

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction



Ohio Institute on Correctional Best Practices

Best Practices Tool-Kit: Faith-Based Programming, Reentry and Recidivism



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BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT

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Faith-Based Programming, Reentry and Recidivism

This Best Practices Tool-Kit aims to systematically identify empirical evidence regarding faith-based programming, reentry and recidivism. It highlights 2-4 practices/programs that are proven, promising or exemplary best practices and provides references for more extensive reading, if desired. The objective of the tool kit is to offer a sound evidence base that will better inform policymakers, practitioners and researchers on faith-based programming in corrections. For definitional purposes, best practices fall on a continuum ranging from those practices that are well established and have clearly demonstrated their effectiveness to those that show promise or may be exemplary, but have yet to be fully evaluated and their results documented (Wilkinson 2003).¹

Research indicates that high levels of involvement in religious activities lead to reductions in various harmful health outcomes, reductions in juvenile delinquency (Johnson, Tompkins and Webb 2002; Johnson and Seigel 2002),² and reductions in prison misconduct while incarcerated (Kerley, Matthews and Schulz 2005; Clear and Sumter 2002).³ However, there is little published research evaluating the effectiveness of faith-based organizations, programs or initiatives (Johnson et al. 2002).

Faith-Based programming is difficult to quantify and measure consistently because it is multifaceted and can mean different things to different researchers. In his review of 12 studies on religion and adult offender rehabilitation, Thomas O'Connor (2005) observed the following limitations:⁴

- Studies rarely use random sampling and rely on quasi-experimental designs, which are often non-representative samples, without adequate control groups;
- Many studies employ limited statistical analyses and rarely examine causality, relying instead on bi-variate analysis;
- Many studies use a limited number of control variables with many religious and spiritual factors not controlled for; and,
- Operational definitions of religion vary greatly among studies with many failing to capture the multiple dimensions of religion or tap into the many aspects of religiousness beyond participation.

As noted by O'Connor (2005:524) "as a result of the differences in measurement, research design, data collection, sampling, and data analysis interpretation...it is difficult to make definite conclusions about the relative value of religion as a method of correctional rehabilitation. Religious programming and research into that programming need to improve if society is to benefit from the enormous potential that faith-based services, lives, and interventions have to offer the correctional systems and cultures in the United States."

¹ Wilkinson, R. 2003. "Best Practices: What Does It Mean In Times of Perpetual Transition?" International Corrections and Prison Association 2003 Meetings. Viewed July 25, 2006 at <http://www.drc.state.oh.us/web/articles/article91.htm>.

² Johnson, B.; Tompkins, R.; Webb, D. 2002. *Objective Hope: Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations: A Review of the Literature*. Originally published as a CRRUS Report and re-issued as a CRIAD report in 2006. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.nicic.org/Library/020279>. Johnson, B. and M. Siegel. 2002. *The Great Escape: How Religion Alters the Delinquent Behavior of High-Risk Adolescents*. Originally published as a CRRUS Report and re-issued as a CRIAD report in 2006. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/24233.pdf>

³ Kerley, K.; Matthews, T.; Schulz, J. 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):410-426. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://ijo.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/49/4/410>. Clear, T.; Sumter, M. 2002. "Prisoners, Prisons, and Religion: Religion and Adjustment to Prison." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*. 35(3/4):127-159.

⁴ O'Connor, T. Winter 2004-2005. "What Works, Religion as a Correctional Intervention: Part II." *Journal of Community Corrections*. 14(2):4-6, 20-26. Viewed December 15, 2006 at http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/TRANS/docs/pdf/rs_whatworks2.pdf.

The evidence surrounding the effect and direction of the relationship varied across the few studies which have evaluated the efficacy of faith-based organizations, programs or initiatives. Based upon their meta-analysis of 60 research studies conducted between 1969 and 1998, including dissertations, books, journal articles, and papers presented at professional conferences, Baier and Wright (2001:3) conclude that "previous studies have systematically varied in their estimation of the religion-on-crime effect due to differences in both their conceptual and methodological approaches."⁵ Yet, the analysis leads them to conclude that religious beliefs and behaviors have a moderate deterrent effect on criminal behavior.

