

Connecting
IN-PRISON PROGRAMS
to **PRISONER REENTRY**
and **AFTERCARE**

*A Case Study of Restoration
Outreach of Dallas Ministries*

BY BYRON R. JOHNSON AND SUNG JOON JANG

Purpose

ISR exists to initiate, support, and conduct research on religion, involving scholars and projects spanning the intellectual spectrum: history, psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, epidemiology, theology, and religious studies. Our mandate extends to all religions, everywhere, and throughout history. It also embraces the study of religious effects on such things as prosocial behavior, family life, population health, economic development, and social conflict. While always striving for appropriate scientific objectivity, our scholars treat religion with the respect that sacred matters require and deserve.



Mission

Launched in August 2004, The Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR) exists to initiate, support, and conduct research on religion, involving scholars and projects spanning the intellectual spectrum: history, psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, philosophy, epidemiology, theology, and religious studies. Our mandate extends to all religions, everywhere, and throughout history. It also embraces the study of religious effects on such things as prosocial behavior, family life, population health, economic development, and social conflict. While always striving for appropriate scientific objectivity, our scholars treat religion with the respect that sacred matters require and deserve.

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Background

There is widespread consensus that correctional institutions offer too few programs designed to meet the educational, vocational, and rehabilitation needs of prisoners. There are a number of reasons for this oversight, but one of the most obvious is that policymakers have been reluctant to support correctional policies that appear to favor offender treatment programs. Job training, counseling, or support services for inmates can easily be interpreted as endorsing a philosophical approach that is “soft on crime.” However, evaluation studies indicate that these same kind of correctional programs (e.g., holistic, restorative and positive approaches to offender treatment) have been linked to recidivism reduction and thus help to achieve the goal of increasing public safety.¹ In fact, empirical evidence supports the notion that more punitive approaches have been linked to higher recidivism rates.² Nevertheless, law-and-order approaches have consistently been prioritized over offender treatment models.³ Stated differently, empirical evidence confirms that offender treatment can be effective and reduce post-release recidivism. However, decision-makers have been reluctant to support and scale these efforts.

While practitioners, scholars, and politicians continue to debate how to effectively manage correctional populations, the process of successfully reintegrating offenders back to communities has frustrated correctional leaders and politicians for many decades. This problem has been exacerbated by the sheer number of prisoners returning to American communities each year. Between 1980 and 2006, the U.S. prison population increased by 467 percent (from 319,598 to 1,492,973), and the parole population increased by 362 percent (from 220,438 to 798,202).⁴ The prison population decreased by about 7 percent (from 1,615,500 to 1,505,400) between 2009 and 2016, and the parole population continued an upward trend, showing an almost 10 percent increase between 2006 and 2016 (from 798,202 to 874,800).⁵

Though the prison population has been in slow decline since 2009,⁶ a prior three-decade buildup has made it inevitable that there would be an increase in the number of prisoners returning to communities across the country.⁷ In 2015, more than 641,000 people who had been sentenced to state and federal prison were released to communities across the country. Consider that another 9 million people are released from local jails each year.⁸ Even though it has often been argued that a prisoner reentry plan that includes effective aftercare programs for ex-prisoners (and their families) has the potential to reduce recidivism significantly and thus improve public safety, policy

1 Harlow, C.W. (2003). Education and Correctional Populations (Washington: U.S. Department of Justice), 4, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>.

2 James J. Stephan, J.J. (2008). Census of State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 2005 (Washington: U.S. Department of Justice), 6, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/csfcf05.pdf>.

3 Cullen, F. 2002. *Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs*. In *Crime: Public Policies for Crime Control*, edited by James Q. Wilson and Joan Petersilia, 253–289. Oakland, CA: ICS Press.

4 U.S. Department of Justice. 2006. *Adults on Probation, in Jail or Prison, and Parole*. Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Online. Table 6.1. Retrieved from <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/pdf/t612006.pdf>

5 Kaeble D. and M. Cowhig. 2018. *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2016*. NCJ251211. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics

6 *U.S. Correctional Populations in the United States, 2016* (NCJ 251211) was written by BJS statisticians Danielle Kaeble and Mary Cowhig. *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2016*, was written by Danielle Kaeble. Data are from BJS's National Prisoner Statistics program, Annual Probation and Annual Parole surveys and Annual Survey of Jails. The reports, related documents and additional information about BJS's statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at www.bjs.gov.

7 Carson, E. A. Prisoners in 2015; Langan, P. A., and D. J. Levin. 2002. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*. NCJ 193427. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

8 Allen J. Beck, "The Importance of Successful Reentry to Jail Population Growth" (paper presented at the Urban Institute's Jail Reentry Roundtable, June 27, 2006), available at urban.org/sites/default/files/beck.ppt.

makers have been reluctant to publicly defend such programs.⁹ This has led to a national debate about how to best handle what has become known as the prisoner reentry crisis.¹⁰

Several correctional programs have been implemented over the years to help address the difficult adjustment period when prisoners transition back into society. Halfway houses, community corrections, intensive supervision, and community reintegration programs represent a few of the various post-release efforts designed to make prisoner reentry into society less difficult for ex-prisoners while ensuring public safety.¹¹ But despite corrections expenditures that are now in excess of \$60 billion annually, the likelihood that a former prisoner will succeed in the community has not improved. In a 2018 study that followed more than 400,000 people released from state prisons in 30 states in 2005, 68 percent were arrested within 3 years of release, and 79 percent within 5 years of release.¹²

Growing caseloads have made effective case management of former prisoners in the community increasingly difficult. A by-product of heavy caseloads is increasing occupational stress on parole officers.¹³ In addition, when parole officers are spread too thin to effectively manage clients in the community, ex-offenders inevitably do not receive the supervision and assistance they clearly need.¹⁴ Even though the problems faced by ex-prisoners returning to society are readily identifiable, governmental efforts to address these reentry and aftercare problems remain limited.¹⁵ On the other hand, private efforts to confront these correctional problems have produced some preliminary results that are positive.¹⁶

9 Cullen, F. 2002. *Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs*. In *Crime: Public Policies for Crime Control*, edited by James Q. Wilson and Joan Petersilia, 253–289. Oakland, CA: ICS Press.

