

## Religion, Crime, and Criminal Justice

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### Abstract and Keywords

Religion and crime are independent subjects that continue to receive significant attention in most societies. However, we do not have an extensive or well-developed research literature examining the direct and indirect ways in which these two topics relate to each other. This curious oversight is unfortunate, because upon close examination of the extant literature, we find that the relationship between religion and crime is quite robust, consistently inverse, and carries with it relevant implications for theory and practice. Additionally, the relationship between religion and crime offers important insights for sacred-secular approaches to crime prevention strategies and policy formation that ultimately improves the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Keywords: [religion](#), [religiosity](#), [faith-based](#), [crime](#), [delinquency](#), [prevention](#), [policy formation](#)

### Introduction

To better understand the past, present, and future role of religion in addressing matters related to crime, delinquency, offender treatment, rehabilitation programs, and even the transition of prisoners back to society, this essay examines the relevant research literature in order to assess the possible benefit or harm that religious influences may bring to bear on criminal justice. In addition, we summarize the current state of our knowledge regarding the relationship between religion and crime and also discuss how religion, faith-based groups, and religious institutions may play a more central and salutary role in improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

## I. Religion and Criminal Behavior

Contemporary research on the religion-crime relationship can be traced to Hirschi and Stark's classic article titled "Hellfire and Delinquency," published in 1969. Hirschi and Stark surprised many when they failed to find a significant inverse relationship between levels of religious commitment among youth and measures of delinquency. Subsequent replications both confirmed ([Burkett and White 1974](#)) and refuted ([Albrecht et al. 1977](#); [Higgins and Albrecht 1977](#); [Jensen and Erickson 1979](#)) Hirschi and Stark's original finding. Stark would later suggest that these contradictory findings were the result of the moral makeup of the community being studied. [Stark, Kent, and Doyle \(1982\)](#) found that areas with high church membership and attendance rates represented "moral communities," while areas with low church membership typified "secularized communities." Stark's moral communities hypothesis, therefore, predicted an inverse relationship between religiosity and delinquency in moral communities as well as the expectation that there would be little or no effect of religiosity on individuals in secularized communities. This important theoretical perspective provided a framework for understanding why some studies of delinquency had yielded an inverse relationship between religious commitment measures and delinquency and others did not ([Stark 1996](#); [Stark, Kent, and Doyle 1982](#)).

Empirical evidence suggests that the effects of religiosity remain significant even in communities typified by decay, poverty, disadvantage, and disorganization ([Freeman 1986](#); [Jang and Johnson 2001](#); Johnson et al. 2000a,b). For example, Johnson and colleagues (2000b) found that individual religiosity helped at-risk youths, such as those living in poor inner-city areas (e.g., Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia), to escape from drug use and other illegal activities. Further, results from a series of multilevel analyses indicate that church attendance (the frequency of attending religious services) has significant inverse effects on illegal activities, drug use, and drug selling among disadvantaged youths (Johnson et al. 2000b).

There is also increasing evidence that religious involvement may lower the risks of a broad range of delinquent behaviors, including both minor and serious forms of criminal behavior ([Evans et al. 1996](#)). An increasing number of important delinquency studies as well as several systematic reviews have helped to clarify the confusion surrounding religion-crime literature. In a systematic review of 40 studies that focus on the relationship between religion and delinquency, [Johnson et al. \(2000\)](#) found that most of these studies reported an inverse relationship between measures of religiosity and delinquency. Several studies found no relationship or were inconclusive, and only one found a positive link between greater religiosity and increasing delinquency. Among those studies with the most rigorous research design, the likelihood that increasing religiosity would be linked with decreases in delinquency was strongest. Conversely, those studies reporting inconclusive results tended to be less methodologically rigorous. In a second meta-analysis, [Baier and Wright \(2001\)](#) reviewed 60 studies within the religiosity-delinquency literature and reached much the same conclusion as the previous study by [Johnson et al. \(2000\)](#). Baier and Wright found that studies using larger and more representative datasets were more likely to find significant inverse effects (i.e., increasing religiosity and decreasing delinquency) than studies that utilized smaller, regional, or convenient samples. In a third systematic review, [Johnson \(2002\)](#) looked at studies examining religion and multiple outcome areas, including several that are relevant for our current discussion (i.e., alcohol abuse, drug use/abuse, and crime/delinquency). Among the 97 alcohol studies reviewed,

only 2 found religiosity to be associated with deleterious outcomes. Another 10 studies reported inconclusive findings, while 85 found an inverse relationship. This indicates that increasing religiosity is associated with a lowered likelihood of alcohol abuse. Johnson also found a similar pattern among 54 studies examining drug use or abuse. Of the 54 studies, 50 found that increasing religiosity was related to decreasing drug use or abuse, while only one study found a positive relationship. Finally, Johnson reviewed another 46 studies within the crime and delinquency literature that examined the influence of religion, and the same trend was found—increasing religiosity tends to be linked with decreasing criminal or delinquent behavior (37 studies), while increasing religiosity is positively related to delinquency in only one study.