In his extensive research on religious programming, behavior, practices and crime, Byron Johnson (2004) distinguishes between two types of religious research: organic research, and intentional or programmatic research.⁶ The focus of organic research is the impact of religious activities, such as church attendance or participation in religious activities on various social and behavioral outcomes. The focus of intentional or programmatic religion studies is on the effectiveness of faith-based organizations or interventions, including rehabilitation programs that have a spiritual base, on criminal activities. The focus of this toolkit is on empirical research that addresses either of these issues.

Implementing Programs

Regardless of the differences in evaluation research on faith-based programming and criminal behavior, O'Conner, Duncan and Quillard (2006) recommend that policy makers incorporate the following considerations into their decision making when dealing with faith-organizations and correctional systems:⁷

1. Clearly articulate their assumptions about the nature of people as these assumptions influence the penal system;
2. Strengthen the role of professional chaplains and engage a variety of community voices;
3. Promote the dialogue between principles of effective programming and the ethical and compassion principles of religion.

Incorporating the above considerations in decision making should lead to:

- A greater involvement of the community in the criminal justice system;
- Development of an authentic spirituality among prisoners choosing to practice their religion;
- A more humane criminal justice system; and,
- A reduction in recidivism for some offenders and an increase in public safety.

Mears et al. (2006) assert several implementation strategies could increase the effectiveness of faith-based programs, including:⁸

- Clearly state the goals of the program and how the activities contribute to achieving those goals. Doing so contributes to establishing appropriate outcome measures to determine the effectiveness of the program. If the program goals are unclear and unarticulated, the program cannot be evaluated effectively. For example, if the goals of the program are to foster community connectivity rather than to reduce recidivism, why use a recidivism measure to determine the effectiveness of the program?
- Strive for consistent implementation of activities. Efforts should be made to ensure that all aspects of the program, activities and assessments are completed consistently.

⁵ Baier, C. & B. Wright. 2001. "If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments": A Meta-Analysis of the Effect of Religion on Crime." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. 38(1):3-21. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://jrc.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/38/1/3>.

⁶ Johnson, B. "Religious Programs and Recidivism among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs: A Long-Term Follow-up Study." *Justice Quarterly*. 21(2):329-354.

⁷ O'Conner, T.; Duncan, J.; Quillard, F. 2006. "Criminology and Religion: The Shape of an Authentic Dialogue." *Criminology and Public Policy*. 5(3): 559-570.

⁸ Mears, D.; Roman, C.; Wolff, A.; Buck, J. 2006. "Faith-based Efforts to Improve Prisoner Reentry: Assessing the Logic and Evidence." *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 34:351-367.

- Build and foster collaborative partnerships with social service agencies which will increase the capacity to match clients with appropriate services.
- Maintain sufficient, consistent and sustained funding and staffing levels.

In addition to the above considerations, to increase their likelihood of effectiveness faith-based programming and interventions must adhere to principles of effective correctional treatment such as criminogenic risk/need, responsivity, family/community context, program integrity and program delivery type.

Exemplary Programs

There remains controversy surrounding the research evaluating the relationships between faith-based programming and crime reduction. However, below I highlight one program that incorporates the principles of effective programming just described.

InnerChange Freedom Initiative Program (IFI)

The InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI) is a faith-based Reentry Program that was started by Prison Fellowship (PF) Ministries in 1997, but became a separate entity in 1999 and now contracts with PF for staffing and support services. IFI currently operates in 4 state prison facilities, one each in Texas, Kansas, Minnesota and Arkansas, in cooperation with the state. The state provides food, clothing, shelter and security to the inmates, while IFI staff provides the intensive program.