10 See for example, Travis, J. 2005. *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press; Travis, J., and C. Visher, eds. 2005. *Prisoner Reentry and Crime in America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; Western, Bruce (2018). *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation; Harding, David J., Morenoff, Jeffrey D., and Wyse, Jessica J.J. (2019). *On the Outside: Prisoner Reentry and Reintegration*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

11 Petersilia, J. 2003. *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry*. New York: Oxford University Press; Osborne, J., and A. Solomon. 2006. *Jail and Reentry Roundtable Initiative*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

12 Mariel Alper, Matthew R. Durose, and Joshua Markman (2018). *2018 Update On Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-Up Period (2005-2014)*, (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014), available at bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rprts05p0510.pdf.

13 Finn, P., and S. Kuck. 2003. *Addressing Probation and Parole Officer Stress*. Final Report to the National Institute of Justice. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Retrieved from <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/207012.pdf>.

14 Michelle S. Phelps (2013). "The Paradox of Probation: Community Supervision in the Age of Mass Incarceration," *Law Policy* 35: 51-80.

15 Travis, J., and C. Visher, eds. 2005. *Prisoner Reentry and Crime in America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

16 Johnson, B. R., D. B. Larson, and T. Pitts. 1997. "Religious Programming, Institutional Adjustment and Recidivism Among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs." *Justice Quarterly* 14: 145–166; Johnson, B.R. 2003. *The InnerChange Freedom Initiative: A Preliminary Evaluation of a Faith-Based Prison Program*. ISR Report. Waco, TX: Baylor University, Institute for Studies of Religion; Johnson, B. 2004. "Religious Program and Recidivism Among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs: A Long-Term Follow-Up Study." *Justice Quarterly* 21: 329–354; Johnson, B.R., W. Wubbenhorst, & C. Schroeder (2013). *Recidivism Reduction and Return on Investment: An Empirical Assessment of the Prison Entrepreneurship Program*. Institute for Studies of Religion, Special Report. Baylor University (2013), <http://www.BAYLORISR.org/publications/reports/>; Grant Duwe, Michael Hallett, Joshua Hays, Sung Joon Jang, and Byron Johnson, "Bible College Participation and Prison Misconduct: A Preliminary Analysis," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 54, no. 5 (2015): 371–90; Sung Joon Jang, Byron R. Johnson, Joshua Hays, Michael Hallett, and Grant Duwe (2018). "Existential and Virtuous Effects of Religiosity on Mental Health and Aggressiveness among Offenders," *Religions* 9, 182: 1-19.



Assessing the Role of Religion in Prisons

The evolution of the U.S. correctional system has been accompanied by the constant influence of religion and religious workers. Terms such as *corrections*, *penitentiary*, *reformation*, *restoration*, and *solitary confinement* can be traced to religious origins.¹⁷ The role of religion in prisons is important not only in a historical sense, but also continues to be prominent and pervasive in correctional institutions. The fact that many churches and houses of worship have long been involved in jail and prison ministries may not be surprising to scholars. But the fact that faith-motivated volunteers in prisons are as likely to be involved in life-skills training or instruction in GED programs may come as a surprise to the casual observer. In this way, religious volunteers have played and continue to play a vital role in the vast majority of American correctional institutions. Indeed, besides work, education, or vocational training, religious activities attract more participants than any other type of personal enhancement program offered inside a prison.¹⁸

There are many ways in which religion might be consequential for prisoners and ex-prisoners. However, where correctional decision makers and policy stake-holders are concerned, the overriding issue is whether an intervention reduces recidivism. In the mid-1990s, Prison Fellowship (PF), a nonprofit religious ministry to prisoners, commissioned research to determine the effects of faith-based interventions on prisoner recidivism. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, the study examined the influence of religious programs on prisoner adjustment (i.e., institutional infractions or rule violations) and recidivism rates (i.e., post-release arrests) in two matched groups of inmates from four adult prisons in New York State.¹⁹ One group had participated in programs sponsored by PF; the second group had not participated in PF programs. Researchers found that after controlling for level of involvement in PF-sponsored programs, inmates who were most active in Bible studies were significantly less likely to be arrested during the one-year follow-up period.²⁰ A second study, conducted with an additional seven years of follow-up data, documented that after the sample was divided into groups of high and low levels of participation in Bible studies, high-level participants were less likely to be rearrested during a three-year post-release period.²¹ The study concluded that more research is necessary to determine how religion might be related to offender rehabilitation, inmate adjustment, and prisoner reentry. This small but growing body of research indicates that participation in religious programs and activities can contribute to positive adjustment while the inmate is in prison as well as reducing the likelihood of recidivism following release from prison.²²

17 See for example, McGowen, R. (1995). "The Well-Ordered Prison: England, 1780–1865." In *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, edited by Norval Morris and David J. Rothman.

18 This conclusion is based on data from face-to-face interviews with 13,986 inmates in 1991 and published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Similar surveys were conducted in 1974, 1979, and 1986.

19 On the basis of a multivariate matched sampling method, seven variables most strongly predicted members of the PF groups: age, race, religious denomination, county of residence, military discharge, minimum sentence, and security classification.

20 Johnson, B., D. B. Larson, and T. Pitts. 1997. "Religious Programming, Institutional Adjustment and Recidivism Among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs." *Justice Quarterly* 14: 145–166.

21 Johnson, B. 2004. "Religious Program and Recidivism Among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs: A Long-Term Follow-Up Study." *Justice Quarterly* 21: 329–354.

22 Johnson, B.R. (2011). *More God, Less Crime: Why Religion Matters and How it Could Matter More*, Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press; Johnson, B.R. and Jang, S.J. (2012). "Religion and Crime: Assessing the Role of the Faith Factor," *Contemporary Issues in Criminological Theory and Research: The Role of Social Institutions*, Pp. 117–150, in Richard Rosenfeld, Kenna Quinet, and Crystal Garcia (Eds.) *Contemporary Issues in Criminological Theory and Research: The Role of Social Institutions*. Collected Papers from the American Society of Criminology 2010 Conference.

