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Pathway to Salvation? Public Perceptions of the Impact of Religion on
Criminal Behavior and Recidivism

By

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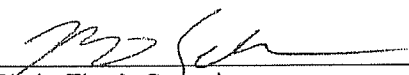
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Thesis Approval Page

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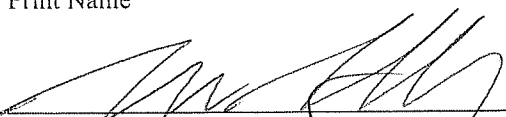
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Abstract

Pathway to Salvation? Public Perceptions of the Impact of Religious Involvement on Recidivism

For centuries, religion has inspired debate regarding the role it might play in advancing a person's position within society. Proponents of the value of religious involvement in shaping adherents' behavior have framed it as a mechanism that can provide a fundamental foundation for human conduct and a script for human interaction. In considering these points, what are the implications for those individuals that society has deemed to be unfit to participate as a free and contributing citizen due to their involvement in crime? Can religion possibly offer a vehicle to salvation for incarcerated offenders, not in the philosophical sense, but within the context of inspiring an abandonment of criminal conduct? Research on the topic suggests that religious participation and practice can impact choices, but remains fractured, failing to adequately draw significant correlations between practice and outcomes in terms of a reduction of criminal activity. Regardless, participation in faith-based programming is encouraged in many correctional facilities. This paper will explore the literature on the subject and discuss the results of a survey designed to measure community attitudes and beliefs regarding the impact of prison-based religious involvement and programming upon inmate recidivism.

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Introduction

For centuries religion has provided a framework for philosophical discussion as to the impact it plays in advancing a person's position within society. It is viewed as a mechanism to provide a fundamental foundation for human interaction, a system to provide life lessons, and a script for human social interaction. In considering these points, what are the implications for those individuals that society has deemed unable to continue to participate as a free and contributing citizen? Can religion possibly offer a vehicle to salvation, not in the philosophical sense, but within the context of morality and behavior in terms of influencing policy? This study will provide a methodology to begin considering the public's perception of the implication of religious study and participation for incarcerated people preparing to reenter society. It is intended to provide evidence to further the discussion of faith and individual choice, rather than rationalize religiosity as a tool in the fight against crime and criminogenic behaviors.

Background

Our incarcerated population has grown at an alarming rate, placing more people who have demonstrated an inability to follow laws into institutions designed to "correct" aberrant behavior. Correctional administrators have historically sought the aid of social scientists, educators, and the faith-based community to develop programming, whether prescribed or voluntary, to address cognitive issues believed to contribute to a criminal mindset. Religious programming has been a staple within correctional systems since the beginning, however very little research has been conducted to demonstrate its impact on reducing criminal behavior upon release.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that almost 2.3 million people were being held in federal and state prisons and local jails at the end of 2007, a 2.3% increase from 2000 (Bureau of Justice Statistics website). It is estimated that over 5.6 million US residents, or one out of every 37 people have spent time in prison (Travis, 24). Growth in prison populations has been the result of a variety of crime reduction strategies as well as the introduction and growth of illegal narcotics within our urban centers. Sixty-eight percent of those released from state and federal prison are rearrested, with over half returning to prison within three years of release (Brazzell, 14), an epidemic necessitating the development of policies not only to protect public safety, but the limited financial resources of government.

History of Religion in Prison

The construction and purpose of prisons as we view them from our modern perspective has evolved over time but has always focused on inflicting punishment for acts that have been deemed inappropriate. The earliest rationale for punishment has been vengeance, broadly interpreted from a biblical perspective as enacting an “eye for an eye.” The earliest form of punishment allowed a harmed party to seek subjective restitution for perceived wrongdoing. “In all likelihood, the first solutions were based on the intervention of a socially-authorized third party who acted as judge and punisher; thus, preventing the punishment from being viewed as a personal and self-interested act of the victim” (McShane, 2).