Anchored in biblical teachings that stress personal responsibility, the value of education and work, care of persons and property and the reality of a new life in Christ, the IFI program emphasize instruction in education, work, life skills, values restructuring, and one-on-one mentoring. IFI consists of 16 to 24 months of in-prison programs, and 6 to 12 months of aftercare following release from prison. The program is implemented in three phases:

- **Phase One:** Lasts approximately 12 months and focuses on the prisoner's internal transformational process seeking to build spiritual and moral filters. A heavy emphasis is placed on education (e.g., Biblical, GED, tutoring), work, and support groups, mentoring and peer groups.
- **Phase Two:** Lasts approximately 6-12 months and tests the inmate's value system in real-life settings and prepares him for life after prison. Inmates may spend much of the day in off-site prison work programs or involved in the reentry portion of the IFI curriculum.
- **Phase Three (Aftercare):** Lasts approximately 6-12 months. Participants are transferred to a Work Release or Halfway House facility to continue their transition process. During this phase, the focus is on housing, employment, facilitating mentoring relations and making connections between the IFI office and local church communities.

IFI draws heavily upon local church communities to provide a wide range of volunteers to assist both the inmate and family during the course of the program. In their study of the IFI program in Texas, Trusty and Eisenberg (2003) found that continued contact with mentors after release from prison was associated with reduced recidivism for program graduates. Specifically, they found that persons who completed the in-prison and aftercare components of the IFI program had an 8% recidivism rate when compared to a 20% rate for a matched group of non-participants. However, non-completers, persons who started the program but did not complete all phases, had a higher recidivism rate (36%) than the comparison group. The authors conclude more research is needed to examine the relationship between program time, completion rates and recidivism rates.

Johnson and Larson (2002) also evaluated the effectiveness of the Texas Department of Corrections' InnerChange Faith Initiative in reducing recidivism. They found that 17.3% of the program graduates (persons completing all phases of the program, as well as holding a job and being an active church member 3 consecutive months following release from prison) were rearrested and 8% were incarcerated

during the two-year follow-up period compared to 35% arrested and 20.3% imprisoned for the matched comparison group. Johnson and Larson also reported that while the graduates performed better than the comparison groups, IFI participants who started the program, but did not graduate were less successful than non-participants. Overall, 36.2% of non-graduating IFI participants were arrested within 2 years, and 24.3% were incarcerated.

Based upon interviews and observations of IFI participants, IFI staff, TDCJ employees and mentors revealed, the authors attribute the reductions in recidivism among the graduates to the following (Johnson and Larson 2002:49):

- Initial skepticism of the IFI program diminished over time.
- Narratives of IFI members revealed five spiritual transformation themes that are consistent with characteristics associated with offender rehabilitation: (a) I'm not who I used to be; (b) spiritual growth; (c) God versus the prison code; (d) positive outlook on life, and; (e) the need to give back to society.
- Spiritual transformation can best be understood as a developmental process marked by key turning points or events.
- Completing the IFI program, and continued positive pre- and post-release mentoring are central to both the offender's spiritual transformation and rehabilitation.

The characteristics associated with IFI recidivism are: lack of post-release accountability via mentors and congregations; isolation from those that could most benefit the individual; and failure to accept personal responsibility for poor decision-making.

Readings and Evaluations of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative Program:

- Trusty, B. and M. Eisenberg. 2003. *Initial Process and Outcome Evaluation of the InnerChange Freedom Initiative: The Faith-Based Prison Program in TDCJ*. Criminal Justice Policy Council. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.nicic.org/Library/019013>.
- Johnson, B. and D. Larson. 2002. *The InnerChange Freedom Initiative: A Preliminary Evaluation of a Faith-Based Prison Program*. Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society. Philadelphia, PA. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/app/publications/Abstract.aspx?id=232622>.

Legal Concerns

Related to the InnerChange Freedom Initiative Program, it should be noted that in a June 2006 ruling by Chief Justice Robert W. Pratt of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa in the case of *Americans United for Separation of Church and State, et al. v. Prison Fellowship Ministries, et al.*,⁹ the Court ruled that the contractual relationship between the Iowa Department of Corrections and InnerChange Freedom Initiative violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment in the following manner:

- InnerChange is pervasively sectarian in nature;
- there can be no separation of InnerChanges' sectarian and secular aspects;
- special privileges accorded to inmates participating in the faith-based program promote religion at the public's expense; and,
- the State of Iowa is excessively entangled with religion through its arrangement with InnerChange.

The Iowa Department of Corrections is appealing the ruling.

⁹ *Americans United for Separation of Church and State v. Prison Fellowship Ministries*. 432 F.Supp.2d 862 (S.D. Iowa 2006). Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.nicic.org/Library/Default.aspx?Library=021559>.