An overarching implication of this relatively new body of research is that religious volunteers and faith-based programs have the potential to play a significant role in how we think about prison management, safety, and offender rehabilitation. For example, research suggests that faith-based dormitories and housing units have the potential to significantly counter the negative and often debilitating prison culture that permeates so many American correctional institutions.²³

A six-year evaluation of a faith-based prison program called the InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI)²⁴ found that inmates who completed the program were significantly less likely than a matched group of offenders²⁵ to be rearrested (17 percent versus 35 percent) or reincarcerated (8 percent versus 20 percent) during a two year follow-up period.²⁶ The study revealed a stark contrast between the areas of the prison controlled by the faith-based program and the areas that house prisoners from the general population. The general population was typified by the presence of a distinct prison code of behavior that often condones rule-breaking and other inappropriate behaviors. Not surprisingly, traditional prison culture often works to undermine the very premises on which a rehabilitation model is based.²⁷

In contrast, the faith-based side of the prison was typified by educational classes, study, work, worship services, little free time, and the absence of television sets. Furthermore, the faith-based program enjoyed an atmosphere that promoted forgiveness, honesty, and personal accountability. Efforts such as IFI and Kairos, another faith-based prison program, are designed to discourage antisocial and destructive behavior and to encourage transparency, contrition, and spiritual transformation, all of which run counter to the pervasive prison code. Preliminary research lends support to the notion that faith-based housing units can create an environment that is conducive to effective treatment and to rehabilitation programs more generally.²⁸ In this way, faith-based interventions have the potential to enhance the achievement of a secular goal and civic good: lower recidivism.

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.²⁹ 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

23 Johnson, B. 2003. *The InnerChange Freedom Initiative: A Preliminary Evaluation of a Faith-Based Prison Program*. ISR Report. Waco, TX: Baylor University, Institute for Studies of Religion.

24 Founded in 1997, the InnerChange Freedom Initiative is operated by Prison Fellowship Ministries at the Carole Vance Unit, outside of Houston, Texas.

25 The comparison group was matched with IFI participants on race, age, offense type, and salient factor risk score (a correctional assessment tool that is used in most prisons to help predict the level of risk that prisoners pose to correctional authorities).

26 Johnson, B. 2003. *The InnerChange Freedom Initiative: A Preliminary Evaluation of a Faith-Based Prison Program*. ISR Report. Waco, TX: Baylor University, Institute for Studies of Religion.

27 The subculture of prisons has been an ongoing topic of sociological and criminological inquiry. Donald Clemmer (1958) coined the term *prisonization*, a process whereby inmates become socialized into prison culture. Assumptions of prisonization are that inmates internalize prison culture and that their subsequent behavior is a reflection of this internalization. Clemmer, Donald. 1958. *The Prison Community*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

28 Johnson, B.R. (2011). *More God, Less Crime: Why Religion Matters and How it Could Matter More*, Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press.

29 Kerley, K.R. Matthews, T.L., and Schulz, J.T. (2005). "Participation in operation starting line, experience of negative emotions, and incidence of negative behavior." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 49(4):410-26.

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.³⁰

A larger evaluation of the effectiveness of the IFI took place in Minnesota and examined recidivism outcomes among 732 offenders released from Minnesota prisons between 2003 and 2009.³¹ A series of regression analyses document that participation in IFI significantly reduced the likelihood of re-arrest (26 percent), reconviction (35 percent), and re-incarceration (40 percent) of former prisoners. A more recent study extends the research on the IFI program in Minnesota 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.

The study focused on estimating the program's benefits by examining recidivism and post-release 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.³²

Corrections officials faced with rising populations and shrinking budgets have welcomed "faith-based" providers offering services at no cost to help meet the needs of inmates. For example, the Louisiana State Penitentiary (a.k.a. "Angola,") is America's largest maximum-security prison and has been known for decades as one of the most violent and corrupt prisons in America. In 1995, Burl Cain became the new warden at Angola, and was influential in the launching of a Bible College within the prison. A first-of-its-kind prototype, Angola's unique Inmate Minister program deploys trained graduates of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in bi-vocational pastoral service roles throughout the prison.³³ Inmates lead their own congregations and serve in lay-ministry capacities in hospice, cell block visitation, delivery of familial death notifications to fellow inmates, "sidewalk counseling" and tier ministry, officiating inmate funerals, and delivering "care packages" to indigent prisoners.³⁴

Drawing from on-site research, scholars launched a major multi-year study of this unique correctional experiment by exploring the history, purpose, and functioning of the Inmate Minister program at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Life-history interviews uncover deep-level and beneficial change in self-identity, corresponding with a growing and important body of research suggesting that faith can help prisoners experience an authentic and positive identity change as well as religiously-motivated desistance.

30 Kerley, K.R., Matthews, T.L. and Blanchard, T.C. (2005). "Religiosity, Religious Participation, and Negative Prison Behaviors," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 44(4), 443-457. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2005.00296.x>

31 Duwe, G. and King (2012). "Can Faith-based Correctional Programs Work? An Outcome Evaluation of the Innerchange Freedom Initiative in Minnesota," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 57(7):813-41. doi: 10.1177/0306624X12439397

32 G. Duwe and B. R. Johnson, (2013). "Estimating the Benefits of a Faith-Based Correctional Program," *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology* 2: 227-239, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2013.02.22>

33 Hallett, M. J. Hays, S.J. Jang, B.R. Johnson, and G. Duwe (2016). *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation*, New York, NY: Routledge.

34 Hallett, M. J. Hays, S.J. Jang, B.R. Johnson, and G. Duwe (2016). *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation*, New York, NY: Routledge.