In sum, these previous reviews of the relevant research literature document consistent evidence that increasing religious commitment or involvement helps protect youth from delinquent behavior and deviant activities. However, it is also important to note that the bulk of the religion-crime literature has developed most notably within the last decade or so. Thus it is necessary to update these reviews to determine whether they are consistent with the more recent research literature on religion and crime.

To follow, we summarize the results of the most recent and comprehensive review of the religion-crime literature that covers studies published between 1944 and 2010. In this systematic review, Johnson (2011) examined the type of study (e.g., cross-sectional, prospective cohort, retrospective, clinical trial, experimental, case-control, descriptive, case report, or qualitative); the sampling method (e.g., random, probability, systematic sampling, convenience/purposive sample); the number of subjects in the sample population (e.g., children, adolescents, high school students, college students, community-dwelling adults, elderly, church members, religious or clergy, gender, and race); location, religious variables included in the analysis (e.g., religious attendance, scripture study, subjective religiosity, religious commitment, intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, etc.); controls, and findings (e.g., no association, mixed evidence, beneficial association with outcome, or harmful association with outcome).

In total, 109 studies were reviewed, and the results of this current review confirm that the vast majority of the studies report a beneficial relationship between measures of religion or religious commitment and various crime and delinquency measures or outcomes. Approximately 89 percent of the studies (97/109) find an inverse or beneficial relationship between religion and some measure of crime or delinquency (i.e., increasing religiosity is associated with lower crime/delinquency). Only 11 studies found no association or reported mixed findings, and only one study from this exhaustive literature review found that religion was associated with a harmful outcome (Johnson 2011).

Researchers over the last several decades have contributed to this emerging religiosity-crime literature; yet until recently there has remained a lack of consensus about the nature of this relationship. Stated differently, in studies utilizing vastly different methods, samples, and research designs, increasing religiosity (religiousness, religious activities, or participation) is consistently linked with decreases in various measures of crime or delinquency. These findings are particularly pronounced among the more methodologically and statistically sophisticated studies that rely upon nationally representative samples. And although religion is a variable that tends to be associated with a lowered likelihood of crime, delinquency, or recidivism, it remains largely overlooked by criminologists and other social scientists interested in crime reduction.

## II. Religious Interventions in Reducing Crime

Multivariate studies typically include research designs that allow researchers to control for a number of factors and thus to rule out other explanations for research findings. Although the research literature is still preliminary, faith-based programs or initiatives studied were found to be significantly more effective than their counterparts. An exception is a study that examined whether participation in religious programs and the experience of being “born again” was associated with lowered recidivism. The study found no difference between religious prisoners and nonreligious prisoners in terms of recidivism ([Johnson 1987](#)).

In a comparative evaluation of the Christian drug treatment program called Teen Challenge, Aaron Bicknese assessed the effectiveness of Teen Challenge according to several outcome measures and found that offenders who participated in the faith-based drug treatment program were more likely to remain sober and maintain employment than those who did not. Further, Teen Challenge graduates were employed full time, and fewer of them returned to treatment than those in either comparison group ([Bicknese 1999](#)).

A series of multivariate studies examining the effectiveness of Prison Fellowship (PF) programs tend to support the notion that PF participants fare significantly better. In the first study, Mark Young and his coauthors investigated long-term recidivism among a group of federal inmates trained as volunteer prison ministers and found that the PF group had a significantly lower rate of recidivism than the matched group ([Young, Gartner, O’Connor, Larson, and Wright 1995](#)). In the second study, Johnson and colleagues examined the impact of PF religious programs on institutional adjustment and recidivism rates in two matched groups of inmates from four adult male prisons in New York State. After controlling for level of involvement in PF-sponsored programs, inmates who were most active in Bible studies were significantly less likely to be rearrested during the year-long follow-up period ([Johnson, Larson, and Pitts 1997](#)). In a follow-up to this study, Johnson extended the New York research on former inmates by increasing the length of study from 1 to 8 years and found that frequent Bible study participants were less likely to be rearrested 2 and 3 years after their release ([Johnson 2004](#)).