In following this line of thought, enacting revenge or seeking retribution evolved into a system of administering punishment based upon commonly agreed upon methodologies signified by equitable treatment and punishment. Though the use of prisons in Europe can be

traced back as early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, American colonies sought punishments that fit the crime, often times inflicting violent acts upon a criminal not only to punish, but to set an example to prevent future transgressions within the populace at large. These types of actions eventually received criticism because of the violent nature and were altered to incorporate the use of almshouses and workhouses as early as the 1700's. Hard labor that was often degrading was instituted to provide a mechanism for an individual to pay their debt to either a victim or society (McShane, 20).

The modern view of the penitentiary sprung up in England in 1779 with the passage of the Penitentiary Act, authored by John Howard before the House of Commons. The law set forth the precedent where prisoners would work long hours in heavy manual labor by day and be confined to cells at night in penitence for their actions. Having been a prisoner in 1755 during the Seven Year's War by the French, Howard was exposed to the revolting and inhuman conditions of the French dungeons. Upon negotiating his freedom, he was able to share his experience and sufferings with English authorities and continued upon a path to support the needs of imprisoned people in England. He was appointed High Sherriff of Bedford in 1773 and began investigating and documenting the conditions and policies of European imprisonment. Upon visiting the Bedford jail he witnessed similar inhumane conditions including the use of spiked collars, chains, and conditions of filth that contributed to contaminants and disease. He pressed for Parliamentary action producing detailed reports to the legislature and recorded his observations and suggestions for action in a book entitled "State Prisons in England and Wales with Preliminary Observations and an Account of some foreign Prisons" (The John Howard Society Website, main page).

Following his work, the Penitentiary Act passed and he became a member of the First Penitentiary Commission. His resignation came just three short years later resulting from discouragement in the country's failure to progress towards the goal of establishing a "regime of hard work and moral penitence in a sanitary environment...to change the prisoner's lifestyle through exposure to good work habits and religious instruction." It would be years before specific portions of the Act would be implemented, but spurred by his vision many governments of several European countries would restructure their penal system to support humane conditions to rehabilitate the incarcerated (The John Howard Society Website, main page).

Modern prisons sprung from two distinct penitentiary styles during the 19th century. The Pennsylvania system, influenced by the Quakers, marked by heavy stone architecture and solitary confinement, presented a system where prisoners had no contact with each other and were put to work on individual labor projects. The philosophy was bound in the Christian thought that these individuals would reflect on their sins, read the bible, and repent providing an opportunity for salvation and the ultimate return to society to lead a productive life. In this system, individuals were removed from society and expected to find their own peace and become part of the "acceptable" Christian lifestyle, the connotation being that individuals would live in accordance with the teachings of the bible and other religious ideologies.

In following similar principles, the Auburn prison in New York emerged in 1819, as a system similarly based upon solitary confinement with the exception that inmates would work in a collective fashion during the day in a common area. The expectation was that they would also learn to adopt a Christian lifestyle through solitary reflection, but also learn to

work within a group in the hopes that they would alter their former behavior and adopt socially acceptable habits.

The contemporary prison we are all familiar with emerged in 1876 in Elmira, New York and emphasized rehabilitation in the form of academic and vocational education, as well as the active labor instilled under the Protestant work ethic. Inmates were able to move through a system of classification based upon program completion and even had an opportunity to receive parole (McShane, 23). In all three cases, religion was the focal point of rehabilitation and understandably the primary means by which an individual would find redemption and emerge healed in the light of God.

As prisons evolved the reliance upon religious programming and philosophy altered with the move toward secular governing, but as we will find never truly vanished. Many have looked to religion as a mechanism to enhance the lives of incarcerated men and women while providing a mechanism to curtail inmate idleness, a contributing factor to prison violence. Religious programming has been a staple within correctional systems since the very foundation, offered as an individualized practice, in a voluntary group setting, or prescribed as part of a specialized program. However, little research has been conducted to support the use of religion as an evidence-based tool to foster successful offender reentry by reducing future criminal activity, nor has research focused on the overall public support for continued religiously based programming.

Assessment of Research

Programs such as education, job readiness skills, cognitive restructuring, and religious programming have been introduced to target specific indicators commonly thought to contribute to an individual's criminality. All have demonstrated varying degrees of

success, but none has provided the overall panacea for preventing continued criminal activity. Surprisingly, given the long history of religious activity and the sheer number of inmates participating in religious programs, which is estimated at one out of every three (Johnson, 1997, 199), little research has been conducted exploring the overall benefit of religion in reducing the potential for future criminal acts. Part of this can be attributed to skepticism within the scientific and academic community regarding the impact of faith on an individual's choices, as well as an overall lack of access to data within state, federal, and local correctional systems. However, it is clear with the millions of tax dollars and private contributions that have been leveraged to support faith-based funding within both the Bush and Obama administrations over the past decade, the time is right to evaluate the impact of religious choice on criminal behavior.

