits that lead to offending.
- ◆ Participants will be required to undertake **anonymous measures of offending** before and after MARC, as well as attitude measures.
- ◆ Participants have the **right to decline** to answer a particular question or **withdraw** from the project at any time.
- ◆ A **MARC information sheet** gives more detailed information about the project.
- ◆ The project is being carried out by **Jeff Lees** as part of a Master of Science (MSc.) degree in Psychology.
- ◆ Supervision for the project is being provided by **Dr Patrick Dulin of Massey University** Psychology Department.
- ◆ The project is **subject to approval** from both Massey and national **ethics committees**.
- ◆ MARC participants will be given a **summary of the project findings** and have access to the full report of the project.



## Important things to consider:

- ◆ While the MARC programme looks at making change from a Christian perspective, it fully respects **the right of individuals to choose their own values and beliefs**.
- ◆ It is important for applicants to understand and accept that the programme is **based on bible principles and a Christian worldview**.
- ◆ It is accepted that some applicants may not be comfortable with this approach and this should be **considered carefully** before enrolling in the programme.
- ◆ During MARC sessions participants will be encouraged to respond to the biblical message presented, but will **always be free to determine to what extent they embrace this message**.
- ◆ **MARC is not affiliated to any particular denomination or church.**

## Contact Details

**Researcher:**  
 Jeff Lees,  
 c/- Arahina Training Centre  
 P O Box 192, MARTON  
 Mobile 021 1161670  
 E-mail [MARC12steps@gmail.com](mailto:MARC12steps@gmail.com)



**Supervisor:**  
 Patrick Dulin  
 Massey University  
 Private Bag 11 054, PALMERSTON NORTH  
 Phone (06) 350 5799 Ext. 2060  
 E-mail [p.l.dulin@massey.ac.nz](mailto:p.l.dulin@massey.ac.nz)

**MARC**  
**MAKING RIGHT CHOICES**

**A PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG MEN WHO WANT TO:**

**STOP OFFENDING**

**SOLVE PROBLEMS**

**GET RID OF BAD HABITS**

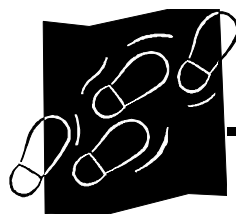
**DEVELOP GOOD CHARACTER**

**MAKE A FRESH START**

**Massey University**  
 COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**A Student Research Project**





# MAKING RIGHT CHOICES (MARC) PROGRAMME

*Breaking Loose from the Past and Walking in Freedom*

## What is the MARC programme?

- ♦ The MARC programme is a **Christian-based approach to breaking the habit of offending**.
- ♦ The programme consists of **ten 60—90 minute sessions** (i.e. 10—15 hours) during **November 2005—February 2006**.
- ♦ Participants attend a **personal delivery** of the programme in an interview room, office or home setting.
- ♦ Attendance at sessions can be **weekly or twice weekly**, and there is scope to fit sessions around work commitments.

## Where Did MARC come from?

- ♦ MARC was developed and implemented at the **Tauranga Community Probation Service** between 1992 and 2003 by Probation Officer, Jeff Lees.
- ♦ Since 1995 MARC has had support from the **Arahina Training Centre**, Marton, with the provision of volunteer staff and programme resources.
- ♦ **Over 50 offenders** have successfully completed the programme.

## Who can go on MARC?

- ♦ Male offender **16—25 years of age** who live in the **Wanganui—Palmerston North region**.
- ♦ Offenders who are happy to attend a Christian-based programme.
- ♦ Priority is given to serious or **repeat offenders**.
- ♦ MARC could be done as part of a **court sentence** or at the end of a **short prison sentence**.
- ♦ If you are unable to do other Corrections' programmes, then MARC may fulfil a **supervision or parole condition** to attend a rehabilitative programme.
- ♦ Participants need to understand the nature of the programme and **sign a consent form**.



## A summary of the Christian worldview

### Where do I come from?

- ♦ The world was created by a supremely intelligent, all-powerful and loving God.

### Why am I here?

- ♦ To live in intimate relationship with God and to experience his love and guidance on a daily basis.

### Where am I going?

- ♦ We are given the freedom to choose where we will spend eternity – with God or separated from God.

### What is wrong with the world?

- ♦ We have a free will and can choose to obey or disobey God's moral law (10 commandments).
- ♦ Our choices have consequences (we reap what we sow).
- ♦ Wrong choices (sin) leads to suffering – both for ourselves and others.

