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Spirituality and Rehabilitation

Intimate Views from Insiders

Dierdre Woody

The author became interested in spirituality and rehabilitation during her summer 1999 employment at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institute–Graterford and as a legal intern in the law firm of Woody and Falkenbach, which specializes in criminal defense work, during the summers of 1991 to 1998. The article focuses on the role of spirituality in rehabilitation processes in correctional settings. It pays special attention to the sources of faith and inner strength, the nature of spiritual guidance, the roles of values, beliefs, and moral commitments, and the effects of cultural, social, political, and economic forces.

My study investigated human behavior in its individual and social contexts, with an emphasis on spiritual values in rehabilitation programs to effect positive social reentry. I also examined the motivational role of religious values, beliefs, and obligations for individuals who have committed crimes (“sinned”), been incarcerated (“punished”), are going through some form of rehabilitation (“doing penance and redemption”), and hope to regain their freedom and become an integral part of society (“transformation and liberation”). I concentrated on the normative dimension of personal identity, including the sources of faith and inner strength, the nature of the spiritual guidance that provides meaning and structure to one’s life, the mediating effects of cultural, social, political, and economic forces, and the resources to which inmates turn during their darkest hours.

I also surveyed the interrelationship between personal rehabilitation and transformation and the belief in God or another transcendent force. I explored the hypothesis that there is a correlation between deeply held moral convictions, faith, and hope and the likelihood for recovery, rehabilitation, and release. While it may not be causative, a positive correlation between commitment to spiritual values and practices and positive personal transformation has implications for the presence and the role of faith-based institutions in prevention, recovery, and release. Through in-depth interviews, I explored the degree to which privately held beliefs help a person maintain a moral map or compass that helps one transform oneself into a productive member of society, and the ways in which faith-based initiatives, within and outside prison walls, help to make this transpire.

I inquired into the hypothesis that most rehabilitative programs or processes neglect the realm of human experience as it relates to the role of spiritual or religious beliefs in the transformation of the lives of those in bondage. The traditional emphasis of rehabilitative programs concentrates on the use of psychological tools of behavior modification or remedial education rather than on the underlying problem of spiritual malaise or alienation.

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Thinking about religion outside a place of worship opens an array of questions about the role of religion in helping prisoners reestablish meaning and value in their broken lives. This investigation sought to understand the architecture of conscience and character as designed by each of the individuals I interviewed, even if they had rejected formal religious ties but characterized themselves as believers.

I show how prison management is not inclined to embrace the “sacred” in prison life, but if steps were taken to include spirituality in rehabilitation practices there would be many beneficial results, including a decrease in spending per inmate, a decrease in the recidivism rate, and an increase in the efficiency of rehabilitation methods. I also cover the importance and availability of educational programs and work opportunities to increase self-worth and lighten the load for correctional officers. Even though the incorporation of faith-based initiatives is minimal in the majority of penal institutions, there are successful endeavors, such as the Ten Point Coalition in the Boston area and initiatives at Chester County Prison, Pennsylvania, that either directly approach the healing power that comes from religion or incorporate the idea of a higher power to bring about personal change and rehabilitation.

I also touch on the implications for practice in terms of public policy and show the positive effects of how existing efforts to invest in human capital can be fortified by investing in spiritual capital as well. I point out that education is needed not only for inmates, but for the staff that works with them as well. Finally, I address the beneficial effects to society of the privatization of state-run services and those involved in the treatment.

The personal stories I gathered, taken as a whole, yield certain themes and traits that relate to patterns of meaning and value. Whether they are rooted in religious laws and practices or one’s devotion to a personal code of conduct, I hope to shed light on the way personal theological convictions affect personal recovery, rehabilitation, and release. I supplemented my interviews with information about faith-based initiatives aimed at similar goals in Boston, New York, Graterford, Chester County, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere. The results of this study lead to constructive recommendations for incorporating the faith dimension in this work or increasing initiatives already in place, thus broadening the definition of psychological intervention to address this normative realm.

Life Behind Bars

“In prisons everything is cold, gray, alien, anonymous, brutal and noisy. Life stops: dreams stop.”¹ The walls surrounding the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institute at Graterford (SCI-G) rise an ominous thirty feet into the air and descend thirty feet into the ground. They are reinforced by steel poles built inside the walls. Needless to say, no one can try to dig his way out, and if a prisoner were to drive a tank into the wall, the tank would be ruined. These gloomy walls shield the sun from entering the few small windows that line the corridors and cells.

SCI-G employs approximately 1,000 staff members and houses 3,500 inmates. Of this number, roughly 500 men are there for life, while about 50 are on death row. Graterford Prison is “the largest maximum security facility in Pennsylvania and the sixth-largest in the country.”² Almost all these men have served a significant portion of their lives in jail and are desperately looking for some type of redemption that will ultimately lead to their release, whether it be a literal release from the confining walls or a spiritual release to the healing powers of a higher spiritual being. “Prisons are places permeated with exile and

overwhelmed with frustrations, where everything seems calculated to make inmates lose heart.”³ Here, where all hope seems lost, “faith and spirituality are sources of strength and endurance”⁴ and the chaplain becomes “the number one department that can and does change the inmate’s life.”⁵

In the summer of 1999, I worked at Graterford in the Recidivism Reduction Department of CiviGenics, Inc., a unique management company that deals with the privatization of public enterprise services. It has numerous branches in many areas in twenty-two states that specialize in the custody and rehabilitation of criminal justice populations. At SCI-G, CiviGenics provides inmates with residential treatment in the sixty-bed Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA), with closely case-managed aftercare services and tracking in the community following release. Both components are performed under contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.⁶

The CRA, within the Recidivism Reduction Department, is a comprehensive instructional program that is the criminogenic equivalent of addiction recovery.⁷ I was a counselor’s aide in its Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program, which had sixty inmates, most of a low social status background with an extremely limited educational and economic background. We worked in the cell block where our clients were housed. All clients are parole violators who have a history of substance abuse and addictive behavior. Phase One (of three phases), of the RSAT program takes place during the last six months of each inmate’s prison sentence. On graduation, the clients are released to a halfway house (Phase Two) for six months, which is followed by release into the community where they will participate in further aftercare services (Phase Three).

Influential Voices

Over the summer I conducted interviews with a number of people who can be placed in two groups. My core group consisted of those who were either presently or previously incarcerated. The thirteen participants in that group can be placed in four subgroups, made up as follows: group A — those incarcerated for life sentences (three); B — those currently in the RSAT program (four); C — those who successfully completed the RSAT program and were released but violated their parole and were returned to SCI-G (three); and D — those who had spent time in prison yet were relatively successful in reentering society on release (three). My questions to the core group centered on their sources of faith and inner strength, the nature of the spiritual guidance that provides meaning and structure to one’s life, the mediating effects of cultural, social, and political economic forces, and the resources inmates turn to in their darkest hours.

My second group of interviewees was comprised of chaplains from Graterford Prison, Chester County Prison, and Boston, individuals who work for CiviGenics, Inc., lawyers and a judge from Delaware County, Pennsylvania, the deputy wardens at Chester County Prison, a sergeant from the Massachusetts State Correctional Institute — Walpole, and a correctional officer from SCI-G. My questions to them concerned their interpretation of religious faith and spirituality and the role they play, constructive steps to be taken to incorporate faith-based initiatives in existing practices, and the current models of practice with which they were familiar.

Prison Management

The majority of programs and work opportunities offered in prisons around the country are controlled by and receive funding from the states. More than 1.8 million men and women are incarcerated in the United States, according to the figures calculated by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.⁸ Of the country's 1,178,978 state prisoners, 35,860 men and women are housed in Pennsylvania's state prisons, as of July 31, 1999.^{9,10} Under existing practice, the state is unable to help all who are looking for work or rehabilitation while in prison. Furthermore, many correctional institutions are less concerned with rehabilitating prisoners than they are with punishing criminals. The Reverend Henry G. Covert, chaplain at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institute at Rockview, points out, in *Ministry to the Incarcerated*, "The idea that prisons are for punishment only reflects an ignorant and archaic approach to corrections that returns unchanged people to society."¹¹

I believe that it is possible to improve on the current programs by strengthening and adding to the systems already in place, therefore generating a greater number of beneficial results in the long run. The Reverend Covert believes,

Prisons should try to change lives through techniques that direct inmate energy toward productive ends and improve self-esteem by encouraging offenders to change their attitudes and begin a new life. The objective of prisons should be to prepare residents for productive lives that begin within the institution. Positive results can come through incentives, pertinent programs, and concerned staff.¹²

These positive results will effect a decrease in monetary spending per inmate, a reduction in the recidivism rate, and an overall increased effectiveness rate of rehabilitation programs.