There exist three main areas of research pertaining to religion and criminal behavior: the impact of religion on crime and violence; the use of religion as a tool for prison adjustment; and religion and recidivism – the potential for future criminal acts among released prisoners. From there we turn to the overall question of public perception regarding religion and faith as a tool in preventing criminal activity.

Religion – Crime and Violence

Though religion has long been a part of prison life as a tool to cope with imprisonment and the deprivation of freedom, it is important to look at studies that have tested the impact of religion on criminal behavior. The landmark study of religion and criminal behavior was published in 1969 by Hirschi and Stark, entitled “Hellfire and Delinquency.” The study focused on deviant behavior among school-aged children, and

found no direct correlation in terms of criminal delinquency between church-going spiritual individuals and their counterparts who lacked belief in the supernatural world. Their findings were not the first rather they were supported by a host of previous research (Lombroso, 1911, Kvaraceus, and Fitzpatrick, 1967), with similar conclusions.

From there, the Moral Community Hypothesis emerged in 1982 in a study conducted by Stark, Kent, and Doyle which built upon the model first explored by Emile Durkheim in 1925, claiming that the deterrent effect of religion on crime is greatest in areas characterized by high rates of aggregate religiosity. Stark et al., claimed that “religion is empowered to produce conformity to the norms only as it is sustained throughout interaction and is accepted by the majority as a valid basis for action” (Baier and Wright, 6). Looking at the research they found that studies reporting no relationship between religion and deviance (Burkett and White, 1974; Hirschi and Stark, 1969) drew samples from the Pacific region where religion was not found to pervade the cultural landscape. Other studies (Albrecht, Chadwick and Alcorn, 1977; Higgins and Albrecht, 1977; Rhodes and Reiss, 1970) focused on areas where religious involvement was higher and reported a significant relationship between religiosity and deviance (Sturgis, 343). The Sturgis research went on to examine thirteen studies finding a majority supporting the Moral Community Hypothesis, a fact that will have merit in the discussion of the research findings presented in this paper when we explore the role of religion on offenders emerging from incarceration.

Church attendance, participation in faith-based initiatives, and the receipt of services from religious practitioners provide a “greater probability that urban youth will escape poverty, crime, and other social ills” (DiIulio, 51). A body of research exists arguing that religious adolescents are less likely to use drugs and engage in deviant behavior than those

who are not (Hawkins, Jenson, Catalono, and Lisher, 1988; Johnson, Larson, Li, and McCullough, 2000; Stark and Bainbridge, 1996). Jang, Bader, and Johnson (2008) looked specifically at the relationship between adolescent religiosity finding that a “child’s religiosity strengthens protective factors that inhibit childhood deviance both directly and indirectly throughout their suppression of risk factors for deviance” (Jang et al., 784). The study found that religiosity had a significant impact upon deviance and drug use during adolescence and early adulthood. The authors cited concerns regarding fear of supernatural judgment and punishment rather than any specific morally driven motivator (Jang, et al., 787).

Much of the research related to religion and criminal motivation has been conducted on youthful populations, but some has focused on the relationship within adults. Evans, Cullen, Dunaway, Burton, and Velmer (1995) built upon the initial findings of Hirschi and Stark by identifying subsequent data influencing the relationship between religious study and criminality. They focused on three variables: 1) the extent to which religion, independently, or in combination with other factors, inhibits adult crime; 2) the extent to which social and religious contexts mediate the effects of personal religiosity; and 3) whether the effects of religion are general across crime types or specific to crimes in violation of religious ascetic standards (Evans, et al, 195).