Attributions from prisoners confirms that faith helps inmates “survive prison” and explores the implications of religious programs for an American corrections system often seen in crisis (e.g., overcrowding, dehumanizing violence, and high recidivism). A number of states have now launched prison seminaries based on the Angola model, including a Bible College at the Darrington Unit, a maximum-security prison in Texas, which enlists inmates who have graduated from a prison-based seminary to work as “Field Ministers,” and serve other inmates in various capacities. Scholars hypothesized that inmate exposure to Field Ministers is inversely related to antisocial factors and positively to prosocial ones. Utilizing manifest-variable structural equation modeling to analyze data from a survey of a random sample of male inmates at three maximum-security prisons where the Field Ministry program operated, scholars found that inmates exposed more frequently to the Field Ministry and for a longer time period tended to report lower levels of criminological risk factors and aggressiveness and higher levels of virtues and predictors of human agency as well as religiosity and spirituality.³⁵ Lastly, the combination of religious involvement and acts of service to others, appears to be significant for inmates experiencing an identity transformation that replaces the old “bad” self with a new reformed and “prosocial” self.³⁶

There are many theoretical perspectives that help to explain why and how religious beliefs and practices may influence behavior. To review these would be beyond the scope of this publication, but in sum, it is safe to say that religious involvement helps some offenders to learn prosocial behavior (i.e. actions that emphasize concern for other people’s welfare). These prosocial skills can instill a greater sense of empathy toward others and thus lessen the likelihood of committing acts that harm others.³⁷ Similarly, religion has been found to help inmates have a sense of meaning and purpose in life and promote virtues, like gratitude and forgiveness.³⁸ Furthermore, once individuals become engaged in deviant behavior, involvement in religious activities can help to steer them back to a course of less deviant behavior and away from potential career criminal paths. In sum, religiosity has been recognized not only as a key protective factor that buffers or protects from harmful outcomes, but also as a variable that can promote prosocial behavior.³⁹

35 Grant Duwe, Michael Hallett, Joshua Hays, Sung Joon Jang, and Byron Johnson, “Bible College Participation and Prison Misconduct: A Preliminary Analysis,” *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 54, no. 5 (2015): 371–90; Sung Joon Jang, Byron R. Johnson, Joshua Hays, Michael Hallett, and Grant Duwe (2019). “Prisoners Helping Prisoners Change: A Study of Inmate Field Ministers Within Texas Prisons,” *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* (2019) doi: 10.1177/0306624X19872966.

36 Hallett, M. J. Hays, S.J. Jang, B.R. Johnson, and G. Duwe (2016). *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation*, New York, NY: Routledge.

37 Johnson, B., D. Larson, S. J. Jang, and S. Li. 2000a. “The ‘Invisible Institution’ and Black Youth Crime: The Church as an Agency of Local Social Control.” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 29: 479–498.

38 Sung Joon Jang, Byron R. Johnson, Joshua Hays, Michael Hallett, and Grant Duwe (2018). “Existential and Virtuous Effects of Religiosity on Mental Health and Aggressiveness among Offenders,” *Religions* 9, 182:1-19. Sung Joon Jang, Byron R. Johnson, and Matthew L. Anderson, “The Effect of Religion on Emotional Well-Being among Offenders in Correctional Centers of South Africa: Explanations and Gender Differences.” Paper under review for journal publication.

39 Johnson, B. 2007. “A Tale of Two Religious Effects: Evidence for the Protective and Prosocial Impact of Organic Religion.” *In Authoritative Communities: The Scientific Case for Nurturing the Whole Child*, edited by Kathleen Kline, 187–226. New York: Springer.

The Problem of Prisoner Reentry and Aftercare

Creating new offender treatment and support programs in prisons and connecting those efforts to community-based programs has proven to be a problem still very much in need of a solution. Put simply, in an era of finite resources and ever-tightening budgets, efforts to significantly expand existing educational, vocational, and counseling programs in prisons and communities have not received serious consideration.

If religious congregations can be viewed as institutions dedicated to improving the plight of at-risk populations, faith and community-based organizations could represent a key factor in helping ex-prisoners' transition to society. President George W. Bush signed an executive order in January 2001 establishing the White House Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives. Over the next several years, Centers of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives were created in eleven federal agencies through a series of executive orders.⁴⁰ In his executive orders and speeches on the initiative, Bush acknowledged the long tradition of faith-based and community organizations helping Americans, especially those who confront serious disadvantages. The president was also convinced that the federal government had not been a very good partner to the faith and community-based groups that have been working to target serious social problems. Furthermore, he believed that the federal government had made it difficult for faith-based and community groups to compete for funds on an equal standing with secular nonprofit service providers for far too long. The 2001 White House report *An Unequal Playing Field* systematically reviewed federal funding and identified the barriers that stand in the way of effective government partnerships with faith and community-based organizations.⁴¹ For example, the report found that the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice estimated that in fiscal 2001, it would award about 0.3 percent of total discretionary grant funds to faith-based organizations (\$1.9 million of \$626.7 million) and 7.5 percent to community-based providers (\$47.2 million). Since 2001, considerable progress has been made in overcoming obstacles (for example, before 2001, references to faith-based groups were virtually absent from federal funding announcements covering social service delivery or demonstration projects) that have prevented faith-based and community organizations from seeking grants to build capacity and thereby strengthen outreach to underserved populations, including prisoners and ex-prisoners. Since 2001, conferences for faith and community-based groups have been offered in all regions of the United States to identify and explain the federal funding processes. It is obvious that the government has a very clear role to play when it comes to prisoner reentry, but it has become equally clear that the government is not equipped to provide the mentoring, care, and social supports that are essential for any effective and holistic plan for prisoner reentry. In other words, government cannot effectively address the prisoner reentry crisis by itself.

40 Executive Order 13198 created five Centers for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives on January 29, 2001; Executive Order 13280 created two Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives on December 12, 2002; Executive Order 13279 requires equal protection for faith-based and community organizations as of December 12, 2002; Executive Order 13342 created three new Centers for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives at the Departments of Commerce and Veterans Affairs and the Small Business Administration on June 1, 2004; and Executive Order 13397 created a new Center for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives at the Department of Homeland Security on March 7, 2006.

41 White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. 2001. *Unequal Playing Field: Barriers to Participation by Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Federal Social Service Programs*. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/08/20010816-3-report.pdf>.

The alternative is also true: Faith-based organizations and individuals cannot effectively address the prisoner reentry problem by themselves. In fact, sacred and secular partnerships represent our best hope for developing an effective prisoner reentry strategy.