The annual cost per inmate is approximately \$23,776.00 at Pennsylvania's state prisons.¹³ In 1998, the United States sent roughly 672 of every 100,000 persons to jail, a figure higher than that of any country except Russia.¹⁴ Furthermore, national statistics tell us that about three out of every four inmates, once released, return to a life of crime and ultimately to jail.¹⁵ Even though crime rates have been decreasing since 1993, the prison population has continued to rise owing to longer prison sentences, curtailment of parole, and a 39 percent increase in the number of parole violators.¹⁶ Therefore, as the recidivism rate increases, additional money must be spent on inmates to ensure basic safety and physiological needs. These basic biological needs, as stated by Abraham Maslow, include food, shelter, water, comfort, order, security, stability, and safety. A person must fulfill certain needs before one can truly accept oneself and experience inner peace, thereby completing personal transformation successfully.

Above the basic biological needs, a person must also fulfill his or her social needs (closeness, belonging, love) and esteem needs (recognition, respect, rewards) before reaching self-actualization.¹⁷ This type of positive, healing environment can be emphasized within prisons through the support and acceptance of rehabilitative programs that focus on self-esteem measures and therapeutic communities that have a direct involvement with a church. Covert sums it up.

The church has a major role in correctional facilities, and its presence is vital to every inmate. It has a positive impact on these troubled communities, whether it is through the continuous visibility of the chapel or inmates interacting with a chaplain or Christian peers. Regardless of religious beliefs, the majority of felons view the church as a necessary and comforting presence.¹⁸

The Reverend Roland Robinson of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston points out that religious faith and spirituality within the context of prison life, rehabilitation, and social reentry play an important role in three primary forms. Religious faith and spirituality offer a ray of hope, moral guidance and discipline, and a road to reconciliation for those existing and living in difficult circumstances.¹⁹

Rehabilitation Efforts

An array of programs is needed to help build on the character and self-esteem of inmates, address the root of their problems, and encourage productive growth. Some of these include self-help programs designed to modify behavior and understand oneself, address stress and anger management, introduce goals, encourage new growth, and assist in peer encounters, family counseling, and parole preparation. Some of these programs exist in a few institutions in Pennsylvania partly attributable to the capabilities and initiatives of both the inmates and the chaplains.²⁰ However, an increase in programs similar to those in correctional institutions around the country would benefit not only the inmates involved in working toward a life free from addictive and criminal behaviors, but would also be beneficial for the prisons and prison management, the state, and ultimately the public. As more inmates become involved in programs to better themselves, correctional officers would have an easier time protecting the safety of the facility, because inmates would be kept busy and have less idle time to get into trouble. In the long run, the state would eventually spend less money per individual because the recidivism rate would decrease. The public would also be affected because its tax dollars would be spent more usefully while individuals who have genuinely been rehabilitated would be returned to society to become productive members in the community. It is important for the church to play an integral role in these advances because, as Covert tells us, “Christ’s mission is to bring peace, ‘to give light to those who sit in darkness’” (St. Luke 1:79). Peace from the turmoil of sinful living becomes a reality through God’s forgiveness. Peace with God and others brings an inner calm and provides us with the resources to work through our trials.²¹

Inmates’ other needs must be addressed as well. Many inmates consider the single most important factor in rehabilitation is education. Interviewees who participated in CiviGenics’s Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program at SCI-G mentioned that “education is the key,” which will ultimately be extremely beneficial in the long run. One inmate pointed out that people who are not educated just sit around and lift weights, becoming stronger, but as they increase their physical strength, their mind becomes more feeble, and they eventually fall back into old criminal behaviors. It was further noted that education has to go beyond classroom fundamentals to the basic religious principles common to all religions.²² Stephen L. Carter, in *Integrity*, supports this theory when he says, “Even if the knowledge of good and evil is innate, perhaps God-given — the ability to discover that inner knowledge is developed only through education.”²³ He continues to elaborate on the positive impacts of the education of basic religious principles when he argues, “Some very basic values — the Golden Rule, for example, and an ethic of loving one’s neighbor — are common to every major American religious group. If we cannot agree on such basic truths as these, we will in years to come be unable to resolve the moral crisis threatening our nation.”²⁴

To begin the education process, teachers must meet the students at their own level. In prison settings, unfortunately, a large majority of the population has never completed

secondary schooling. In these cases, we must first address the lack of such fundamental skills as illiteracy. The most common education courses help many inmates receive a general equivalency diploma. At the Bucks County Correctional Facility, Pennsylvania, the goal of the adult education programs is to "bolster inmates' self-esteem and prepare them for productive lives after prison."²⁵

After inmates have mastered basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, they are most in need of some type of further education or marketable skill that will help them after release. Until 1996, Pennsylvania inmates were eligible to receive Pell Grants, or student loans, from local colleges and universities. This enabled them to go to school while in jail and receive a degree from such local universities as Villanova or Pennsylvania State. Unfortunately, these grants were eliminated when funds were cut. Inmates can still take college-level courses while in jail, but they must pay for them. Needless to say, there has been a significant decrease in the number of participants in this program since the Pell Grants disappeared.²⁶

SCI-Graterford inmates are responsible for maintenance (including painting), kitchen duty, the barber shop, the wood shop, tailoring traditional Department of Correction clothing, gardening, and office work. From 1929 until the beginning of summer 1999, inmates were able to work the 1,714 acres of farmland that surround the prison; early in June, however, all the cattle and dairy cows were auctioned off. The state plans to lease the farmland reservation in the spring of 2000. The state also closed two other agricultural operations, at Huntington Prison and Rockview Prison, with expectations of saving approximately \$2 million a year.²⁷ While many of the skills that inmates are being taught through their jobs will be useful when they are released, there are not enough classes and jobs available to make a significant impact on the entire population. Furthermore, many of the jobs discriminate against lifers, whose participation is restricted to a minimal amount of responsibility — the wood shop, the kitchen, and maintenance — no matter what their security level.²⁸ Covert points out that "lifers also need programs that confront idleness, improve self-worth, and contribute to development"; unfortunately, "they are not priority candidates for academic and job skills training."²⁹

One promising avenue that prisons may turn toward in the future, to provide more jobs for inmates and benefit corporate America simultaneously, is being explored by Federal Prison Industries (FPI), a self-supporting branch of the Justice Department. FPI's goal is to employ at least 20 percent of the eligible federal inmates by bringing private industries into prisons. Although there is strong controversy, FPI continues to "establish prison factories to produce goods for the federal government" in both Texas and Florida. Rather than taking jobs from the public sector, FPI focuses on industries that traditionally use labor from other countries or on industries whose labor is often done by machines. Some jobs being performed by prisoners include data-entry operations for used-vehicle sales, coupon sorting, packaging, sanding and planing for a furniture factory, repairing mail satchels, and producing items such as clothing, mattresses, bricks, brooms, thermoplastics, and printed circuits.³⁰

While a primary focus of prisons is understandably to maintain the safety and security of all inside, adding more educational programs and work opportunities would only help decrease the idle time of the prisoners, resulting in fewer opportunities for them to get into trouble while increasing self-worth. Another challenge that our prisons face is staff employment. Many may think it impossible to employ a staff that can successfully operate a vast amount of programs. However, there are numerous options for prison management to explore. The most obvious option would be to turn to populations that already

have some of these programs in place: the chaplains and the inmates. Prison chaplains, who can act as intermediaries between the prison and the community, are the best spokesmen to set up lasting relationships and promote involvement.³¹ Many small community churches are increasingly becoming involved in prison activities, because they recognize that "in extreme places . . . we can find astonishing resources of strength."³²