### What can we do to fix it?

- ♦ We are all law-breakers (sinners) and are powerless to save ourselves.
- ♦ Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has provided the means for our salvation.
- ♦ We need to confess and turn away from our sin (repent), and receive the gift of salvation.
- ♦ As we submit to God our lives are transformed – we gain motivation and power to act in love.



## Appendix W. A Prayer Used To Help Bring About Spiritual Change

### **P.E.T.E.R. Prayer for Defeating Satan and Walking in the Victory of Christ**

*(Be vigilant against the enemy of our souls<sup>1</sup> and pray this prayer over yourself, your family, MARC participants, their families and other spiritual battlefronts – e.g. church, friends, missions, acquaintances, governing authorities)*

#### **PREPARATION** *(The Lord's Prayer<sup>2</sup>, Prayer of Jabez<sup>3</sup>)*

**My Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name** – I come in honour and worship of your holy name. **Your kingdom come Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven** – I lay my life on the altar as a living sacrifice<sup>4</sup> and surrender my will to you<sup>5</sup>. May I have no will of my own<sup>6</sup>. Order my every step<sup>7</sup> and use me to establish your will on earth. **Give me this day my daily bread** – I put on<sup>8</sup> and feed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the bread of life<sup>9</sup> and who shall supply all my needs according to His riches in glory<sup>10</sup>. May I be a good steward of all that you have given me<sup>11</sup>. **Forgive me my debts as I forgive my debtors** – Show me if I have any sin that needs confessing, including holding any unforgiveness toward others<sup>12</sup>. **Do not lead me into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one** – Please give me wisdom<sup>13</sup> and fill me with the Holy Spirit<sup>14</sup>. Empower me to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh<sup>15</sup> today, so that I will be your faithful witness<sup>16</sup> and not be overcome by temptation and evil influences<sup>17</sup>. **Bless me greatly** today and my family, place your **hedge of protection**<sup>18</sup> around us, **enlarge our territory**<sup>19</sup> that we may be a channel of blessing to others.<sup>20</sup>

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever** – I come boldly before the throne of grace<sup>21</sup> through the shed blood of Jesus that has cleansed me from all sin. I stand in the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>22</sup> as a blood-bought son/daughter of the living God and as His ambassador<sup>23</sup>.

#### **EQUIPPING** *(Keys of Kingdom, Armour of God, Weapons of Warfare)*

I open my heart to You<sup>24</sup> and give You my ear<sup>25</sup>. Block and expose all voices that are not from You<sup>26</sup>. I seek to hear and obey the voice of the Good Shepherd<sup>27</sup> and the prompting of the Holy Spirit<sup>28</sup>.

I put on the whole **armour of God**<sup>29</sup> (the **helmet** of salvation, **breastplate** of righteousness, **belt** of truth, **shoes** of the gospel – I take up the **shield** of faith, the **sword** of the Spirit, and **all prayer** in the Spirit). I take up the **weapons of our warfare** which are not of this world, but are **mighty in God for pulling down strongholds**<sup>30</sup>.

#### **TARGET** *(Identifying offensive and defensive targets)*

In the Name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>31</sup> I take **the keys of the Kingdom, and I bind and resist the influence of Satan**<sup>32</sup>, all evil spirits, principalities and powers of darkness<sup>33</sup>. **I bind** you Satan in all your **evil plans**<sup>34</sup>, **destructive lies**<sup>35</sup> and **strongholds of false thinking**<sup>36</sup> over myself, my family and the following people...*(name them... e.g. wife, children, friends, MARC participants, church family, extended family, neighbours, government leaders – let God give you a list of those He wants you to target in prayer each day).*

#### **ENGAGEMENT and RELEASE**

1. I bind Satan from **Stealing, killing** and **destroying**<sup>37</sup> us in body, soul or spirit, and I loose myself and those I have named to **salvation**<sup>38</sup>, **sanctification**<sup>39</sup>, restoration<sup>40</sup>, reconciliation<sup>41</sup>, healing<sup>42</sup> and the **abundant life**<sup>43</sup> through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>44</sup>.
2. I bind Satan from sending, **Temptations**<sup>45</sup>, **ungodly influences**<sup>46</sup> and **fiery darts**<sup>47</sup>, and loose myself and those I have named to **abhor what is evil** and **cling to what is good**<sup>48</sup>, and to make **faith responses** whatever comes along<sup>49</sup>.
3. I bind Satan from defeating us through **Anxiety/fear**<sup>50</sup>, **doubt**<sup>51</sup> and **unbelief**<sup>52</sup>, and I loose myself and those I have named to **courage**<sup>53</sup>, **trust**<sup>54</sup> and **faith**<sup>55</sup> in the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.