In the concluding chapter of their book *Prisoner Reentry and Crime in America*, Jeremy Travis and Christy Visher ask two important questions:

Is it possible to imagine a world in which the agencies of the justice system— corrections, police, courts, and parole—work together with other public and private institutions—housing providers, workforce development agencies, drug treatment providers, foster care agencies, and churches and other faith institutions—to systematically reduce the risk of failure around the time of reentry? . . . What would such a strategy look like? (pp. 255–256)?⁴²

Two major prisoner reentry initiatives were launched in the early 2000s and provided some preliminary answers to the questions posed by Travis and Visher. A third and related initiative, commonly referred to as the Second Chance Act, was passed by Congress three years after first being introduced, and the president signed it into law in April 2008. Intended to reduce repeat offenses and to improve former prisoners' chances for success in the community, the *Recidivism Reduction and Second Chance Act* authorized \$165 million annually over two years to support mentoring programs, substance abuse treatment, literacy classes, job training, and other assistance intended to help ex-offenders pursue productive, crime-free lives after their sentences are up. The bill authorized grant funding for fiscal years 2009 and 2010 for state and local governments to launch or continue programs to improve ex-offenders' return to society. It also allocated competitive grants to faith-based and community nonprofits to offer programs that link ex-offenders with mentors or that help them seek and keep jobs. The bill included elements of the Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI), launched in 2004, which connected ex-offenders with religious and secular nonprofits for mentoring and other programs to help them make a successful transition to community life.

⁴² Travis, J., and C. Visher, eds. 2005. *Prisoner Reentry and Crime in America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.



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Department of Public Safety
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Ready4Work

In 2003, the U.S. Department of Labor launched a three-year pilot program to address the needs of ex-prisoners through faith-based and community-based organizations. *Ready4Work* emphasized on-the-job training, job placement, case management, mentoring, and other aftercare services. Community and faith-based organizations were selected to provide services to adult ex-offenders in eleven cities.⁴³

Ready4Work purposely targeted participants who had a high probability of recidivism;⁴⁴ ex-prisoners in *Ready4Work* had extensive criminal histories, and half had previously been arrested five or more times.⁴⁵ Once individuals entered the program, they were eligible for services lasting up to one year. Participants were also matched with mentors in one-to-one and/or group mentoring relationships. Job placement specialists helped participants find jobs, and case managers continued to provide assistance after participants became employed.

The *Ready4Work* pilot ended in 2006, and results indicate that a total of 4,482 former prisoners enrolled in *Ready4Work*. Of these ex-prisoners, 97 percent received case management services, 86 percent received employment services, and 63 percent received mentoring services. *Ready4Work* sites placed 2,543 participants (57 percent) into jobs; 63 percent retained jobs for three consecutive months after placement.⁴⁶

Public/Private Ventures (PPV) oversaw the *Ready4Work* demonstration project as an intermediary. PPV reported that only 2.5 percent of *Ready4Work* participants were reincarcerated within six months and that 6.9 percent had been reincarcerated at the one-year post-release mark. Although this was not a randomized design, the findings were impressive.

Over 60 percent of *Ready4Work* participants received mentoring as part of their services. This study demonstrated that mentoring positively affected outcomes for participants. *Ready4Work* participants who met with a mentor remained in the program longer, were twice as likely to obtain a job, and were more likely to stay employed than were participants who did not meet with a mentor.⁴⁷ PPV researchers conclude that “while mentoring alone is not enough, supportive relationships—which can be fostered through mentoring programs—should be considered a core component of any reentry strategy.”⁴⁸

43 The eleven sites were City of Memphis Second Chance Ex-Felon Program (Memphis, TN); Allen Temple Housing & Economic Development Corporation (Oakland, CA); East of the River Clergy, Police & Community Partnership (Washington, DC); Exodus Transitional Community (East Harlem, NY); Holy Cathedral/Word of Hope Ministries (Milwaukee, WI); Operation New Hope (Jacksonville, FL); SAFER Foundation (Chicago, IL); Search for Common Ground (Philadelphia, PA); Union Rescue Mission (Los Angeles, CA); Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church & the InnerChange Freedom Initiative (Houston, TX); and America Works Detroit (Detroit, MI).

44 Participant eligibility for *Ready4Work* was determined on the basis of three factors: age of the ex-offender, presenting offense, and length of time before or after release. Ex-prisoners between the ages of 18 and 34 years who had most recently been incarcerated for a nonviolent felony offense and were no more than ninety days pre-release or post-release were eligible to enroll in the program.

45 Farley, C., and S. Hackman. 2006. *Ready4Work in Brief—Interim Outcomes are In: Recidivism at Half the National Average*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

46 Farley, C., and S. Hackman. 2006. *Ready4Work in Brief—Interim Outcomes are In: Recidivism at Half the National Average*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

47 Farley, C., and S. Hackman. 2006. *Ready4Work in Brief—Interim Outcomes are In: Recidivism at Half the National Average*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

48 Farley, C., and McClanahan. 2007. *Ready4Work In Brief—Update on Outcomes: Reentry May Be Critical for States, Cities*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures; McClanahan, W. 2007. *P/PV Preview: Mentoring Ex-Prisoners in the Ready4Work Reentry Initiative*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures; McClanahan, W. 2007. *P/PV Preview: Mentoring Ex-Prisoners in the Ready4Work Reentry Initiative*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.



Ready4Work provided an important preliminary snapshot of what is possible when an intermediary brings together public and private entities to address prisoner reentry in a comprehensive and coordinated strategy. Results from *Ready4Work* support the notion that a comprehensive prisoner reentry plan is possible and that it can be accomplished without a massive expansion of the existing criminal justice system. As far as federal projects go, the *Ready4Work* initiative in eleven cities represented a major demonstration project. Additionally, it helped to highlight the work of faith- and community-based groups that are addressing prisoner reentry, such as Exodus Transitional Community in New York, Word of Hope Ministries in Milwaukee or the Safer Foundation of Chicago.