In one of the more publicized studies to date, Johnson took six years to complete an evaluation of PF’s expressly Christian, faith-based prerelease program known as the InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI). Among the study’s key findings are the following: (a) IFI program graduates were significantly less likely than the matched comparison group to be arrested and (b) IFI program graduates were significantly less likely than the matched comparison group to be reincarcerated during the two-year follow-up period ([Johnson and Larson 2003](#)).

In yet another study of PF, Kerley and associates explored the relationship between participation in Operation Starting Line (OSL), a faith-based prison event, and the subsequent experience of negative emotions and incidence of negative behaviors ([Kerley, Matthews, and Schulz 2005](#)). OSL participants were less likely to experience negative emotions and to engage in fights and arguments with other inmates or prison staff. The results from this study are consistent with previous research and were supported in a second study where Kerley surveyed prisoners in order to determine whether levels of reported religiosity were associated with reduced levels of arguing and fighting. The study concluded that religiosity directly reduces the likelihood of

arguing and indirectly reduces the likelihood of fighting ([Kerley, Matthews, and Blanchard 2005](#)).

The Iowa Department of Management conducted an evaluation of all 17 substance abuse treatment programs found in eight of Iowa's prisons, including PF's IFI. Among other things, the lengthy evaluation concluded that IFI was the first or second most effective of the 17 substance abuse interventions to reduce recidivism in the state of Iowa ([Iowa Department of Management 2007](#)).

More recently, [Duwe and King \(2012\)](#) evaluated the effectiveness of the IFI by examining recidivism outcomes among 732 offenders released from Minnesota prisoners between 2003 and 2009. A series of regression analyses document that participation in IFI significantly reduced the likelihood of rearrest (26 percent), reconviction (35 percent), and reincarceration (40 percent) of former prisoners.

A new study extends the research on IFI by conducting a cost-benefit analysis of the program. Because IFI relies heavily on volunteers and program costs are privately funded, the program involves no additional expense for the State of Minnesota. This study focused on estimating the program's benefits by examining recidivism and postrelease employment. The findings showed that during its first six years of operation in Minnesota, IFI produced an estimated benefit of \$3 million, which amounts to nearly \$8,300 per participant ([Duwe and Johnson 2013](#)).

### **III. How Does Religion Matter for Crime Reduction?**

As we have demonstrated, there is consistent empirical evidence that religiosity is linked with the reduction of crime and delinquency.<sup>1</sup> In short, we know that religion matters, but researchers have spent far less time considering how measures of religion, religious institutions, or religious commitment are inversely related to crime and delinquency. In this section, we examine how various religious variables are consequential for crime reduction.

#### **A. Religion Is a Protective Factor**

There is growing evidence that religion, individual religious commitment, and religious congregations have the potential to help prevent high-risk urban youths from engaging in delinquent behavior ([Johnson, Jang, Larson, and Li, 2001](#); [Johnson, Larson, Jang, and Li 2000](#)). Johnson and colleagues ([Johnson, Larson, Li, and Jang 2000](#)) estimated a series of regression models and found that (a) the effect of neighborhood disorder (i.e., high-crime neighborhoods) on crime was partly mediated by an individual's frequency of church attendance and (b) involvement of African American youth in religious institutions significantly buffers the effects of neighborhood disorder on crime and serious crime in particular. The authors conclude that the African American church has the potential to be an important agency of local social control and that researchers should not overlook the important role that these religious congregations may play in the lives of disadvantaged youth.

Preliminary evidence suggests that youths who have continued religious involvement or participation throughout adolescence may be the beneficiaries of a cumulative religiosity effect that lessens the risk of illicit drug use ([Jang and Johnson 2001](#)). This finding suggests that youths

who continue to attend and participate in religious activities are less likely to commit crime or delinquent acts. Indeed, [Johnson \(2000\)](#) finds that church-attending youths from disadvantaged communities are less likely to use illicit drugs than youths from suburban communities who attend church less frequently or not at all.