In mid-2006 the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio issued an Agreed Order that defines the relationship between the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and certain aspects of religious expression within the agency. Within that Settlement and Agreed Order, two of the four provisions discussed relates specifically to faith-based programs:¹⁰

- No inmate will be ordered, by written pass or otherwise, to attend a faith-based program. Faith-based programs will be identified as such, and inmate attendance at these programs is voluntary.
- ODRC will not sponsor or endorse the religious message of any faith-based program that is allowed to enter the prison, nor shall ODRC endorse any religious message on its official documents or bulletin boards.

Lawsuits such as the above have implications for another area of faith-based programming in a correctional setting; namely, the appropriate use of government grants within the program structure, implementation or practices. In June 2006, the Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation and investigative arm of Congress, reported on various aspects of the White House Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The report concluded that although "most agencies provided grantees with an explicit statement on the safeguards prohibiting the use of direct federal funds for inherently religious activities," there was no clear guidance from the Justice's on the activities for its correctional programs. In their study of 10 grant programs reviewed by the GAO, "only four programs provided a statement on the rights of program beneficiaries and only three provided information on permissible hiring by [Faith Based Organizations]."¹¹

Additional Suggested Readings on Faith-Based Programming, Reentry and Recidivism

Outcome evaluations on faith-based programming are limited. However, below are additional readings which may provide direction and suggestions for future research into this area.

Aos, S.; Miller, M.; Drake, E. 2006. *Evidence Based Adult Corrections Programs: What Works and What Does Not*. Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Olympia, WA. Viewed December 19, 2006 at <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=06-01-1201>.

Description: Provides a comprehensive review of 291 rigorous evaluations conducted throughout the United States and other English-speaking countries during the last 35 years on programs designed to lower the recidivism rates of adult offenders. Although some programs are found effective, the results are inconclusive regarding faith-based programs.

Camp, S.; Klein-Saffran, J.; Kwon, O.; Daggett, D.; Joseph, V. 2006. "An Exploration into Participation in a Faith-Based Prison Program," *Criminology and Public Policy*. 5(3):529-550. Viewed December 15, 2006 at http://www.bop.gov/news/research_projects/published_reports/gen_program_eval/volunteer_cpp.pdf.

Description: Using faith, socio-demographic, psychological, and criminal history variables, the authors examine the types of incarcerated persons who volunteer to participate in the Life Connections Program (LCP), an 18-month multi-faith residential program established by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 2002. The findings indicate that program participants are motivated to make changes in their lives, and are seeking their way in a religious sense.

¹⁰ Stout, Austin. "Settlement and Agreed Order Regarding Religious Issues." Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. 14 July 2006. Communicated via email.

¹¹ "Highlights: Faith-Based and Community Initiative. June 2006. United States Government Accountability Office, Report number GAO-06-616. Viewed December 29, 2006 at <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d06616high.pdf>. The full report was viewed December 29, 2006 at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06616.pdf>

Clear, T.; Hardyman, P.; Stout, B.; Lucken, K.; Dammer, H. 2000. "The Value of Religion in Prison." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*. 16:53-74. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://ccj.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/16/1/53>.

Description: Using ethnography and a series of individual and group interviews with inmates incarcerated in prisons in the states of Delaware, Texas, Indiana, Missouri and Mississippi, the authors assess the effectiveness of religious programming from the perspective of inmates.

Clear, T.; Sumter, M. 2002. "Prisoners, Prison, and Religion: Religion and Adjustment to Prison." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*. 35(3-4):127-59.

Description: Explores the relationship between inmate religiousness and adjustment to prison and the number of disciplinary confinements they receive. Findings indicate that a significant relationship exists between inmate religiousness and multiple measures of inmate adjustment to the prison environment.

Evans, T.; Cullen, F.; Dunaway, R.; Burton, V. 1995. "Religion and Crime Reexamined: The Impact of Religion, Secular Controls, and Social Ecology on Adult Criminality." *Criminology*. 33(2):195-221.

Description: The authors test the religion-crime relationship in models using a comprehensive crime measure and three separate dimensions of religiosity. Their results show that among their religiosity measures, participation in religious activities is a persistent and non-contingent inhibitor of adult crime.