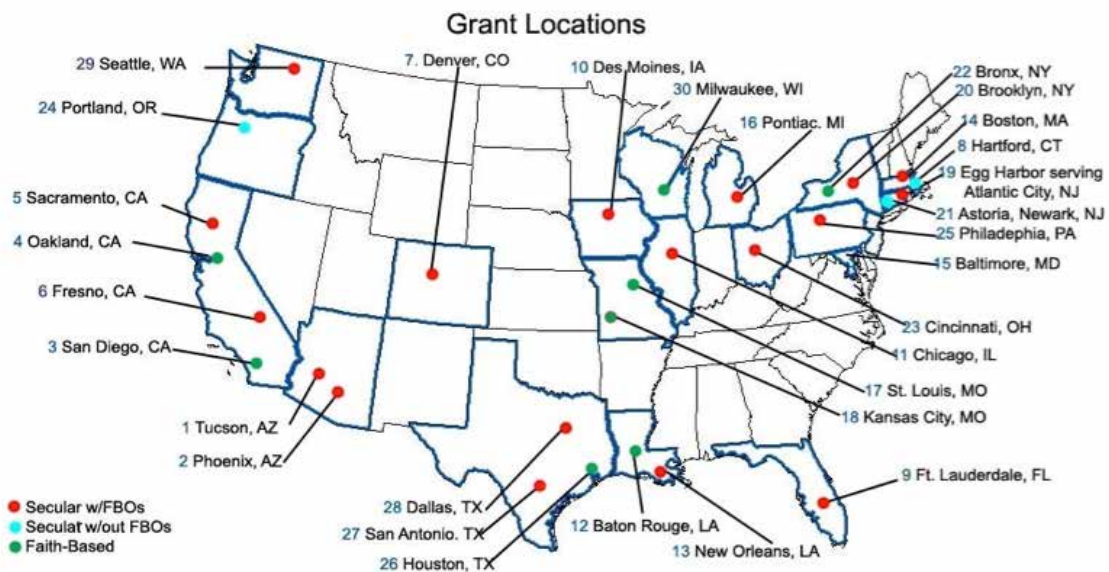
The Prisoner Reentry Initiative

The *Prisoner Reentry Initiative* (PRI), announced in 2004, grew out of the U.S. Department of Labor’s *Ready4Work* project. PRI was designed to further test the proposition that prisoner reentry could be effectively accomplished by a comprehensive strategy that is designed to draw heavily from partnerships with community and faith-based groups. The PRI helped to connect former prisoners with faith-motivated groups as well as secular community-based organizations that are willing to help ex-prisoners locate employment and stay out of trouble by following prosocial paths.

PRI sites began serving program participants in the spring of 2006, and the results, like those of *Ready4Work*, were promising. It is important to note, however, that these outcomes were not based on a randomized design with strict controls. A total of 10,361 PRI participants had been enrolled as of November 2007, and about 6,000 participants have been placed in jobs. Participants’ one-year post-release recidivism rate was 20 percent.

As can be seen in Figure 1, nine of the thirty PRI grants went to faith-based organizations. Twenty-one grants went to community-based organizations, and all but three of these secular organizations report working with faith-based organizations. Indeed, collaborations with faith-based organizations appear to be important for faith-based as well as community-based PRI recipients. These alliances confirm the premise that sacred and secular partnerships can be essential in establishing a network of social supports necessary for comprehensive and coordinated prisoner reentry.

Figure 1: Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI) Grants



Any prisoner reentry plan that is comprehensive and holistic will require new people as well as programs that do not currently exist in most jurisdictions. It is unlikely that governmental entities alone will or can provide these programs. Faith- and community-based groups represent a crucial piece of the reentry puzzle that has yet to be integrated in a systematic fashion. A comprehensive prisoner reentry plan will be sustainable only if partnerships between sacred and secular as well as national and community groups are supported. A healthy atmosphere of mutual respect must replace the suspicion that still too often typifies relations between public and private organizations and between secular and religious groups that nonetheless have similar social service missions.

For example, religious individuals and faith-based groups need to recognize that ongoing training regarding correctional issues is something to be coveted rather than merely tolerated. Religious volunteers should be required to undergo basic training regarding custodial and security issues before being allowed to do volunteer work. Furthermore, ongoing training for religious volunteers should be endorsed as well as widely promoted by faith-based organizations. This is especially true for faith-motivated volunteers who are interested in mentoring prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Faith-based groups need to understand that accountability, assessment, and evaluation of their efforts—which will surely follow if these groups partner with government—are extremely useful tools. Overstating program effectiveness without empirical evidence has often been a problem for religious volunteers and faith-based organizations. If their efforts are to be taken seriously, religious volunteers must understand that faith-based programs, like others, must be evaluated objectively. This kind of accountability will go a long way toward improving relationships with other private and public groups whose confidence faith-based groups need in a comprehensive and coordinated response to prisoner reentry.

Rethinking the Role of Volunteerism in Prisoner Reentry

Though often overlooked, the role of religion, religious volunteers, religious programs, and faith-based organizations in the criminal justice system has been a constant in U.S. history. This oversight is unfortunate, since numerous theoretical perspectives as well as published research indicate that communities of faith have the potential to be powerful partners with government in developing and implementing comprehensive prisoner reentry approaches. The following section reviews research documenting the role of religion in prisons and prisoner reentry and research connecting religion to crime reduction and prosocial behavior and thus provides a basis for the inclusion of a faith-based approach to prisoner reentry and aftercare.

For many decades volunteer have played a critical though largely overlooked role in augmenting prison-based programs. As important as this work within correctional facilities might be, it does not diminish the fact that prisoner

reentry and aftercare tend to be largely unnoticed by most religious volunteers and organizations. The reality is that prison ministry is a much easier and safe task to pursue than the communities where former prisoners will eventually reside following release from prison. Prisoners appreciate the attention they receive from the outside world, and these exchanges tend to be overwhelmingly positive and nonthreatening for volunteers. Consequently, prison ministry is a common outreach in many U.S. congregations that attracts thousands of religious volunteers who visit prisons every day.

Likewise, faith-based organizations disproportionately opt for in-prison ministry rather than out-of-prison programs because reentry and aftercare are anything but easy or safer. For example, Prison Fellowship (PF), the largest faith-based prison ministry in the United States, has always recognized that reentry and aftercare are vitally important, but PF's efforts have been only marginally involved in these areas. Though the disproportionate emphasis on volunteerism tends to be within prisons rather than on aftercare in communities is undeniable, it would be inaccurate to suggest that faith-based prisoner reentry programs are nonexistent. Faith-based prisoner reentry and aftercare programs tend to be small, isolated, and in need of coordination as well as evaluation.