Recent research helps to confirm the growing evidence that religious commitment and involvement help protect youth (and adults) from delinquent behavior and deviant activities ([Baier and Wright 2001](#); [Jang and Johnson 2003, 2004, 2005](#); Johnson et al. 2000c). Recent evidence also suggests that such effects persist even if there is no strong prevailing social control against delinquent behavior in the surrounding community (Johnson et al. 2000b). Stated differently, youths from “bad places” can still turn out to be “good kids” if religious beliefs and practices are regular and important in their lives. There is additional evidence that religious involvement may lower the risks of a broad range of delinquent behaviors, ranging from minor to serious forms of criminal behavior ([Evans et al. 1996](#); [Regnerus 2003](#); [Wallace 1998](#)). Preliminary research findings also indicate that religious involvement may have a cumulative effect throughout adolescence and thus may significantly lessen the risk of later adult criminality ([Jang and Johnson 2001](#); [Jang, Bader, and Johnson 2008](#)). Whereas criminologists have tended to focus on the effects of community disadvantage on predisposing youth to delinquent behavior, we are now beginning to understand the effects that religion or religious institutions may play in providing communities of “advantage” for youth. In other words, uninterrupted and regular church attendance may further inoculate or insulate youth from crime and delinquency.

In a similar vein, preliminary research has examined intergenerational religious influence and finds that parental religious devotion protects girls from delinquency ([Regnerus 2003](#)). There is additional research documenting that religion can be used as a tool to help prevent especially difficult populations, like high-risk urban youths, from engaging in delinquent behavior (Johnson et al. 2000a, [2001](#)). For example, youths living in poverty tracts in urban environments—or what criminologists call disadvantaged communities—are at elevated risk for a number of problem behaviors including poor school performance, drug use, and other delinquent activities ([Johnson 2000](#); Johnson et al. 2000b). However, youths from these same disorganized communities who participate in religious activities are significantly less likely to be involved in deviant activities. In this way, religiously committed youth are resilient to and protected from the negative consequences of living in impoverished communities.

Confirmed in previous meta-analyses as well as the current systematic review of the crime and religion literature reported in this chapter, we now have solid empirical evidence demonstrating that religion is a protective factor that may buffer or shield youths as well as adults from delinquency, crime, and recidivism. Youth exposure to religious and spiritual activities, in conjunction with other environmental factors, is a powerful inhibitor of juvenile delinquency and youth violence. For example, those who attend church frequently are less likely to engage in a variety of delinquent behaviors, including drug use, skipping school, fighting, and violent and nonviolent crimes. The fact that these findings hold even in disadvantaged communities provides additional evidence of the connection between religiosity and resilience. Stated differently, the role of religion and religious institutions is especially critical in communities where crime and delinquency are most prevalent.

In sum, a review of the research on religious practices or commitments and deviant behavior indicates that, in general, higher levels of religious involvement are associated with lower rates of crime and delinquency. The empirical evidence demonstrates that those who are most involved in religious activities are less likely to commit criminal or delinquent acts. Thus, aided by systematic reviews of the relevant literature, it is accurate to state that religiosity is now beginning to be acknowledged as a key protective factor that buffers or shields youth from criminal and delinquency outcomes.

## **B. Religion Promotes Prosocial Behavior**

Criminologists have studied factors thought to be linked to the causes of crime and delinquency for several centuries. Books, journals, and thousands of studies have been dedicated to examining the many characteristics of offenders, communities, as well as the antecedents to criminal behavior in order to more accurately predict future criminal or delinquent behavior. Quite naturally, a great deal of criminological research can best be understood as attempting to answer these two central questions: *Why do people commit crime? How can we prevent it?* As a result, literatures have appeared that examine the harmful effects of poverty and disadvantage, lack of education, and unemployment, to mention just a few, in causing or contributing to crime and deviant behavior. Indeed, many criminology courses are dedicated to the study of crime causation.

Social scientists have much less often asked another equally important question: *Why is it that most people do not commit crime?* Social control theorists like [Travis Hirschi \(1969\)](#) have provided a unique and important perspective, arguing that there are very important reasons why people do not commit crime or engage in delinquent behavior. Studying and emphasizing factors that essentially keep people from breaking the law, control theorists reason, ultimately advances our understanding of how to pursue crime prevention. Religion, therefore, is but one of many factors that control theorists might argue “bond” an individual to society and conventional or normative behavior. Indeed, it is easy to see how religion may play a central bonding role between each of Hirschi’s four elements at the heart of social control theory—attachments, commitments, involvements, and beliefs (1969).<sup>2</sup>

As we have demonstrated through a systematic review of the extant research literature, increasing religiosity is a well-documented protective factor that buffers or insulates youth (and even adults) from crime and delinquency. In this way, religion helps youth to be resilient and to avoid delinquent paths in spite of characteristics and factors that would otherwise seem to predict a deviant behavioral trajectory. We now pose another equally important though understudied question: *Why is it that people do good things?*

Less commonly acknowledged by researchers is the contribution of religious belief and practice in fostering positive or normative behavior. We argue here that it is at least as important to understand why people turn into good citizens as to understand why they go bad. In essence, we have probably spent too much time asking why people do bad things, like commit crime.