In using these three variables, the Evans study broadened the scope of the relationship between religiosity and crime capturing specific data indicators related to participation in religious services, the impact of religion on behavior, and “hellfire”, or specific religious beliefs and relevant sanctions. They concluded that only one area could be used as a predictor in having a negative impact upon crime, finding that the behavioral impact of religion and the hellfire values failed to emit any negative impact upon criminality, posing

significant data to support a relationship in predicting future criminal trends. Religious activity, or full-fledged adoption and participation as part of a group orientation, had the most significant impact upon the reduction of criminal trends (Evans, 202). The combination of the findings from Evans and the Moral Community Hypothesis seem to indicate that there is a specific and direct link between the impacts of religion on criminal behavior. However, this was only achieved within a cultural landscape where the group orientation embraces the precepts of a religious sect that looks upon specific criminal acts negatively. Societal norms including religious observance could theoretically diminish the overall criminal trends of the actors within those cultural and regional boundaries, demonstrating a strong link between religion and behavior.

From 1969 to 1998 social scientists have focused on this area averaging two studies per year with results concluding that religion had little or no impact on criminal behavior, (Hirschi and Stark, 1969; Ellis and Thompson 1989) to religion having a significant impact (Rohrbaugh and Jessor, 1975; Chadwick and Top 1993). In 2001, a conclusive review of over 60 studies conducted by Baier and Wright (2001) found that “religion had a statistically significant” impact on crime (Baier and Wright, 16). The Hellfire Hypothesis and follow-up studies (Burkett and White, 1974; Higgins and Albrecht, 1977; Stark, 1996) predict that religiosity has the ability to deter individual-level criminal behavior as a result of supernatural fear and reward. Looking to social control theory they argue that religious institutions instill normative beliefs and foster attachment, commitment, and involvement within a larger society, which if embracing a moral compass against deviant acts can cause a deterrence (Baier and Wright, 4). It can be argued that religion, in and of itself, has no correlation upon individual acts, but in the event that it becomes part of the societal norm

where supernatural consequences accompany aberrant behavior, it can provide a level of deterrence impacting criminal activity. However, legal ramifications have also pervaded the cultural landscape within the US, where consequences are associated with specific behaviors, yet we continue to see an escalation of criminal activity. Perhaps there is a direct correlation between the secularization of society and increasing criminal trends, where supernatural sanctions no longer provide a sufficient degree of motivation and corporal punishment fails to suppress delinquent behavior, a concept that will be further explored within the discussion section of this paper.

Religion – Prison Adjustment and Behavior

In understanding the role that religion plays within a correctional setting, it is important to consider the work by Gordon Allport (1968) who looked at religious orientations along intrinsic and extrinsic lines. Beginning with intrinsic motivations, which are defined by specifically religious beliefs, a 2000 study conducted by Clear et al., presents an argument that inmates are inclined to seek religion as a means of coping with their incarceration and the feelings associated with the deprivation of freedom. They seek religion to escape confinement and deal with the guilt associated with incarceration either through casual participation and practice or through a strong adherence to specific doctrinal faith (Clear, et al. 2000, 58). Once again, incarcerated individuals seek out supernatural support that could guide their behavior. They tend to associate and interact with similar minded individuals through worship and leisure that creates a cultural landscape similar to the Moral Community and subject to similar conclusions regarding future criminal activity.

However, in considering extrinsic values, where religion is chosen for either instrumental or utilitarian benefit, inmates may seek religious participation as a means of protection, access to black market contraband, or a means of accessing other inmates to foster criminal planning and behavior. They may also seek access to outsiders or simple benefits like cookies and punch that are typically associated with worship services (Clear, et al., 2000, 67). There are questions related to the impact of religion for inmates who participate for “sincere” or insincere” reasons that could impact their behavior (Dammer, 2002, 39-42). An argument could be made that inmates seeking religion for personal growth will do well, and those who see it as a tool to for extrinsic value will find no benefit, but further research is needed to justify this argument.

Clear and Sumter (2002) offer the most convincing data to date. A survey conducted of 769 male inmates housed within 20 facilities throughout 12 states found that there was an inverse relationship between an inmate’s religiosity and institutional infractions or adjustment within the prison setting. Following social control and moral hypothesis theory they conclude that institutions demonstrating a strong religious identity will have an impact on the behavior of religiously involved offenders (Sturgis, 345).