Another avenue would be to address the inmates themselves. Many prisoners run programs for their peers, because they understand the importance of education and rehabilitation.³³ Not only does this involvement help strengthen therapeutic atmospheres, it promotes trust between inmates, gives them other resources to turn to during difficult times, and most important, provides inmates with opportunities to participate in charitable activities. Dan Armstrong, president of the Delaware County Association for Criminal Defense Lawyers, pointed out that when inmates take leadership or counseling roles within the institution, it allows them to have a positive influence on younger, more vulnerable inmates.³⁴ For many, charity is a form of purifying the heart, another opportunity for them to show their obedience to their higher power.³⁵ Additionally, inmates best understand their strengths and weaknesses, and know best what their peers need to be successfully released into and become productive members of society. Covert stresses the need for and positive impact of these activities when he says, "Education and training improves the quality of life for prisoners. Inmates who engage in self-improvement activities not only help themselves but also are more likely to assist their peers."³⁶

This leads to the conclusion that as rehabilitation programs become more defined and instrumental in aiding inmates, and as the opportunity to participate in these types of educational and personal transformation programs increases, the overall positive effect will lead to a decrease in the recidivism rate and, therefore, less money will be spent per individual in the long run. The heightened control in our institutions will also be affected, because a greater number of inmates will participate in self-help, educational, and work programs and will therefore have less idle time to get themselves into trouble. Finally, and most important, therapeutic environments that concentrate on the power of a higher being than oneself will help inmates fulfill their social and esteem needs, lead to effective rehabilitation methods, and encourage them to become beneficial members in the community upon release.

Voices from the Front

My core group played a pivotal role in this study. They introduced me to the pains of prison life, the often dreary background that led them there, their expectations for the future, and what is being done to help and rehabilitate them. From their answers, I formulated my questions for the secondary group. Without their help, my effort would have been fruitless, so I thank them all wholeheartedly.

There were three primary areas of focus for my questions: the spiritual source of their faith, in terms of inner strength, morals, and values; a personal assessment of their journey to recovery, including, particularly, observations about their past and childhood, and their current and future goals and hopes, including internal conflict and struggle, as well as personal growth; and constructive thoughts on future growth, in terms of community development, personal goals and hurdles, and advice to policymakers and other inmates.

The four subgroups of the core group consisted of three men who are serving life sentences (Group A); four clients of RSAT (Group B); three past RSAT clients who were returned to SCI-G for parole violations (Group C); and three men who had spent time in

prison earlier in their lives, but are living and doing well in the community (Group D). All the interviews were conducted during July 1999, at either the State Correctional Institute–Graterford or at a designated location in Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

These interviews were extremely important and powerful. Many of the men had never been confronted with questions of this type, so they were forced to take a deeper look into their personal convictions, leading to a stronger understanding of themselves. It also gave others a chance to express beliefs they had formed over the course of their lives and time spent in jail. Many thought they had valuable opinions and insights to share, but no one had ever thought it was useful to take the time to explore their views.

Personal Theologies

When asked how they would like to be remembered when they die, respondent C-1 summed up the majority of the inmates' answers when he said he would like to be remembered as a person who "suffered from emotional, financial, and domestic strife because of poor decision making, but continued to strive toward . . . betterment for myself, loved ones, and communities at large."³⁷ Another inmate, who was sentenced to life at age sixteen and has since been blessed as an Imam, a spiritual or divinely appointed leader of the Sunni Islamic faith,³⁸ made the persuasive point that "it is what you do that counts; how you are remembered isn't important."³⁹

Members of the core group expressed a variety of religious beliefs. Two of the lifers, all those in Group C, and one man in the RSAT program followed the Sunni Islamic faith. Three interviewees characterized themselves as Christians. I also interviewed one Baptist, one Catholic — both in Group D, and one Jewish man from the RSAT program. Finally, one person in the RSAT program characterized his source of faith and spiritual guidance as coming from a "belief in a higher power," without specifically referencing a faith tradition.⁴⁰

The solidarity of their faith ranged from "as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar"⁴¹ and "as solid as the natural elements here on earth"⁴² to the continuous practice for the sake of his children,⁴³ and not something that helped him get through the difficult times, even though he wished he could say it did.⁴⁴ All the Moslem men were very precise about how they replenished their faith: the ritual prayer (five times a day), daily study and reading from the Holy Qur'an, fasting, charity, kindness, and helping others. The non-Moslems said that they replenish their faith primarily through prayer and reading from the Holy Book. During difficult times they turn toward religion as well as their family and friends. One man, respondent D-2, turned solely to his lawyer, Dennis Woody, during difficult times.⁴⁵ Steve Schucraft and Dennis Woody, criminal defense attorneys, both consider that their role goes beyond representation to being a friend and confidant, because in many cases offenders have been abandoned by their family and friends. They believe that it is part of their role to steer offenders in the right direction whether toward entering rehabilitation programs or working toward setting goals.⁴⁶

Causes of Crime

A number of different factors played a part in leading these men toward criminal activities. The primary reason given was that the environment in which they grew up was infiltrated by high crime, drugs, and prostitution, a place where gangs were the dominant force on the street. The Imam tried to relay the fear that went hand in hand with living in

this type of area. He said that he was “scared to death of those individuals who were gangsters and into drugs,” that this type of fear is indescribable and can motivate people to respond in different ways. Other contributing factors cited by inmates include abusive households, gambling, drug abuse, the absence of community-based opportunities to participate in constructive activities, faulty personal decision-making skills, the need for acceptance, and the constant exposure to violence on television.

Change Agents

To bring about personal change, six of the ten in groups A, B, and C — five of whom are Moslem — all mentioned that their belief in a higher power and getting in touch with their inner self were major contributors. Others in these groups noted that the process of growing up and becoming more mature, addressing the areas of concern in their lives, and learning skills that helped them improve their sense of self-worth and value all played a part in their personal growth. All the men in Group D believed that the support from and the time spent away from their families and children were major factors in helping them to grow.

When asked if society could have done something to intervene and provide guidance when they were younger, half of the respondents stressed the need for more community involvement with youth. They pointed to the importance of organizing activities in order to keep kids from getting themselves into trouble and the terrible danger posed by lack of knowledge and resources available. A few others remarked that society was not at fault, that society “did all they could do, it was all me.”⁴⁷ Some said that they had made up their minds not to listen to anyone else, thereby setting themselves up for failure rather than success. Two individuals believed that they were missing the spirituality component in their lives and said that this should be stressed more in trying to intervene with young people.⁴⁸

Future Hopes

When peering into their future, all were generally optimistic and most respondents thought that it looked bright as long as they stayed focused on their goals and surrounded themselves with positive people who strive for positive change. Two of the most devout Moslems, the Imam and respondent B-2, said, “No one knows what the future will bring” and “I live as if there won’t be a tomorrow, because I don’t know what the future holds.”⁴⁹ This absence of temporality is a core belief that is taught in the Islamic religion. The Catholic man, who has done life on the “installment plan” for twenty-three of his fifty-two years, told me that he does not plan for his future, because if he did and things did not go as planned, his self-esteem would plummet. He said he is most concerned with building his life day by day, and “if I do this, then I’ll have a future.”

Each man expressed different fears and obstacles that he must overcome to reach his goal. Generally, fears were minimal and in some cases viewed in a beneficial light. The lifers were afraid of never being granted clemency and not being able “to experience life”⁵⁰ or to satisfy “those who can influence the situation.”⁵¹ The men in the RSAT program feared falling back into old drug and alcohol habits, public ridicule, and “putting other things in front of my recovery and messing up again.”⁵² The Group C men also feared slipping into drug and alcohol habits again, and respondent C-2 fears the unknown

— going back into society and holding down a job, a task in which he had never succeeded — but at the same time he looks forward to it. The fears of the Group D men are minimal — taxes, finances, and holding down a stable job. They have come to understand that as long as they take things day by day and stay focused and on track everything will fall into place for them.

Advice about Life Inside to the World Outside

In giving advice to policymakers, peers, children, and society in general, all the lifers pleaded for those in positions of power to be open-minded and to deal with the incarcerated on a case-by-case basis. They said that if each person's characteristics are not looked at, they will continuously be victimized by the system. Roughly three-quarters of all thirteen interviewed indicated that their primary advice centered around advocating for providing information about and incorporating the principles of religion into all areas of one's life. The Islamic Imam would tell his peers that there are three things one can do while in jail: get better, remain the same, and get worse. He and others affirmed their belief that one must take the initiative to help oneself and not fall victim to the destructive environment of prison life.