In addition to documenting the protective factor that religion can play, scholars have also discovered that at-risk youth from disadvantaged communities who exhibit higher levels of religiosity are not only less likely to commit crimes than their disadvantaged counterparts but

also more likely to stay in school, make better grades, and find and retain steady employment ([Freeman 1986](#); Johnson et al. 2000b).

Clearly not enough scholarship has focused on the prosocial side of the equation. Scholars need to do a much better job of documenting the factors and conditions that motivate, cause, support, and sustain positive or prosocial behavior. It is important to note that in discussing prosocial behavior, there is much more involved than merely obeying the law and desisting from criminal behavior. We need to know why people do admirable things. For example: *Why do people do admirable things such as supporting charities, doing volunteer work, returning lost valuables, or participating in civic activities?*

A number of studies have been published in recent years documenting the relationship between increasing religiosity and higher levels of prosocial behavior. This body of research consistently finds that religious commitment is a source for promoting or enhancing beneficial outcomes like well-being ([Blazer and Palmore 1976](#); [Graney 1975](#); [Markides 1983](#); [Musick 1996](#); Tix and Frazier 1997; [Willits and Crider 1988](#)), hope, meaning, and purpose ([Sethi and Seligman 1993](#)), self-esteem ([Bradley 1995](#); [Ellison and George 1994](#); [Koenig et al. 1999](#)), and even educational attainment (Johnson et al. 2000b; [Jeynes 2007](#); [Regnerus 2000,2001](#)). Indeed, the more actively religious are more likely to give to charities (both religious and nonreligious) and to volunteer time for civic purposes ([Brooks 2006](#)). The review of a large number of studies across multiple disciplines with diverse samples and methodologies leaves one with the robust conclusion that the empirically documented effect of religion on physical and mental health outcomes is remarkably positive ([Koenig, McCullough, and Larson 2001](#)).

Studies also suggest that being involved in or exposed to altruistic or prosocial activities and attitudes—something that many churches and other faith-based organizations reportedly have as intrinsic aspects of their mission—appears to reduce the risk of youth violence. A proper understanding of the mechanisms associated with prosocial behavior will assist in the development of future prevention and intervention strategies. Unraveling the role of religiosity, religious institutions and congregations, as well as religious practices and beliefs in promoting prosocial behavior among youth should be a priority for academic researchers.

Just as the studies reviewed earlier document that religious commitment is a protective factor that buffers individuals from various harmful outcomes (e.g., hypertension, depression, suicide, and delinquency), there is mounting empirical evidence to suggest that religious commitment also helps to promote and enhance beneficial outcomes (e.g., well-being, hope, meaning and purpose, educational attainment, and charitable giving). This review of a large number of diverse studies concludes that, in general, the effect of religion on physical and mental health outcomes is remarkably positive ([Koenig et al. 2001](#); [Johnson 2002](#)). These findings have led some religious health-care practitioners to conclude that further collaboration between religious organizations and health services may be desirable ([Levin 1984](#); [Miller 1987](#); [Olson 1988](#)). According to Peterson,

These phenomena combined point to the church as having powerful potential to affect the health of half the population... We are convinced that a church with a vigorous life of worship, education, and personal support together with the promotion of wellness has more of an impact

on the health of a community than an addition to the hospital or another doctor in town. Right now this is a hunch; in five years, we'll have the data to prove it.” (1983, p. 22)

This enthusiasm notwithstanding, more research utilizing longitudinal and experimental designs is needed to further address important causal linkages between religion and myriad prosocial outcomes.

#### **IV. Why Religion Matters for Crime and Criminal Justice**

Religious involvement may provide networks of support that help adolescents internalize values encouraging behavior that emphasizes concern for others' welfare. Such processes may contribute to the acquisition of positive attributes that give adolescents a greater sense of empathy toward others, which in turn makes them less likely to commit acts that harm others. Recent research confirms that religiosity can help youths to be resilient even while living in communities typified by poverty, crime, and other social ills commonly linked to deleterious outcomes.