A subsequent study in 1997 by Byron Johnson found that religious participation in Prison Fellowship, a Christian worship program, influenced institutional adjustment (Johnson, et al., 1997, 9). Later Clear and Sumter supported these findings but determined that adjustment was also strongly influenced by “person-place interaction” in that inmates were motivated by their physical setting as well as by the other inmates sharing that space. They did however bolster previous conclusions that an inmate’s religiousness influenced the

overall number of institutional infractions recorded during their incarceration (Clear and Sumter, 146).

Following the Prison Fellowship study, Camp, et al., (2006) analyzed the Life Connections Program (LCP) instituted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 2002 to gain a better understanding of which types of inmates volunteer for religious programming. LCP is a multi-faith accommodation involving a core curriculum taught by spiritual guides of all faiths. Looking at 999 inmate participants between August, 2005 and May 2005, the study surveyed 407 LCP inmate participants and 592 comparison subjects at ten different prisons. They found that both groups were equally likely to identify with and practice religion prior to incarceration. Older inmates and minorities, including those listing an affiliation with the Muslim faith, were less likely to volunteer, and individuals serving longer sentences were more likely to volunteer for the program. The study listed that “motivation for change” was one of the highest indicators for participation in the program (Camp, et al., 544) suggesting that individuals seeking religious involvement may be motivated to alter lifestyle. The study fails to evaluate extrinsic motivations and does not track institutional infraction records or community adjustment.

The body of research here indicates that offender behavior is motivated by the overall prison landscape and religiosity will impact only if the institution has adopted it as a socially normative value. Correctional staff and administrators, as well as prison leadership would control the overall cultural landscape of an institution and could motivate individuals to participate and influence behavior patterns. The research fails to draw a distinction between behavior during incarceration and the potential for criminal activity following release. The behavior of individuals, as motivated by specific religiosity, does not appear to have any

relation to behavior upon release within society. Embracing the theories that exist, it is impossible to draw any type of conclusion on the impact of religiously involved behavioral patterns. The communities that these individuals return to may not share the same religiously held beliefs and moral norms that existed within a given prison. Prison does not imitate life in any respect and further study could address deviant behavior amongst individuals leaving facilities considered “religious” against those found to have no controlling religious identity. Only then would we be able to glean insight as to the overall impact and influence on behavior.

Religion – Recidivism

The third element is the relationship between religious participation and recidivism or re-incarceration, which has long stood as the litmus test for successful programming despite some criticism. Dr. James Vacca cited three egregious errors related to the use of recidivism as a measurement of successful programming: the fundamental lack of a universal definition; the impact of law enforcement on incarceration rather than individual success; and the fact that it is far too simplistic, failing to measure any level of achievement (Vacca, 302). Despite the shortcomings, recidivism is the strongest measure available to researchers, and provided it is thoroughly defined, can provide insight as to the success of religion as a programmatic tool against future incarceration rates.

A large body of research exists in looking at religious involvement and the impact on prospective criminal behavior, as well as investigating the impact of religion on inmate socialization within the correctional setting. It is surprising, however, how little exists on at the impact of religious involvement and a person’s religiosity in terms of rates of re-

incarceration or recidivism. Johnson suggests that the scarcity of research could be blamed upon potential biases among religious workers and scientific researchers. Those individuals working directly with inmates within the prison system may lack the ability to mount a sophisticated study. It could also be the result of the ambivalent nature of academics associated with this field and their lack of interest in relating spiritualism to the re-incarceration of an offender. As a result, it is concluded that there is no real connection between social science research and correctional policy making and practice (Johnson 1997, 160).

In any study on this topic, it is important to distinguish the specific type of religious practice and ideology. As in previous studies, the level of participation and the inherent affinity a person feels toward a specific faith will have some degree of impact upon their overall level of commitment and subsequent success. Johnson breaks these thoughts on research into two categories: 1) organic religion which examines the influence or impact of religion on an array of social and behavioral outcomes and 2) intentional or programmatic religion which is based upon the effectiveness of faith-based organizations or intervention (Johnson 2004, 330). Additionally, it will be important to consider the method through which a person receives and practices their particular faith. Specifically whether they participate in organized worship services such as bible study, through participation in faith-based programs where government funds are granted for specific programming provided by a religiously affiliated non-profit group, or whether the offender observes their faith on an individual level.