4. I bind Satan from **gaining ground** in our souls through **Bitterness**<sup>56</sup>, **moral impurity**<sup>57</sup> and **temporal values**<sup>58</sup>, and I loose myself and those I have named to walk in **forgiveness**<sup>59</sup>, to be washed in the blood of the Lamb and have a pure heart and a **clear conscience**<sup>60</sup>, and to **eternal values** through total surrender to Christ<sup>61</sup>.
5. I bind you Satan from using your destructive **lies to Blind our eyes, dull our ears and harden our hearts**<sup>62</sup> to the truth, and I loose myself and those I have named to have **eyes opened to see, ears unstopped to hear** and a **teachable heart** to receive and respond to the truth of God's Word<sup>63</sup>.
6. I bind you Satan from enslaving us through **Envy, jealousy and greed**<sup>64</sup>, and I loose myself and those I have named to **thankfulness**<sup>65</sup>, **generosity**<sup>66</sup> and **self control**<sup>67</sup>.
7. I bind you Satan from overwhelming us with **Depression, discouragement and despair**<sup>68</sup>, and I loose myself and those I have named to **the joy of the Lord**<sup>71</sup>, **praise and rejoicing**<sup>72</sup>, and a **living hope**<sup>73</sup> in our risen Saviour.
8. I bind you Satan from controlling us through **Negative thinking**<sup>74</sup>, **a critical spirit**<sup>75</sup>, and an **independent unsubmitted heart**<sup>76</sup>, and I loose myself and those I have named to a **renewed mind**<sup>77</sup> and to walk in love<sup>78</sup> with a yielded heart.<sup>79</sup>
9. I bind you Satan from damaging relationships through **Disunity**<sup>80</sup>, **discontentment**<sup>81</sup> and **the poison tongue**<sup>82</sup>, and I loose myself and those I have named to the **unity of the Spirit**<sup>83</sup> in the bond of peace, **godly contentment**<sup>84</sup>, and to give and receive **words of encouragement**<sup>85</sup>.
10. I bind you Satan from causing us to **Grieve**<sup>86</sup> or **quench the Holy Spirit**<sup>87</sup>, or to **neglect the gifts of the Holy Spirit**<sup>88</sup>, and I loose myself and those I have named to be **filled, empowered and anointed** by the Holy Spirit<sup>89</sup>, and to stir up and **earnestly desire the spiritual gifts**<sup>90</sup>.
11. I bind you Satan from deceiving us through **Vain philosophies**<sup>91</sup>, **human reasoning**<sup>92</sup> and **false doctrine**<sup>93</sup>, and I loose myself and those I have named to receive **wisdom from above**<sup>94</sup>, **divine revelation**<sup>95</sup> and **rightly divide the word of truth (have sound doctrine)**<sup>96</sup>.
12. I bind you Satan from ensnaring us through **Pride**<sup>97</sup>, **self-righteousness**<sup>98</sup> and **selfish ambition**<sup>99</sup> and I loose myself and those I have named to **walk in humility**<sup>100</sup>, to be **robed in the righteousness of Christ**<sup>101</sup> and to **deny self, take up our cross today and follow Christ**<sup>102</sup>.

I loose myself and those I have named to the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring comfort, counsel<sup>103</sup> and conviction of **sin, righteousness and the judgment to come**<sup>104</sup>, to mortify the flesh<sup>105</sup>, to sanctify<sup>106</sup> and pour God's love into our hearts<sup>107</sup>, to **reveal Christ, and to lead us into all wisdom and truth**<sup>108</sup>. I am thirsty and come now to **drink of your Spirit**, that I may be strengthened within and that **rivers of living water** will flow out from my innermost being.<sup>109</sup> May it be **no longer I that lives, but Christ that lives in me.**<sup>110</sup>

I loose myself, and my family and the saints of God to the anointing of the Holy Spirit to **preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to open prison doors and to boldly declare that now is the time of God's favour, today is the day of salvation**<sup>111</sup>.