Hercik, J.; Lewis, R.; Myles, B.; Roman, C.; Zweig, J.; Whitby, A.; Rico, G.; McBride, E. 2004. *Development of a Guide to Resources on Faith-Based Organizations in Criminal Justice*. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.nicic.org/Library/020425>.

Description: Documents criminal justice-related services provided by larger faith-based organizations across the nation and is divided into four sections: (1) literature review to examine the relationship between religion and faith, and delinquency and crime; (2) identification of promising faith-based programs supporting criminal justice initiatives; (3) contextualization of prior research and recommendations for future research; and, (4) key elements of innovative faith-based interventions from four case studies of programs provided by the Aleph Institute, the Amachi Program, the Kairos Horizon Communities in Prison and the Masjid Al-Islam Da'wah Program.

Johnson, B. 2001. "Reviewing and Clarifying the Role of Religion in Reducing Crime and Delinquency." *Federal Probation*. 65(3):49-53. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.uscourts.gov/fedprob/2001decfp.pdf>.

Description: Reviews the research on the influence or impact of religion on an array of social and behavioral outcomes, including delinquency, hypertension, depression, mortality, suicide, promiscuous behaviors and drug and alcohol use. The author concludes that although the literature is positive, it is also limited. Provides suggestions for where more rigorous research is needed.

Johnson, B. 2002. "Assessing the Impact of Religious Programs and Prison Industry on Recidivism: An Exploratory Study." *Texas Journal of Corrections* 28(1):7-11. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.nicic.org/Library/018449>.

Description: Exploratory study that uses a follow-up period of 3 years to compare recidivism rates for a Brazilian faith-based prison (Humaita), and a Brazilian prison based primarily on vocational training and prison industry (Braganca). Results show that the overall recidivism rate for both groups is low. However, former Humaita inmates fare better than former Braganca inmates in a number of areas, including a lower recidivism rate overall and lower rates of arrests and re-incarceration for high and low risk offenders.

Johnson, B. 2004. "Religious Programs and Recidivism among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs: A Long-Term Follow-Up Study." *Justice Quarterly*. 21(2):329-354.

Description: Using data from a previous study by Johnson, Larson and Pitts (1997), the author extends the follow-up period from 1 year to 8 years; incorporates various statistical analyses; includes 2 outcome measures and uses various measures of program participation. Results show no difference

in median time to re-arrest or re-incarceration between inmates who participate in religious programs sponsored by prison fellowship and those who do not. However, inmates who participate in Bible studies are less likely to be rearrested at 2 and 3 years after release. This difference borders on being statistically significant.

Johnson, B.; Larson, D.; Pitts, T. 1997. "Religious Programs, Institutional Adjustment, and Recidivism among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs." *Justice Quarterly*. 14(1):145-166.

Description: Examines the impact of religious programs sponsored by Prison Fellowship on institutional adjustment and recidivism rates between two groups of inmates from four adult male prisons in New York State. One group participated in programs and the other did not. Findings show that the groups are similar on institutional adjustment, as measured by both general and serious prison infractions. They are also similar in recidivism patterns, as measured by arrests during a 1-year follow-up period. However, after controlling for level of involvement in faith-based sponsored programs, inmates who were most active in Bible studies are significantly less likely to be rearrested during the follow-up period.

Johnson, B.; Tompkins, R.; Webb, D. 2002. *Objective Hope: Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations: A Review of the Literature*. Originally published as a CRRUS Report and re-issued as a CRIAD report in 2006. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.nicic.org/Library/O20279>.

Description: A systemic review of 766 studies of organic or intentional religious programming is offered. While some support can be found for faith-based interventions of an organic nature (i.e., hypertension, mortality, depression, suicide, promiscuity, substance abuse, and delinquency), research regarding intentional religion and well-being, meaning in life, self-esteem, and educational attainment is lacking.