My last question concerned what inmates would recommend to strengthen the morals, purpose, and dignity of other inmates. All believed that any and all types of self-help programs are beneficial. These programs must concentrate on educating the inmates on issues, like jobs and goal setting, they will face once they are released, and how to overcome their addictions, whether they be drugs and alcohol or simply criminal behavior. The major problem of current programs is that they are not sufficiently accessible. The limited number of programs makes it impossible to cover all the essential components of which inmates have to be aware to accomplish rehabilitation.

The other major factor respondents said would help increase inmates' self-worth is the opportunity to hold a job while in prison. The major stumbling blocks here include, again, few employment outlets, but more important, inmates cannot earn more than 42 cents an hour. Such "slave wages," say the inmates, tear away at one's self-worth. Furthermore, those who are able to work inside the prison in kitchen duty, maintenance, tailoring, clerical duties, or the wood shop cannot participate in any self-help program because all of them are offered during the day when the men must be at work.

Respondent B-4 told a story he referred to as "The Bull in the China Shop" to express his thoughts for helping inmates. A bull walked into a beautiful store filled with rare china and beautiful glass. Unfortunately, the bull was unable to appreciate what was around him, because he did not know any better. He therefore went around the store breaking everything in his path, because he did not understand the effects of his actions. The inmate compared men in prison to the bull, and the beautiful china shop to the world around us — outside the prison walls. He said that like the bull, many inmates do not understand the repercussions of their destructive behavior because they have not been educated about the unlimited opportunities available to them when they attained the desire and ambition to reach their goals. Therefore, unless they are educated, many men continue their destructive behavior simply because they are unaware of their surroundings and feel trapped. However, if they were educated, they would be liberated and in a better position to take a step back and look at the effects of their actions and learn to appreciate their surroundings.

Spirituality: The Root Source of Change

As previously noted, faith-based institutions play an integral role in prison life, rehabilitation, and social reentry. The Reverend Alex Hurt, a board member of the Ten Point Coalition and the founder of Breaking the Chains, a prison release program, considers the role of religious faith and spirituality absolutely essential as the single most important variable in reducing the recidivism rate, for religion gives inmates a higher sense of meaning about life and work.⁵³ Barbara Walrath, mid-Atlantic regional director, CiviGenics, Inc., and former deputy warden of Delaware County Prison, Pennsylvania, believes that many acquire clarity during incarceration, which enables them to grasp new ideas and helps bring about personal change.⁵⁴

Unfortunately, at SCI-G and many other correctional facilities, the institution thinks not in terms of spirituality but of "intervention, security, and disciplinary action."⁵⁵ More often than not, chaplains are called in as a last resort. For example, an SCI-G inmate refused dialysis treatment for religious reasons. In accordance with a new policy, the man and his case were reviewed by the medical staff and by a number of psychologists. Sadly, none of them could convince him to continue the dialysis treatment, even though he would certainly die without it. Even more distressing is that, in accordance with a new policy for cases like these, chaplains are to be included only when a man dies. Finally, in desperation, a nurse decided to call on the chaplain for help. Within five minutes of talking with the inmate, the chaplain understood where the man was coming from: he had decided that because he had made his peace with God, he no longer needed dialysis. After his talk with the chaplain, the inmate decided to continue the dialysis treatment.⁵⁶

Mary Dougherty-Hunt, director of Juvenile Day Reporting Services, CiviGenics, and John Kenny, RSAT counselor, CiviGenics, both agree that the major problem with incorporating religion and spirituality into many of the existing rehabilitative programs is that many counselors do not want to press their own ideas of religion on others or do not feel comfortable with their own spirituality.⁵⁷ Moreover, Mary Rose Worthington, director of Juvenile Justice Services at CiviGenics, former director of RSAT at SCI-G, and former executive director of Sleighton School, Pennsylvania, a residential school for delinquent and dependent teenagers, noted that because it receives funding from the state, CiviGenics is able to provide only the opportunity for people to express their faith since its personnel are not spiritual therapists. It was further noted that the American Civil Liberties Union has done a tremendous amount in the recent years to demand the opportunity for inmates to express and practice their faith, regardless of their preferred religion.⁵⁸ John Kenny and Amy Pouchet, also a CiviGenics RSAT counselor, do not believe that they could further integrate spirituality into their program for the simple reasons that many inmates want nothing to do with religion; were the counselors to introduce additional spirituality, they would risk being charged with forcing their religious views on others.⁵⁹

This is not to say that spirituality plays no part. The idea that one should be guided by one's higher power is reinforced in the philosophy of the Correctional Recovery Academy, which emphasizes constructive ways to bring about personal change, and by the counselors. The latter may also refer inmates to the chaplain and excuse them from group meetings to attend weekly services.⁶⁰ Representatives of both Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous, whose cornerstone is spirituality, come weekly to speak with the men about practicing the twelve steps of AA in all aspects of their lives. "AA, through [its] twelve-step program, promotes a personal spirituality which fills the void that so

many alcoholics and caregivers talk about.”⁶¹ AA has an outstanding record, both qualitatively and quantitatively, partially attributable to a recognition that alcoholism is a spiritual disease. Jim Kyle, an alcohol and clinical manager for the Addictions Recovery program at Friends Hospital, says, “Spirituality connects you with the rest of humanity . . . I just don’t have a connection between myself and the rest of the world. Spirituality, in my estimation, makes that connection.”⁶²

Many correctional personnel have found that religion can play a purely therapeutic role rather than solely a transcendent philosophy. Covert explains why prisoners have a strong tendency to relate to Jesus Christ:

They follow the events that occurred after our Lord’s arrest and, although his imprisonment was brief, they see that Christ is like them. Prisoners are drawn to a God who can truly identify with their plight. They can relate to a savior who understands their feelings of isolation and abandonment. Inmates gravitate toward Jesus because he knows the pain of being misunderstood, rejected by humanity, and seemingly forgotten by God.⁶³

Numerous inmates said they found increased fulfillment in life and an easier road to rehabilitation and personal change once they understood and accepted their religion. An inmate who had successfully completed the RSAT program but who had been returned to SCI-G for a parole violation, told me that the greatest source in helping him to overcome his fears is his religion, Islam.⁶⁴ Another man, who has done life on the “installment plan” but rejoined and has been living successfully in the community for the past five years, said that as he becomes closer to God, the quality of his life increases. He also feels withdrawn when he doesn’t experience this closeness to God: “When I screw up, especially with drug and alcohol use, I don’t feel connected like I normally do.”⁶⁵ The Imam with whom I spoke said that during his most difficult times he turns to supplication, praying to the Creator for assistance, understanding that what can be changed will be changed. He believes that Allah will not place on any individual a burden the person will not have the strength to endure; he therefore accepts the fate that he may remain at Graterford for the rest of his life.⁶⁶

Thomas Rapone, chief operating officer of CiviGenics, believes that religion plays as large a role in rehabilitation as treatment, training, programming, and psychological intervention and must be part of a total plan integrated across the board to reduce criminal recidivism. He emphasized that religion “absolutely needs to play a more advanced role,” including intervention measures taken prior to arrest, during incarceration, and in after-care services. Rapone, who has been involved in all facets of the before, during, and after of criminal justice work, pointed out that religious involvement was “absolutely missing in the seventies, eighties, and nineties” and is only now gaining more acceptance. Numerous successful endeavors in each area, which are a tremendous help to those involved, are not widespread enough to help the entire criminal population. He believes that there has to be a way to measure the involvement of faith-based institutions. If there were a way to qualify and quantify the results and track these records, more people would pay attention to such initiatives. “People want to and need to see results.”⁶⁷

Models of Practice

The Ten Point Coalition

In considering the effectiveness of faith-based coalitions designed to intervene and target at-risk individuals prior to arrest, Rapone, who was secretary of public safety for the

commonwealth of Massachusetts, noted that the Ten Point Coalition in Boston is “probably one of, if not the most, successful religious coalitions involved in this whole area of rehabilitation . . . and is responsible for a large reduction of juvenile crime in Boston.”⁶⁸ Its mission statement describes it as “an ecumenical group of Christian clergy and lay leaders working to mobilize the Christian community around issues affecting black youth — especially those at risk for violence, drug abuse, and other destructive behaviors.”⁶⁹ This coalition among Boston’s churches, police department, communities, and businesses describes the goal as “[mobilizing] churches to begin a comprehensive approach to addressing the spiritual, economic, and cultural needs of the broader community.”⁷⁰ The focus of its involvement and programs is directed to ten specific areas:

1. Gang intervention programs;
2. Court advocacy programs;
3. Urban missionary programs;
4. School partnership programs;
5. Downtown and suburban church linkages to inner-city ministries;
6. Initiation of and support for neighborhood crime watches;
7. Community health center partnerships;
8. Establishment of Christian brotherhoods;
9. Counseling and other services to address domestic abuse;
10. Development of church-based black and Latino history curricula.⁷¹

The Ten Point Coalition is determined to have a positive effect on inner-city youth by providing morals and guidance through religious convictions. When asked what society could have done to intervene and provide guidance when they were younger, a number of the core group of current and former inmates referred to greater community and church involvement as helping them gain opportunities that would not otherwise have been available. Respondent D-3, who has spent over half of his life in jail but is doing well, mentioned that when he was a kid, the church was very important. A child’s early years are most important in defining character and conscience, and the stronger the church presence, the less likely it will be for him or her to have problems later. “I really think that spirituality and guidance is the answer.”⁷²

Others cited a major absence of community involvement where they grew up. The Imam described his situation as coming from a broken home in the ghetto. He was never approached or had the opportunity to be part of the Boy Scouts or participate in activities like swimming or fishing. Such activities were not part of his environment, where gangs were very influential and no one in his schools paid attention; no attempt was made to provide guidance in values and morals.⁷³

There is an obvious need to strengthen our nation’s morals and values, so evident in the blatant and random acts of violence occurring in our schools and communities. Probably the most extreme case, with the most media coverage, was the April 20, 1999, incident at Columbine High School in Colorado, where two students killed thirteen and injured twenty-three others before killing themselves. Yet countless people may think that this type of mayhem will never happen in their town. However, Robert Vernon, retired assistant chief of police, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), and head of the Pointman Leadership Institute, pointed out, in his *L.A. Justice: Lessons from the*

Firestorm, that incidents like these and others “may seem bizarre, outside the norm, and in a sense they are. But we learn by examining the most blatant cases.”⁷⁴ He goes on to say

Establishing a moral consensus will, of necessity, involve the recognition of a higher power. That in turn leads to accountability, and accountability ultimately demands the acceptance of the concepts of right and wrong . . . Building a moral consensus would help us find our lost conscience.⁷⁵ Pennsylvania criminal defense attorney Timothy Gorbey pointed out that unless it is a crime of passion, the majority of people in jail are usually there because they did not have a proper value system.⁷⁶

There is a positive alternative. Through the endeavors of groups similar to the Ten Point Coalition, drawing upon Christian, Moslem, Jewish, and other faiths’ traditions, our youth would be exposed to a safer environment in which to grow up; they would have the opportunity to be taught positive values and morals; they would have access to crisis centers and counselors who would be effective in steering at-risk youth away from crime and drugs; the young would know that there are people, to whom they could turn during desperate situations, who would love and care for them and work continually for their physical and emotional safety and well-being. The Reverend Jack Crans, chaplain, Chester County Prison, believes that “the greatest prison ministry in the world is the effective work of a Bible-believing church in a high crime neighborhood.”⁷⁷ A statement by the Ten Point Coalition and citywide Clergy against Violence concerning recent events in Boston, puts it plainly:

For us, as religious leaders, the root cause of violence is the spiritual crisis characterized by “a lack of moral vision, a dullness of spirit which the scriptures call ‘hardness of heart.’” This crisis — most apparent among our youth — is manifest in the culture of violence that surrounds us, the availability and use of handguns and other firearms, the sale and abuse of drugs and alcohol, the structural economic injustice that feeds and tolerates unemployment, the economic underdevelopment of communities, the lack of positive activities for our youth, the persistence of racism and ethnic discrimination, the erosion of moral values, and the breakdown of family and community ties.⁷⁸

The Reverend Jeffrey L. Brown, minister of the Cambridge First Union Baptist Church, a founder and member of the coordinating committee of the Ten Point Coalition, and founder of Positive Edge, a Cambridge after-school project, is convinced that “if all of us can come together we can indeed usher in a brighter tomorrow for ourselves and for the generation following.”⁷⁹

Abraham House

In addition to the role faith-based initiatives can play prior to arrest, it is equally important for them to play a role in aftercare services. The Reverend Jeffrey Brown understands that most inmates who are being released want to improve in their lives, for they do not want to be lured back into old habits. He believes faith-based initiatives can play a crucial role in helping to reorient inmates into their communities, helping them to get a job, become associated with a different circle of friends, and see that there are other avenues for them to turn to.⁸⁰

For example, Abraham House, begun in 1993 through the efforts of chaplains and correctional officers at Rikers Island, New York., opened in Mott Haven, New York, “the poorest congressional district in the United States.”⁸¹ The goal of Abraham House is “to minister to the spiritual, mental and physical needs of offenders to insure a different kind

of reentry experience on their return to life outside. We wanted to set up a 'house of prayer' for prisoners, their children, their families and for those visibly or invisibly present."⁸²

Abraham House can be described as a halfway house for men who have recently been released from prison and their families. There are, however, defining characteristics that distinguish it from typical halfway houses. It is centered around family involvement and community support. The men's families live there with them, and counseling programs incorporate all aspects of family life. Within its residential program, Abraham House changes the lives of men through group and individual counseling. The residents "learn to accept responsibility and acquire the social skills needed to return successfully to society. Their activities and progress are monitored, they learn job disciplines and are challenged to believe more deeply in God and in themselves. They need to achieve wholeness to build their new lives."⁸³

Abraham House also provides nonresident services to prisoners who have been placed in its custody but are allowed to continue living with their families and to those who have been specially selected as needing additional counseling and have been sentenced to community service by the courts. The facility also provides services such as the Good News Family Center, which assists the families of those in prison through private counseling in a wide number of areas and provides for the opportunity to take classes in English and computers; a Food Pantry program, which serves about fifty Mott Haven families and an additional thirty-five families of prisoners; and the Good News Youth Center, an alternative to the streets, which "provides a safe, secure and welcoming place where the young can come to socialize, relax or receive social services such as after-school tutoring and individual counseling."⁸⁴ Its focus is "to enable young people to see their value as individuals and encourage them to be active participants in their neighborhood."⁸⁵ Through this program, a local gym is available; group meetings are held there on topics such as parenting, pregnancy, nonviolence, conflict resolution, and social skills training. These intervention endeavors include at-risk youth who have been assigned to Abraham House by the courts.

The primary difference between Abraham House and other halfway houses is not the multitude of aftercare and preventive services it provides but the "belief that Jesus Christ is the head of the house and that the way to the Gospel is the underlying foundation of our existence."⁸⁶ The Reverend Pierre Raphael, one of the founders of Abraham House and author of *God Behind Bars: A Prison Chaplain Reflects on the Lord's Prayer*, explains:

We already saw that Abraham House draws its name and inspiration from this forefather of all Christians, Jews and Moslems. This makes Abraham House a nonsectarian program of the Catholic Archdiocese of New York. Whatever their faith, men and women who are in our program are called upon to believe, as Abraham did, more deeply in God and in themselves.⁸⁷

The people of Abraham House understand the importance of helping even one person only, and they are determined to provide a place of hope, security, and direction for those who have been living in isolation and fear. John Cardinal O'Connor, archbishop of New York, commented on one of his visits to Abraham House, "This is one of the most impressive activities I have seen in New York, one of the most impressive in which the church is involved. Lives are simply not rehabilitated, but saved here. Families are being restored. Consider the productive work that will be done by those who have gone through Abraham House, and the savings to society."⁸⁸

Essential Education

To effect public policy, we must first start with education. To bring about change, we need to begin educating those who have the most direct contact with prisoners: the staff of correctional officers. They are taught the primary duties of care, custody, and control. They must ensure that inmates do not escape, engage in violent activities, and receive the medical assistance they require.⁸⁹ Sergeant Sue Hughes, who has worked at the Massachusetts State Correctional Institute at Walpole since 1980, believes that all staff should be educated on the diversity of religious views. They have no educational training in this area, participating only in a forty-hour security training program each year. She believes that she is unaware of other religious traditions and says that the majority of her staff is unfamiliar with them as well. She said that many of her staff do not practice any religion and therefore do not understand the importance of religion for inmates. She believes that if religious education was incorporated, the beneficial effect would be twofold, because the correctional officers are around the inmates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.⁹⁰

Mary Dougherty-Hunt believes that all who have direct contact with offenders should be required to go through a training program which includes the following:

1. An understanding of their own religious faith;
2. Education of cultural diversity in order to appreciate different faiths;
3. How to counsel offenders in a nonjudgmental and nonleading manner, so they can come to an acceptance of a higher power in their own way; and
4. Providing for community programs to help offenders incorporate this aspect of spirituality into their lives.