An effective and positive impact on prisoner reentry will require a paradigm shift for many religious programs. Instead of leading a Bible study in prison, religious volunteers will need to consider developing strategies to improve, for example, housing and employment conditions for ex-offenders who are already living in the community as well as for prisoners who will eventually be returning home. The importance of mentoring relationships that are established in prison and carry over to the community cannot be overemphasized. Research confirms that mentoring matters—not just for children, but also for adults. The problem is that there is a severe shortage of mentors for prisoners and especially for ex-prisoners. This is precisely why communities of faith, America's most volunteer-rich organizations, are uniquely positioned to assist.⁴⁹ However, faith communities have not been approached in any meaningful way on a national scale to provide these mentors. Another possibility is having properly trained volunteers to specifically assist parole and other community corrections personnel. Ultimately, a comprehensive prisoner reentry plan will require very large numbers of committed and trained volunteers and partners as well as a willingness to connect them, along with their varied networks of social and spiritual support, to correctional, governmental, and secular entities that are committed to prisoner reentry and aftercare. Without a comprehensive approach that coordinates public and private, secular and sacred partnerships, the lack of effective prisoner reentry support will remain a national emergency. There is great promise if government and faith-based groups collaborate in meaningful partnerships to successfully address prisoner reentry problems.

We know that lack of housing, employment, transportation, counseling, and mentoring are substantial obstacles that make the transition from prison to society difficult for ex-prisoners. Obviously, tackling these problems will call for a great deal of new human and financial resources as well as the participation of key community leaders. Thus, any comprehensive strategy for confronting the problems of prisoner reentry will require an infusion of an unprecedented number of new volunteers who have or can develop strategic alliances focused on each of the problems ex-prisoners encounter. But where will these new volunteers and resources come from?

Organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA), the largest mentoring organization in the world, have developed immensely successful strategies for recruiting mentors. In recent years BBBSA was able to more than double the number of children served.⁵⁰ Along with many other grantees, BBBSA helped to lead the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) efforts nationally, in a partnership program known as Amachi. It took BBBSA ninety-five years to make 120,000 matches; there are currently 250 MCPs in forty-eight states partnering with over 6,000 churches to serve more than 100,000 children.⁵¹ Conversations with Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode, who has directed the amazing growth of Amachi, reveal the foundational role of congregations in recruiting mentors. The Amachi experience confirms that when people are asked to volunteer, many will do just that.⁵² A comprehensive plan for prisoner reentry that draws heavily on volunteers will need to develop strategies for recruiting mentors, although this effort will no doubt look different from the BBBSA and Amachi models.

The vast majority of the many thousands of correctional volunteers tend to come from religious congregations. No source provides more volunteers than America's houses of worship,⁵³ and there are at least 361,000 congregations in the United States.⁵⁴ Religious congregations not only mobilize volunteer labor for the church itself, but also are feeder systems for many other nonprofit and volunteer organizations. Furthermore, religious volunteers do not necessarily choose between volunteering for the church and volunteering for a secular organization; many do both.⁵⁵ Surveys have consistently found a positive association between religious affiliation and attendance and charitable behavior in terms of both financial giving and volunteering.⁵⁶ Harvard University scholar Robert Putnam and his colleagues in the Saguaro Seminar echoed this finding when they observed:

Houses of worship build and sustain more social capital—and social capital of more varied forms—than any other type of institution in America. Churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship provide a vibrant institutional base for civic good works and a training ground for civic entrepreneurs. Roughly speaking,

50 Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. 2005. *Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Expands Relationship with Kintera*. Retrieved from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/_mi_m0EIN/is_2005_July_19/ai_n14794523.

51 Amachi. 2008. *Amachi: People of Faith Mentoring Children of Promise*. Retrieved from www.amachimentoring.org.

52 Musick, M., and J. Wilson. 2007. *Volunteers: A Social Profile*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

53 Putnam, R. D., et al. 2001. *Better Together: Report of the Saguaro Seminar*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government; Putnam, R.D. and D. Campbell (2012). *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

54 2010 *Religious Congregations and Membership Study*. Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies.

55 Clain, S., and C. E. Zech. 1999. "A Household Production Analysis of Religious and Charitable Activity." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 58: 923–946.

56 Brooks, A. C. 2006. *Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth About Compassionate Conservatism*. New York: Basic Books; Independent Sector. 2002. *Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 2001: Findings from a National Survey*. Washington, DC: Independent Sector.

*nearly half of America's stock of social capital is religious or religiously affiliated, whether measured by association memberships, philanthropy, or volunteering.*⁵⁷

Research confirms that volunteers will respond if they are approached with the right message, but it is not enough simply to attract large numbers of volunteers. The coordination and mobilization of volunteers and organizations is equally important.

As was discussed above, developing a truly comprehensive prisoner reentry plan is difficult because there are so many different challenges that complicate an ex-prisoner's effort to make a successful transition back into society. For example, focusing on housing without proper consideration of employment is shortsighted. Likewise, concentrating on transportation without planning for mentoring and other social supports is likely to be unsuccessful. Any comprehensive prisoner reentry plan must be able to coordinate all the major obstacles to successful reentry.

The role of faith- and community-based organizations in social service provision is still relatively new and underdeveloped. This is unfortunate, since these organizations could be the most important underutilized element in building successful prisoner reentry models that incorporate working with volunteers, especially volunteers from religious congregations. Intermediaries can be a bridge between ex-prisoners and the many social service providers and various governmental agencies. Intermediaries can coordinate reentry efforts of community- and faith-based organizations, volunteers, social services, mentors, and parole officers. Additionally, intermediaries can serve in many important ways by providing management and oversight to groups and organizations; technical assistance to agencies, groups, and ministries; and ongoing training to strengthen capacity and sustainability.

Without this kind of assistance, there is a strong likelihood that small grassroots groups will ultimately fail.⁵⁸ According to Mike Doyle, Executive Director of the Cornerstone Assistance Network, a faith- based intermediary organization in Fort Worth, Texas, failure to develop a sound organization will cause even successful programs to suffer if not to surrender to financial and reporting pressures. Intermediaries can play a key role in coordinating the efforts of fragmented community and faith-based organizations.⁵⁹ Too often, these small groups operate in relative isolation from each other and, as a result, are not able to build or sustain capacity. Organizations such as the United Way provide an example of how organizations, through targeted mission statements, can have a substantial and scalable influence.⁶⁰ Intermediaries are essential to a comprehensive and coordinated prisoner reentry plan that can recruit a large number of skilled and trained volunteers while developing private and public partnerships to confront key reentry and aftercare problems.