**I pray Lord of the harvest, send labourers into your harvest field**<sup>112</sup>, and I declare **"hear am I, Lord, send me"**<sup>113</sup>." May I fulfil your plan and purpose for my life<sup>114</sup>.

I thank you Lord for this great day and for everything that you are doing in and through my life.  
In Jesus name I pray<sup>115</sup>. AMEN!!



## Scripture References:

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- <sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 5:8
- <sup>2</sup> Matthew 6:9-13
- <sup>3</sup> 1 Chronicles 4:10
- <sup>4</sup> Romans 12:1
- <sup>5</sup> Luke 22:42, John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38
- <sup>6</sup> Galatians 2:20
- <sup>7</sup> Proverbs 16:9, 20:24, Psalm 37:23-24, Jeremiah 10:23
- <sup>8</sup> Romans 13:14
- <sup>9</sup> John 6:33-35, 48-51
- <sup>10</sup> Philippians 4:19
- <sup>11</sup> Luke 16:10-12, 1 Peter 4:10
- <sup>12</sup> Ephesians 4:32
- <sup>13</sup> James 1:5
- <sup>14</sup> Luke 11:13
- <sup>15</sup> Romans 8:1,4
- <sup>16</sup> Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 2:2, Revelation 1:5, 3:14
- <sup>17</sup> Romans 12:21
- <sup>18</sup> Job 1:10
- <sup>19</sup> 1 Chronicles 4:10
- <sup>20</sup> Genesis 12:2, 1 Peter 3:9, Romans 12:14, 15:29
- <sup>21</sup> Hebrews 4:16
- <sup>22</sup> Matthew 28:18
- <sup>23</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:20
- <sup>24</sup> Luke 24:32, Acts 16:14, 2 Corinthians 7:2
- <sup>25</sup> Mark 4:9, 23, Revelation 2:7
- <sup>26</sup> John 10:5, Galatians 1:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- <sup>27</sup> John 10:3-5,16,27
- <sup>28</sup> Acts 8:29, 10:19, 11:12, 19:21, 20:22, 15:28
- <sup>29</sup> Ephesians 6:10-19
- <sup>30</sup> 2Corinthians 10:3-5
- <sup>31</sup> Ephesians 1:19-22, Matthew 28:18
- <sup>32</sup> Acts 5:3, Matthew 12: 29, 16:16-19, James 4:7, Mark 3:27
- <sup>33</sup> Ephesians 2:1-3, 6:10-12
- <sup>34</sup> 2 Corinthians 2:11
- <sup>35</sup> John 8:44, Ezekiel 13:22
- <sup>36</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
- <sup>37</sup> John 10:10, 1 Peter 5:8-9
- <sup>38</sup> Acts 4:12
- <sup>39</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- <sup>40</sup> Psalm 23:3
- <sup>41</sup> Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
- <sup>42</sup> Luke 4:18, Is.53:5
- <sup>43</sup> John 10:10
- <sup>44</sup> 1 John 2:2, Rev.12:11
- <sup>45</sup> Luke 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 3:5
- <sup>46</sup> Ephesians 4:14, 1 Corinthians 15:33
- <sup>47</sup> Ephesians 6:16
- <sup>48</sup> Romans 12:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- <sup>49</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:10, Eph. 6:16
- <sup>50</sup> 2 Timothy 1:7
- <sup>51</sup> James 1:6
- <sup>52</sup> Hebrews 4:12, 19
- <sup>53</sup> Joshua 1:9, 1 Cor.16:13
- <sup>54</sup> Proverbs 4:6
- <sup>55</sup> Romans1:17, Ephesians 6:16
- <sup>56</sup> Ephesians 4:31, Hebrews 12:15
- <sup>57</sup> Hebrews 12:16, 1 Timothy 1:19
- <sup>58</sup> Colossians 3:2, Matthew 6:19, 1 John 2:15
- <sup>59</sup> Ephesians 4:32
- <sup>60</sup> 1 Timothy 4:12