Valerie Mitchel, project coordinator, CiviGenics, Inc., also feels that the most important thing we can do to bring about beneficial changes in the correctional system is to incorporate religious training for those who are directly involved with offenders because they are the ones who spend the most time with them; we “need to get down to a line staff level; if not we will never be able to make changes.”⁹¹

County Corrections Gospel Mission

The Reverend Jack Crans, of Chester County Prison, Pennsylvania, believes that it makes sense to introduce correctional personnel — the police and criminal justice workers — as the “visible front line of communicating the Word of God,” because they have the most contact with inmates and individuals who are at risk. Crans understands that one cannot change a system without changing the leadership involved. Therefore, he believes that we must “raise the bar” on what constitutes a leader, which he and others are doing through the County Corrections Gospel Mission (CCGM), which draws heavily on an evangelical Christian tradition. The CCGM rests on the motto “Godly leadership makes the difference” and cites Proverbs 29:2, “When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”⁹²

CCGM is an incorporated Mission Agency headquartered in Coatsville, Pennsylvania, established to address and serve the nation’s spiritual crises now partially reflected in Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Systems. A commitment to and burden for the development of a local, national and international strategy which Biblically focuses

on the people groups most impacted by family breakdown, poverty and crime is the aim of its ministry heart.⁹³

Directed by the Reverend Crans, CCGM was officially established in 1985 with Chester County Prison and the city of Coatsville as the “center of our work and the ‘school masters’ of our continued burdens and ministries”; however, there has been a strong and definitive pattern of ministry in the surrounding area since 1969. Through the endeavors of CCGM, an array of programs has been established for at-risk youth, mothers, the incarcerated and their families, men who have recently been released from prison, and for the education of criminal justice officials.⁹⁴

Two of CCGM’s most successful endeavors include City Gate, whose involvement is focused on providing aid to men recently released from Chester County Prison, and the Camp at Old Mill, which reaches out to at-risk children. City Gate shelter, founded by Crans and currently directed by Jim Davis, was opened on August 4, 1980. Its mission is to provide “an alternative to the streets, and for sinners in the Coatsville area to have a tangible daily evidence of God’s love.”⁹⁵ The shelter provides a set of services for residents, including a three-phase counseling program, help in job training resources, housing referrals, medical care, nightly dinners and ministry, which are open to anyone, prison and children’s ministry, outreach to Pocopson Nursing Home residents, and street evangelism.⁹⁶

The Camp at Old Mill reaches out to inner-city and at-risk youth and seeks to change the lives of those involved “through the teaching of God’s Word, the Bible.” The camp is also home to a variety of year-round programs, including youth Bible clubs, church and youth group retreats, pastor and missionary retreats, and revival services for those who want to worship God in a beautiful camp setting.⁹⁷

The Pointman Leadership Institute

The Pointman Leadership Institute, headed by Robert L. Vernon, another faith-based initiative aimed at rehabilitation and transformation, is designed to educate those involved with the correctional system in terms of ethics and integrity in leadership, which brings peace to those involved. Its mission is “to support and encourage those in authority with excellent professional training, education, and consulting services . . . to help create a group of men and women who exemplify positive moral character.”⁹⁸ Its target population is the top command of the prison systems. It has conducted seminars throughout the world, including Russia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Albania, Mongolia, England, Germany, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, and the People’s Republic of China. The institute was scheduled to visit Romania and Bolivia in the fall of 1999. Within the United States, the Pointman Institute has served the Illinois and Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police, the Cincinnati and Kettering, Ohio, police departments, the Southeastern Illinois Law Enforcement Commission, and the Command Officers Seminars in Idaho, Missouri, and Tennessee, plus the Pennsylvania State Police Management Seminar. The seminars focus on the importance of ethics and moral principles to “help leaders develop policies, strategies, and tactics for more dynamic leadership and a smoothly run organization.”⁹⁹

Seminar participants are asked, among other things, to define the meaning of the following words: *leadership, integrity, courage, diligence, discipline, humility, loyalty, optimism, and conviction*. Following each seminar, participants are told that they are free to leave. Those who prefer to remain have the opportunity to address a final component: the spiritual element. In almost every case, three-quarters of the group stay to learn the beneficial results of incorporating spiritual values in their leadership positions. According to

the Reverend Crans, more than half say, "I want to know more [about spirituality], because I need it."¹⁰⁰

Through the efforts of the institute, many individuals at the top of prison command are being educated to the fact that a loving, trustworthy person of strong character can make the difference in a time of crisis.

Further Public Policy Implications

Initiatives being explored by individuals and groups around the country have aroused enough interest and support to affect public policy beneficially. Four specific implications include a greater focus on rehabilitation and reentry programs, an increased interest in the needs of juveniles designed to keep them out of jail and promote community involvement, a larger role for faith-based institutions, and continued support for private service providers that successfully do jobs otherwise performed by the state. It is hoped that these initiatives will pave the way and serve as a starting point for continued public policy implications.

Attorney General Janet Reno, recognizing the existing problems in our criminal justice system, proposed one policy solution to the American Bar Association on August 10, 1999, at its annual meeting in Atlanta. Reno promoted the use of "reentry courts" for inmates being released, by "giving defendants treatment and incentives to not repeat their crimes."¹⁰¹ She pointed to the success of drug courts in Miami and other cities, because they give inmates a chance to succeed in reentry to the community. She pleaded, "Let's give our courts, our judges, what it takes to do justice, what it takes to solve the human problems that bring the cases before them."¹⁰²

Along similar lines, Judge William Toal of the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas, Pennsylvania, is concerned that often people appear before him whose reports indicate that they need to have further aftercare services or inpatient treatment similar to drug and alcohol therapy. Unfortunately, more often than not, there is no outlet to which these individuals can be referred because either the costs are too high and there is no one to pay for them, or there are simply no services available.¹⁰³

Other such courts are being implemented in counties surrounding Philadelphia, but they concentrate on juveniles rather than older offenders. These courts, for juveniles who have committed nonviolent crimes, attempt "to prevent youngsters from becoming hardened criminals while keeping such cases out of the already clogged court systems."¹⁰⁴ These courts, in Montgomery, Delaware, and Chester counties, Pennsylvania, are made up of volunteers within the county and are overseen by an employee of the district attorney's office. A local police department would decide whether to send the juvenile to the youth-aid panel or to the court system. The area volunteers would be responsible for determining the appropriate punishment for the juveniles, which would usually involve a community service, rather than their being sent to a detention center.¹⁰⁵

In the first-ever Massachusetts Recovery Fair, held at a Dedham jail in August 1999, the goal was to show inmates that there is a better road map to recovery. As at a job fair, representatives from halfway houses, shelters, and treatment centers were invited to the Recovery Fair to talk with inmates about substance-abuse treatment programs and various options with regard to housing available to them on release. Also as in the job market, competition is tough for inmates who desire to enter and participate in aftercare services. Many programs and shelters have long waiting lists, and some have spots set aside for minority groups, for example, African-Americans, Latinos, and veterans.¹⁰⁶

Strengthening the church connection is another course of action. In July 1999, a conference involving more than one hundred clergy and police chiefs from around the country was held in Washington, D.C., on "the restoration of religious faith in today's youths." Conferees gathered to develop ideas on how to prevent an increase in violence among the nation's youth. The Reverend Jeffrey Brown, who attended the conference, criticized politicians who advocate policies without bothering to understand the people who are affected. Brown commented, "If you want to bring politics into this, then go where your politics lie. Go to the cities."¹⁰⁷