57 Putnam, R. D., et al. 2001. *Better Together: Report of the Saguro Seminar*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government.

58 McKinsey & Company. 2001. *Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations*, published for Venture Philanthropy Partners, 27–32. Haryana, India: McKinsey & Company.

59 Fink, B., and A. Branch. 2005. *Promising Practices for Improving the Capacity of Faith- and Community-Based Organization*. Philadelphia: Branch Associates, Inc. and Abt Associates, Inc.

60 The United Way is a national network of more than 1,300 locally governed organizations that work to create lasting positive changes in communities.

ROD Ministries: Connecting In-Prison Ministry to Aftercare

Restoration Outreach of Dallas (ROD) Ministries is a non-profit organization serving offenders in area prisons by repairing, restoring, and redirecting their lives, broken by their offending and imprisonment, through faith-based program. ROD encourages an offender to embark on a journey of hope and restoration, and their discipleship program begins with extensive hands-on Bible teaching, as it promotes virtues (e.g., accountability) and sense of meaning and purpose for a redirection of life, which would lead to changes in the offender's self-identity as well as attitudes and behaviors.

ROD runs a faith-based program that is available for any inmates who are committed to change their lives for the better if they meet the following requirements to participate:

- Have at least 3 months left until release
- Attend ROD classes offered in the prison
- Attend substance abuse programs offered within the facility if needed
- Plan to reside in the Dallas area upon release

The ROD program consists of four intensive discipleship classes, each of which run for three months, and builds upon the previous class. All four classes are offered at the Coffield Unit, a medium security correctional facility within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), in Tennessee Colony, Texas. The first three ROD classes are offered at the Hutchins State Jail, a classification center located in Dallas, Texas. The ROD curriculum is currently a 12-month process at Coffield, whereas it is a 9-month commitment at Hutchins. Each class meets weekly and requires homework. Clients are required to consistently attend Bible study classes, complete needs assessment with volunteer leaders, and devise a plan of action for their needs.

Following successful completion of the classes and requirements, inmates participate in a graduation ceremony and receive a certificate. Ninety days prior to release, an exit interview is completed, and ROD assesses the offender's needs to determine placement in an aftercare program. In this way, ROD is different than other faith-based efforts in that it intentionally bridges in-prison programs to post-release programs in the community. Aftercare is an important part of ROD that ensures the prisoner's successful reentry into the community.

The current study will focus on the ROD in-prison program in two correctional facilities – Hutchins State Jail and the Coffield Unit. Unlike most faith-based programs that claim to be effective based primarily on anecdotal evidence (e.g., personal testimonies), this study offers a unique opportunity to systematically and scientifically assess the impact of a faith-based program among prisoners.



Specifically, the current study is based on a longitudinal research design, which enables us to examine causal influence of program participation on inmates, and thus will conduct surveys with participating inmates six times over a 15-month period: pretest (before ROD I class starts), three (two for Hutchins) interim tests (after ROD I, II, and III end, respectively), post-test (after ROD IV class ends), and follow-up survey (3 months after the posttest). For comparative purposes, a control group will be created using propensity score matching (PSM). PSM is a method to create a group of non-participating inmates who are equivalent to those who participate in the ROD classes in terms of key factors, such as sociodemographic (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, education, marital status, etc.) and system-related variables (e.g., previous criminal records, current conviction, length of sentence, programming participation, prison misconduct, etc.). Inmates in the control group will participate in two surveys, pretest and post-test only. Official data from TDCJ will be analyzed in combination with survey data.

We will compare inmates participating in ROD classes led by volunteers (Hutchins Unit) to ROD participants led by fellow prisoners (Coffield Unit). An emerging literature indicates that prisoner-led religious movements may be more effective in the process of crime desistance, rehabilitation, and identity transformation.⁶¹ The current study will test whether this is the case with the ROD program. Finding support for the notion that inmate-led programs can be more effective than volunteer-led programs carries significant implication for correctional practitioners and decision-makers, and could influence policy decisions regarding offender treatment programs more broadly.

ROD Ministries could become a national model in that it not only continues to develop and expand the aftercare portion of their work within communities, but they are connecting the post-release work component to the in-prison ministry. Connecting in-prison work to aftercare will help provide a truly comprehensive approach to offender treatment and restoration. Most ministries to inmates focus on prison work only, and ROD has the chance to move the aftercare discussion forward dramatically by connecting their in-prison work to their aftercare work in the free world.

61 Hallett, M. J. Hays, S.J. Jang, B.R. Johnson, and G. Duwe (2016). *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation*, New York, NY: Routledge; Sung Joon Jang, Byron R. Johnson, Joshua Hays, Michael Hallett, and Grant Duwe (2019). "Prisoners Helping Prisoners Change: A Study of Inmate Field Ministers Within Texas Prisons," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* (2019) doi: 10.1177/0306624X19872966.

Conclusion

Because prisoner reentry is a problem facing communities all across the United States, the goal of any plan should be to establish a model that not only is effective in a particular area, but also can be effective on a larger scale in multiple communities. We need a plan in which coordination and collaboration are central, the goals of the reentry model are realistically achievable, the specific elements of the plan are replicable in any community, and the plan is affordable and does not add new costs to already overburdened correctional budgets. This case study will examine if ROD Ministries is capable of developing a scalable plan for effective in-prison ministry that is intentionally connected to prisoner reentry.

The role of the government in reentry and aftercare is important, even central, but it should not be all-encompassing. The criminal justice system should be viewed as a key partner among other public and private partners collaborating with the many reentry initiatives that are being led in the community and coordinated through intermediaries. Ready4Work and PRI provide initial evidence that sacred and secular groups as well as national and community government institutions can work together to address comprehensive prisoner reentry in a scalable way. To replicate these experiences, the federal and state governments need to continue to welcome and accommodate religious and community-based volunteers and groups, like ROD Ministries. Additionally, faith- and community-based groups will have to bring much needed expertise in coordinating and training volunteers as well as organizations in the areas of employment, housing, education, and counseling. In this way, sacred and secular partnerships can play a catalytic role in a truly comprehensive and scalable approach to prisoner reentry.

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