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- <sup>61</sup> John 14:15, Rom. 6:16, 12:1  
<sup>62</sup> Matthew 13:14-15, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, 11:14  
<sup>63</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:4-5  
<sup>64</sup> Mark 7:22, Romans 1:29, Romans 5:20, James 3:16  
<sup>65</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Colossians 3:17  
<sup>66</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:5-11  
<sup>67</sup> Galatians 5:23  
<sup>68</sup> Psalm 38:6, Proverbs 12:25, Isaiah 61:3  
<sup>69</sup> Ezra 4:4, Hebrews 12:3, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Galatians 6:9  
<sup>70</sup> Psalm 42:5, 11, 69:20, 88:15, Eccl. 2:20  
<sup>71</sup> Psalm 32:11, Isaiah 29:19, 61:3, 1 Thessalonians. 1:6  
<sup>72</sup> Isaiah 61:3, Psalm 42:6, 12, 43:5  
<sup>73</sup> 1 Peter 1:3, Lamentations 3:19-23, 1 Timothy 4:10  
<sup>74</sup> Psalm 10:4, 94:11, Proverbs 23:7, Isaiah 55:7-9, 59:7, Matthew 15:19,  
<sup>75</sup> Mark 14:5, Matt. 20:11, John 6:61, Isaiah 29:24  
<sup>76</sup> Jeremiah 17:23, Acts 7:51, Deut. 10:16  
<sup>77</sup> Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 10:5  
<sup>78</sup> Ephesians 5:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:9  
<sup>79</sup> 1 Peter 3:4, Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5  
<sup>80</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:3  
<sup>81</sup> Exodus 16:3, Luke 3:14  
<sup>82</sup> Psalm 64:3, Rom. 3:13, James 3:8  
<sup>83</sup> Eph.3:4  
<sup>84</sup> Philippians 4:11, 1 Tim. 6:6  
<sup>85</sup> Hebrews 10:25  
<sup>86</sup> Isaiah 63:10, Eph. 4:30  
<sup>87</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:19  
<sup>88</sup> 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6, 1 Corinthians 14:39  
<sup>89</sup> Luke 4:14-18, Acts 1:8  
<sup>90</sup> 1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6, 1 Corinthians 12:31, 14:1, 12, 39  
<sup>91</sup> Colossians 2:8  
<sup>92</sup> Matt. 16:23, 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5, 14  
<sup>93</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:4, 1 Tim. 1:3, Gal. 1:6-7  
<sup>94</sup> James 3:17  
<sup>95</sup> Ephesians 1:17, 2 Corinthians 4:6  
<sup>96</sup> Acts 20:27, 2 Timothy 2:15  
<sup>97</sup> Psalm 59:12, 1 Tim. 4:6, 1 John 2:16  
<sup>98</sup> Isaiah 64:6, Romans 10:3  
<sup>99</sup> Galatians 5:20, Philippians 2:3  
<sup>100</sup> Micah 6:8, Romans 12:3, James 4:6  
<sup>101</sup> Isaiah 61:10, Phil. 3:9  
<sup>102</sup> Matthew 16:24, Galatians 2:20  
<sup>103</sup> John 15:26  
<sup>104</sup> John 16:8  
<sup>105</sup> Romans 8:13  
<sup>106</sup> Romans 15:16, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 Peter 1:2  
<sup>107</sup> Romans 5:5  
<sup>108</sup> Exodus 31:3, 35:31, Isaiah 11:2, 1 Corinthians 2:10, Ephesians 3:5, John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13, Acts 6:3  
<sup>109</sup> Ephesians 3:16, John 7:38-39, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 5:18, Revelation 22:17  
<sup>110</sup> Galatians 2:20  
<sup>111</sup> Luke 4:18, 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, Isaiah 61  
<sup>112</sup> Matthew 9:38, Luke 10:2  
<sup>113</sup> Isaiah 6:8  
<sup>114</sup> Jeremiah 29:11, Proverbs 19:21, Ephesians 1:11, Matthew 28:19-20  
<sup>115</sup> Ephesians 5:20



### **P.E.T.E.R. PRAYER – Short Version**

Dear Lord, I fully submit and **surrender my will to you**. I ask for wisdom and to be filled with your Holy Spirit. I **come boldly before the throne of grace** through the shed blood of Jesus that has cleansed me from all sin. I stand **in the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ**, clad with the whole **armour of God**.

In the Name of Jesus I **bind and resist you Satan**, all evil spirits, principalities and powers of darkness, from oppressing my family, and those I have targeted in prayer. I bind your **evil plans, destructive lies** and **strongholds of false thinking**. I bind you Satan from **stealing, killing** and **destroying** us in body, soul or spirit, and I loose myself, and those named on my target list, to salvation, sanctification, and abundant life through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

**Thank you Lord for your great victory. AMEN.**