Robert Vernon was struck by the problem of "arrogant elitism"¹⁰⁸ during his years with the LAPD. He and others in his department continually went into the community to start up beneficial programs to reduce crime in the most violent areas of Los Angeles. Unfortunately, even when the empirical results of their initiatives showed a reduction in crime and enjoyed overwhelming support within the communities involved, these people met opposition from many prominent people in the city whose support they desperately needed to continue to receive funding for their programs. One of their critics expressed his displeasure and criticism by saying that the people in the communities where the programs were being run "don't always know what is best for them, and that this group of community and political leaders from South-Central Los Angeles should decide on such programs for the people."¹⁰⁹

Persons who are unfamiliar with the positive effects of the privatization of state-run services tend to criticize these industries' attempts to generate a profit by providing to the public services that traditionally were deemed to be the job of the state. However, "as the number of offenders entering and retained in the criminal justice system continues to grow, the costs of the system have exploded, and are now outstripping the taxpayer's ability and willingness to pay."¹¹⁰ Companies like CiviGenics are turning their efforts to "integrated service solutions to local, state and federal jurisdictions throughout the United States."¹¹¹ In the words of its founders, CiviGenics services are beneficial to society and those involved in treatment because they provide closely managed counseling opportunities, specialized programs, public safety, and are essentially tackling the areas where state services have proved to be ineffective. The efforts, accomplishments, and role of companies such as CiviGenics as a "national correctional service provider" can be an important resource in reducing criminal recidivism.¹¹²

Broader Public Knowledge

It is important to analyze a small sample of the prison population and the efforts surrounding these people to gain greater insight into specific endeavors and initiatives that are effective. By considering individual cases, one is better able to determine the specific needs of prisoners that must be attended to. Furthermore, by centering on specific projects and how they are effectively implemented and maintained, one can gain the knowledge necessary to carry out additional programs, encourage further initiatives around the country, and find support for the continued growth of these endeavors.

Society must recognize that the jail populations include husbands, sisters, kids, and neighbors. As more individuals become involved, stereotypes will fall and perceptions of the narrow-minded will change.¹¹³ For this to happen, each person must be judged according to his or her personal characteristics, not collectively, for people who are judged collectively are continually victimized.¹¹⁴

These problems cannot be ignored or put on the back burner. More often than not,

"the public lends only a distracted ear to anything having to do with prison, even to the people speaking with the best intentions about alternatives to debilitating incarceration."¹¹⁵ Many people think that inmates are either beyond rehabilitation or not important enough to have time and money spent on them. This, however, could not be further from the truth. Appropriately inscribed over the entrance to each New York prison is Dostoyevsky's warning: "A civilization is judged by what it does with its prisons."¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the Reverend Crans advises that "taking the spiritual out of corrections takes the strongest arm out of the government and makes it out of control."¹¹⁷ Will and Ariel Durant pointed out, in *Lessons of History*, "There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion."¹¹⁸ Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini of Milan, Italy, explained, "When I begin my pastoral visitation to the archdiocese, I begin not with a visit to the cathedral, but to the prison. In this way I want to call attention to the importance of this form of ministry."¹¹⁹

The Road Ahead

This study helped me gain a better understanding of criminals' needs to effect successful release into a life free of criminal and addictive drug and alcohol habits. It also shed light on the role of values, beliefs, and moral commitments as individuals attempt to free themselves from addiction and failure.

The role of religion in prison settings is important because it develops a positive support network for the inmates as well as comfort for those who have been stripped of their dignity and self-respect.¹²⁰ On average, a person who enters the correctional system returns seven times.¹²¹ It is apparent, therefore, that we must take constructive action to address and curb the growing incidence of recidivism. The Reverend Crans believes that a chaplain in a prison, with the power to make a difference in the quality of life of those who are incarcerated, to bring religious awareness to the families, and to help restore the life of the community, plays a pivotal role.¹²²

The study helped me better understand what the system is doing to rehabilitate and provide guidance to the incarcerated and to help inmates become desirable members of the community on release. The numerous issues generated by this analysis include the types of programs and projects that work and don't work with respect to preventative criminal measures and rehabilitation methodologies; the extent to which a focus on faith and spirituality is an important part of such efforts; and how small ventures similar to those of CiviGenics, Inc., at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institute—Graterford and elsewhere are valuable to society and those involved in the treatment. From considering the successful interventions at Chester County Prison, the Ten Point Coalition, and by the chaplains and correctional officers of Riker's Island whose efforts produced Abraham House, one gains a greater knowledge of the diverse and productive roles faith-based initiatives can play.

Different as they may be, however, the attention to strengthening and sustaining moral identity, thereby providing a motivational framework that nourishes individual and community well-being rather than damaging it, is central to all of them. I found that the most significant transformation comes about when the spiritual realm is incorporated. I am thankful for and look positively on the fact that many of the questions I raised and tested have been raised elsewhere and continue to be raised by numerous people working within and alongside the corrections field. Only by positively tapping into the determination, the focus, and the power of religion — a tapestry of many colors in our richly pluralist

society — can we hope to bring about constructive change in a field dedicated to helping people do the right thing. ❀

I compiled the major portion of research for this survey at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institute—Graterford and through many interviews with current and former inmates and with personnel in the correctional field. The research was part of the independent study I designed for liberal arts credit at Babson College with my faculty adviser, Marcy Murningham, whom I thank for her valuable guidance and support throughout the investigation.

Notes

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3. Raphael, *God Behind Bars*, 60.
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14. Sniffen, "Inmate Numbers Rise," A5.
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17. Covert, *Ministry to the Incarcerated*, 19.
18. *Ibid.*, 78.
19. Telephone interview with the Reverend Roland Robinson, August 11, 1999.
20. Interviews: with Imam Tahir Aderonmu, chaplain, SCI-G, July 23, 1999; with the Reverend Jack Crans, chaplain, Chester County Prison, Pennsylvania, director, County Corrections Gospel Mission, Pointman Leadership Institute instructor, August 9, 1999; with the Reverend Edward Neiderhiser, chaplain, SCI-G, July 23, 1999; with the Reverend Michael Rzoncn, chaplain, SCI-G, July 23, 1999; with SCI-G inmates, July 1999.
21. Covert, *Ministry to the Incarcerated*, 69.
22. Interviews with Group B, four inmates in the SCI-G RSAT program, July 1999.
23. Stephen L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1996), 65.
24. *Ibid.*, 237–238.
25. Stephanie Doster, "Learning New Skills In Prison," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 12, 1999, B5.
26. Interview with respondent B-1, Jewish client, RSAT, SCI-G, July 1999. He has since been released to a halfway house for six months.