Lupu, I.; R. Tuttle. 2006. *The State of the Law 2006: Legal Developments Affecting Government Partnerships with Faith-Based Organizations*. The Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy: Rocketfeller Institute of Government. Albany, New York. Viewed December 18, 2006 at <http://www.religionandsocialpolicy.org/publications/publication.cfm?id=84>

Description: Reviews some of the most significant court cases of 2006 that involved prison programs, government chaplaincies and grants to help faith-based organizations increase their ability to win government grants. The report breaks down the most significant legal developments affecting the federal initiative into five main categories: guidance to faith-based organizations on how to work legally with the government; government grants to increase faith-based organizations capacity; faith-based programs in prisons; government chaplaincies; and the structure of lawsuits based on the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The report also considers court decisions in Florida and Georgia that may influence policy toward faith-based organizations in those states.

McGarrell, E.; Brinker, G.; Etindi, D. 1999. *The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Crime Prevention and Justice*. Occasional Paper Series. Welfare Policy Center: Hudson Institute. Viewed December 15, 2006 at http://www.hudson.org/files/publications/faith_based0499.pdf.

Description: Discusses the literature on religious programming and crime in three areas: individual beliefs and practices, ecological studies and research on the effectiveness of faith-based programs in reducing crime and deviance. Offers suggestions on how to address perceived challenges and policy considerations.

O'Conner, T. Winter 2004-2005. "What Works, Religion as a Correctional Intervention: Part II." *Journal of Community Corrections*. 14(2):4-6, 20-26. Viewed December 15, 2006 at http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/TRANS/docs/pdf/rs_whatworks2.pdf.

Description: Using data on the spiritual history and practices of men and women incarcerated in the Oregon Department of Corrections, the author describes the religious process that offenders go through while they are incarcerated and reviews the empirical research on the effectiveness of religion as a correctional intervention.

Odle, N. 2006. "Privilege through Prayer: Examining Bible-Based Prison Rehabilitation Programs Under the Establishment Clause." *Bepress Legal Repository*. Viewed December 29, 2006 at <http://law.bepress.com/expresso/eps/1894/>.

Description: In-depth review of the Establishment Clause in relation to the June 2006 court decision involving the lawsuit of the Americans United for a Separation of Church and State v. Prison Fellowship Ministries, 432 F.Supp.2d862.

Ohio Correctional Faith-Based Initiatives Task Force. 2006. *Report to the Ohio General Assembly from the Correctional Faith-Based Initiatives Task Force*. Columbus, OH. Viewed December at <http://www.drc.state.oh.us/web/FB.PDF>.

Description: Final report by a 17 member task force detailing the needs of offenders and the types of programs that effectively rehabilitate offenders. The task force identifies programs that currently exist and gaps that exist between the needs and what is currently provided to inmates and adjudicated youth. The report contains summaries of presentations by various practitioners, researchers and legislatures and concludes with their ideas on how the faith-based and community organizations can assist correctional agencies in addressing the perceived gaps.

Shorba, J. 2002. "Instituting a Defensible Faith-Based Program." *Corrections Today*. April 2002, p. 24-26.

Description: After reviewing court cases involving violating the Establishment Clause, the author poses several questions state administrators should address before instituting a faith-based program, including: What is the program goal?, Do the actions of the administrators convey a message that either endorsed or disapproves of religion?, Is program participation voluntary?, Are there incentives used that are not available to the general population?, and How are faith-based programs funded?

Sumter, M. 2000. *Religiousness and Post-Release Community Adjustment*. Graduate Research Fellowship-Executive Summary. Grant 99-IJ-CX-0001; NCJ 184508. Document number: 184509. Viewed December 15, 2006 at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/Abstract.aspx?ID=184508>.

Description: Using 1992 data on 321 prisoners from around the country, the author compares the 6-year arrest rate of prisoners who participated at least weekly in religious activities during their free time 90 days prior to their release, and scored in the top 20 percentile of a self-report religiousness survey to a matched group of non-participants. The author concludes, overall, there was a greater chance for non-religious inmates to be arrested than religious inmates. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

The Best Practices Tool-Kit is published up to six times a year by the Institute for Excellence in Justice, a collaborative partnership between the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's Institute on Correctional Best Practices and the Ohio State University's Criminal Justice Research Center. Please direct all questions to Coretta Pettway at Coretta.Pettway@odrc.state.oh.us