Frequent participation in religious activities may help adolescents to learn values that give them a greater sense of empathy toward others. Similarly, once individuals become involved in deviant behavior, it is possible that participation in specific kinds of religious activity can help steer them back to a course of less deviant behavior and, more importantly, away from potential career-criminal paths. For example, preliminary empirical studies addressing faith-based approaches to prison treatment have shown that inmates who regularly participate in volunteer-led Bible studies or who complete a faith-based program are less likely to commit institutional infractions ([Hercik 2004a](#)) or to commit new crimes following release from prison ([Johnson 2004](#); [Johnson, Larson, and Pitts 1997](#)). In the first major evaluation study of a faith-based prison launched in 1997 in Houston, Texas, [Johnson and Larson \(2003\)](#) found that inmates completing the IFI were significantly less likely to be arrested than a matched group of prisoners who did not receive this religious intervention (8 to 20 percent, respectively) during a two-year postrelease period. Similar results were reported in a study comparing former prisoners in two Brazilian prisons—one a faith-based prison program<sup>3</sup> and the other a model prison based on a vocational model<sup>4</sup> ([Johnson 2002](#)).

An objective assessment of the research literature reveals that individual religious commitment or religiosity as well as religious congregations can have a significant buffering or protective effect that lessens the likelihood of delinquent or criminal behavior. In a separate review of the research literature, we also document that increasing measures of religiousness are associated with an array of prosocial outcomes. Thus, both protect from deleterious outcomes like crime and delinquency, and promote prosocial or beneficial outcomes that are considered normative and necessary for a productive civil society.

#### **Conclusion**

This chapter provides evidence that religious influences are consequential in crime reduction. The vast majority of studies reviewed document the importance of religious influences in protecting youth from harmful outcomes as well as promoting beneficial and prosocial outcomes. The beneficial relationship between religion and crime reduction is not simply a function of

religion's constraining function or what it discourages (e.g., opposing drug use or delinquent behavior) but also a matter of what it encourages (e.g., promoting prosocial behaviors).

Although some researchers have identified low religiosity as a factor for health-risk behaviors, religion measures are not routinely included in research, and research that explicitly examines religion remains rare. Future research on crime and delinquency should include multiple measures of religious practices and beliefs. It is time for researchers and federal funding agencies to discontinue the pattern of overlooking this important line of policy-relevant research. New research will allow us to more fully understand the ways in which religion directly and indirectly impacts crime and criminal justice. Churches, synagogues, mosques, inner-city blessing stations, and other houses of worship represent some of the few institutions that remain within close proximity of most adolescents, their families, and their peers. Research is now beginning to demonstrate that these religious institutions can play an important role in promoting the health and well-being of those they serve.

As policymakers consider strategies to reduce delinquency, gang activity, and crime, it is essential for such deliberations to seriously and intentionally consider the role of religion and religious institutions in implementing, developing, and sustaining multifaceted approaches. From after-school programs for disadvantaged youth to public/private partnerships that bring together secular and sacred groups to tackle social problems like the prisoner reentry crisis, it is apparent that any strategy will be needlessly incomplete unless religious communities are integrally involved.

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#### Notes:

(1) See H. [Koenig et al. \(2001\)](#), *Handbook of Religion and Health*, Oxford University Press, and [Johnson \(2002\)](#), "Objective Hope—Assessing the Effectiveness of Religion and Faith-Based

Organizations: A Systematic Review of the Literature,” Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR Research Report), Baylor University (2002/2006), for a systematic review of the research literature documenting the protective role of religion in depression, suicide, mortality, promiscuous sex, alcohol abuse, and drug use/abuse.

(2) Social control theory is not unique in its theoretical relevance for the role of religion in reducing or preventing crime and delinquency. Social disorganization, labeling, differential association, life-course perspective, rational choice, and strain are but a few of the theoretical perspectives within criminology that easily allow the introduction of religious variables and influences within existing frameworks. These lines of inquiry make it possible for researchers to generate and test hypotheses of direct and indirect contributions of religion variables in explaining any number of outcomes relevant for criminology and delinquency studies.

(3) Based on a Catholic model, the faith-based prison went by the name Humaita.

(4) In 2000, the Braganca prison was widely promoted as an exemplar and a model for future prisons in Brazil.

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