27. Soper, "Graterford Prison Plans to Stop Inmate Farming."
28. Interview with respondent A-3, Imam of the Sunni Islamic faith, a lifer at SCI-G, July 1999. He was tried as an adult and sent to jail for coconspiracy to murder when he was sixteen years old. At the age of forty-two, he had served time in numerous Pennsylvania state prisons.
27. Soper, "Graterford Prison Plans to Stop Inmate Farming."
28. Interview with respondent A-3, Imam of the Sunni Islamic faith, a lifer at SCI-G, July 1999. He was tried as an adult and sent to jail for coconspiracy to murder when he was sixteen years old. At the age of forty-two, he had served time in numerous Pennsylvania state prisons.
29. Covert, *Ministry to the Incarcerated*, 112.
30. Rodney Ho, "Mr. Schwalb Puts His Inmates to Work for the Private Sector," *Wall Street Journal*, July 22, 1999, 1, 4.
31. Crans interview.
32. Raphael, *God Behind Bars*, 23.
33. Interviews: with respondent A-2, a Moslem lifer, SCI-G, July 1999. He runs numerous programs for other inmates, one of which is an introduction to goal setting; with respondent C-2, a Sunni Muslim, July 1999, previously a client of RSAT who was released but violated parole and was returned to SCI-G. He runs two programs, on peer encounters and an introduction to goal setting, for other inmates. Raised as a Jehovah's Witness, he has since embraced Islam.
34. Interview with Dan Armstrong, at Springhaven Country Club, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, July 30, 1999.
35. Respondent A-3.
36. Covert, *Ministry to the Incarcerated*, 112.
37. Interview with respondent C-1, July 1999. A Moslem inmate and former client of RSAT, he had been released but violated parole and was back at SCI-G. He has since been released on parole and planned to live with his daughter and her husband. Strongly goal oriented, he planned to prove to his family that he is a changed man by paying rent, holding down a job, and fulfilling his duties as a grandfather.
38. For those unfamiliar with the religion, "Moslem" is Arabic for "one who submits" to the word of "Allah," Arabic for "the God" or "the Eternal." There are two primary groups of Islamic believers within Graterford — "Islam" is Arabic for "submission to God" — the Sunni and the Shia. The Sunni represent the orthodox or conservative branch of Islam. The Shi'ites, about one-fifth of the world's Moslems, represent the nonconforming, unorthodox group. Both groups trace their roots back to Mecca and the Qur'an. (Floyd H. Ross and Tynette Hills, *The Great Religions by Which Men Live* [Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1956].) They submit to Allah through *arkan ad-din*, the five basic pillars of faith: *shahadah*, the affirmation that "there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God"; *salah*, the five daily ritual prayers; *zakat*, the giving of alms or charity; *Sawm*, the dawn-to-sunset fast during the lunar month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Moslem year; and *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca (*Columbia Encyclopedia*, infoplease.com).
- Another group, the Nation of Islam, led by Louis Farrakhan, are black nationalists not recognized by Moslems because they do not follow the tenets of Islam and often resort to violence and racism to make a point.
39. Respondent A-3.
40. Interview with respondent B-4, July 1999; a client of RSAT, SCI-G, he believes in a higher power than himself. He has since been released to a halfway house for six months.
41. Respondent A-3.
42. Respondent C-1.
43. Interview with respondent D-2, July 1999. A Christian who has served numerous sentences lasting from three months to two years in county and state prisons, serving a total of seven to eight years for these sentences, but has been out of prison for about a year. He lives in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, with his wife and two children and works as an auto-body mechanic.

44. Interview with respondent A-1, July 1999, a Christian lifer at Pennsylvania State Correctional Institute-Graterford. Sent to jail when he was twenty-one, he has served time in six of the twenty-seven Pennsylvania state prisons. Forty-four years old, he has married since the interview.
45. Respondent D-2.
46. Interviews: with Stephen Schucraft, criminal defense attorney, Media, Pennsylvania, and former parole officer, at Springhaven Country Club, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, July 30, 1999; with Dennis Woody, criminal defense attorney, Media, July 30, 1999.
47. Respondent A-1.
48. Respondent C-1; respondent D-3, a Catholic who lives in Wilmington, Delaware, with his wife. Out of jail for the past five years, he works as a painter. He has served time for twenty-three of his fifty-two years, but not consecutively, at numerous Pennsylvania state and county prisons, including SCI-G.
49. Interview with respondent B-2, July 1999; a Moslem client of RSAT, SCI-G, he has since been released to a halfway house for six months. Raised as a Catholic, he embraced Islam while serving a ten-year sentence.
50. Respondent A-3.
51. Respondent A-1.
52. Respondent B-1.
53. Interview with the Reverend Alex Hurt, August 16, 1999, at Borders Books & Music, Boston, August 16, 1999.
54. Interview with Barbara Walrath at CiviGenics mid-Atlantic regional office, July 30, 1999.
55. Aderonmu, Neiderhiser, Rzoncn interviews.
56. Ibid.
57. Interviews: with Mary Dougherty-Hunt at CiviGenics mid-Atlantic regional office, July 30, 1999; with John Kenny at SCI-G, July 28, 1999.
58. Interview with Mary Rose Worthington, July 30, 1999.
59. Kenny interview; interview with Amy Pouchet, July 28, 1999, at SCI-G.
60. Pouchet interview.
61. Lisa D. Williamson, "The Hidden Addiction on the Main Line," *Main Line Today*, July 1999, 31-33, 69.
62. Ibid., 70.
63. Covert, *Ministry to the Incarcerated*, 71.
64. Interview, July 1999, with respondent C-3, a Moslem inmate who had been a client of RSAT, was released but violated parole, and was back at SCI-G. The first practicing Moslem in his family, he wished to set up a legacy of service for his children.
65. Respondent D-3.
66. Respondent A-3.
67. Interview with Thomas Rapone, chief operating officer, CiviGenics, former secretary of public safety for the commonwealth of Massachusetts, former Massachusetts commissioner of corrections, former warden, Delaware County Prison, Pennsylvania, former U.S. marshal for the eastern district of Pennsylvania, August 4, 1999, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.
68. Ibid.
69. The Reverend Dr. Ray A. Hammond, the Reverend Eugene F. Rivers III, the Reverend Gilbert A. Thompson, and the Reverend Bruce H. Wall, *Ten Point Proposal for National Church Mobilization to Combat Black-on-Black Violence*, "Fact Sheet — Ten Point Coalition," Boston, October 23, 1993, 1.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., 2.
72. Respondent D-3.
73. Respondent A-3.
74. Robert L. Vernon, *L.A. Justice: Lessons from the Firestorm* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1993), 183.
75. Ibid., 245.
76. Interview with Timothy Gorbey at Springhaven Country Club, July 30, 1999.

77. Crans interview.
78. Hammond et al., *Ten Point Proposal for National Church Mobilization to Combat Black-on-Black Violence*, "Statement by the Ten Point Coalition and Citywide Clergy against Violence Concerning Recent Events in Boston," Late Summer/Early Fall 1994, 1.
79. Ibid., "Statement by Rev. Jeffrey Brown," May 27, 1994, 2.
80. Telephone interview with the Reverend Jeffrey L. Brown, August 19, 1999.
81. Raphael, *God Behind Bars*, 120.
82. Ibid., 121.
83. Ibid., 126.
84. Ibid., 127.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid., 128.
88. Ibid., 131.
89. Interview with Corey Dierolf, correctional officer on CiviGenics RSAT program block, SCI-G, August 28, 1999.
90. Interview with Susan Hughes, August 4, 1999.
91. Dougherty-Hunt interview; interview with Valerie Mitchel at CiviGenics mid-Atlantic regional office, July 30, 1999.
92. Crans interview.
93. County Corrections Gospel Mission, "County Corrections Gospel Mission: A Strategic Perspective," information pamphlet, Leaman's Advertising, Gap, Pennsylvania, 1999.
94. Ibid.
95. County Corrections Gospel Mission, "Welcome to City Gate," information pamphlet, Leaman's Advertising, 1996.
96. Ibid.; John Corr, "At Shelter, Words of Comfort," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 10, 1999, B2.
97. County Corrections Gospel Mission, "The Camp at Old Mill," information pamphlet, Leaman's Advertising, 1996.
98. Robert L. Vernon, "Pointman Institute Seminars. A Service to Those in Authority: Presenting Time-Tested Principles That Empower Leaders with Wisdom, Conviction, and Character," information pamphlet, 1999.
99. Ibid.
100. Crans interview.
101. Associated Press, "Reno Wants Programs to Help Ex-Inmates," *Boston Globe*, August 11, 1999, A10.
102. Ibid.
103. Interview with the Honorable William R. Toal, Jr., at Springhaven Country Club, July 30, 1999.
104. Meredith Fischer, "Montco to Keep Youths Out of Court," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 27, 1999, B1.
105. Ibid.
106. Judy Radowsky, "Prison Program Maps Out Inmates' Road to Recovery," *Boston Globe*, August 26, 1999, B4.
107. Eun Lee Koh, "On the Front in a War on Youth Strife," *Boston Globe*, July 30, 1999, A12.
108. Vernon, *L.A. Justice*, 227–236.
109. Ibid., 233.
110. CiviGenics, Inc., *Statement of Capabilities*.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. Respondent A-1.
114. Respondent A-3.
115. Raphael, *God Behind Bars*, 22.
116. Ibid., 108.
117. Crans interview.
118. Vernon, *L.A. Justice*, 245.
119. Raphael, *God Behind Bars*, 22–23.

120. Dougherty-Hunt and Worthington interviews.
121. Interview with Christopher Gallagher, deputy warden, Chester County Prison, Pennsylvania, July 30, 1999; McFadden interview.
122. Crans interview.