The strongest research on this topic was conducted in a 1997 study by Johnson, Larson, and Pitts, one of the few studies specifically identifying religion as a tool to address

recidivism. By focusing on inmates involved in at least one of three Prison Fellowship (PF) activities at four prisons in New York, they compared 201 participating inmates against a cohort of 201 non-participating inmates with similar variables, age, race, religious denomination, county of residence, military discharge, minimum sentence and initial security classification (Johnson et al., 1997). They found that 38% of the PF group and 31% of the non-PF group committed infractions during their incarceration. In a one year follow-up, 37% of PF inmates and 36% of non-PF inmates were re-incarcerated, indicating limited correlation between religious programming as a means to control recidivism.

However, they were able to draw specific conclusions related to the type of risk and participation levels associated with religious activity. In a one year follow up they found that for both PF and non-PF groups, 8% of the lowest risk offenders were re-incarcerated. Medium and high risk offenders returned at a rate of 19% and 75 % respectively. In looking at levels of religious participation, they concluded that those individuals having participated in at least 10 “services,” bible study, prayer groups, etc., within a year, were the least likely to be re-arrested in their follow up study (Johnson et al., 2004, p 334).

The study had some admitted limitation in terms of cell size, where the high participant group consisted of only 22 people and limited time-frame for follow up at one year. Johnson later came back extending the study period to eight years from release and found that 70.2% of the overall population had been rearrested with 67.7% PF and 72.6% non-PF. In considering the participation levels of the PF group, Johnson found that 41% of the high participation groups versus 56% of the low participation group were rearrested within three years (Johnson, et al., 2004, 342).

Johnson's research remains the most comprehensive available in considering the impact of religion on future incarceration rates. However, his focus involved inmates participating in Prison Fellowship, using a predominately Christian sample and failing to fully focus on a growing Muslim inmate population. His work has been corroborated by other research, notably a 2000 study by Sumter consisting of 321 prisoners from 12 states which concluded that "inmates who report high levels of participation in religious programs and report high levels of belief in the supernatural are less likely to be arrested after release regardless of whether they are classified as being 'religious' or 'nonreligious'" (Johnson, et al., 2004, 334). Here the "nonreligious" label refers to those who participated outside of traditional spiritual desires, presumably those whose participation was based upon motivations outside of the religious experience itself.

The body of research that exists does not fully address the religiosity of the inmate sample or whether religious practices are continued into the community and at what level. The recent focus of faith-based initiatives by both the Bush and Obama administrations should provide further opportunities to study the impact of religion on post-release success. As Mears et al., concludes "Research to date simply provides too little a foundation for clearly identifying when programs are 'faith-based' or for stating that such programs effectively improve recidivism and other behavioral outcomes, and existing faith-based reentry program generally have not been subject to rigorous theoretical or empirical analysis" (Mears, et al. 2006, 362).

Here again, the body of research is limited and focuses almost wholly on Christianity. Similar to the research conducted on religiously affiliated youth, we see a link between the level of commitment of "religious" inmate and successful reintegration. Though the research

fails to follow the offender into the community to gauge the level of support and religious participation following prison, those individuals who participated at the highest levels during incarceration demonstrated strong levels of success as measured by recidivism over a period of three years.

The research points to a connection between religious participation, the level of an individual's religiosity, and a reduction in criminal behavior, as measured along all three categories.

The question of religion in prison has never been more important. The last decade has seen unprecedented federal funding of religiously tied organizations under the faith-based programs of both the Bush and Obama administrations. In order to develop policy within the institutional setting for the incarcerated population, sound empirical evidence needs to demonstrate programmatic success. Public perception should also play a crucial role in determining how and if tax-supported resources should continue to be invested in programs with a strong link towards religiously affiliated groups. This study is intended to fully evaluate the research that exists relating religious participation and behavioral success as well as public support.

Research on Public Perception of Religion

In 2001, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life hosted a Panel discussion in Washington, D.C. entitled, "For Goodness' Sake: Why So Many Want Religion to Play a Greater Role in American Life" (Farkas et al., 2001). Bringing distinguished panelists from academia and the faith-based community they presented the case for religion within the public discourse as a motivating factor for policy. In evaluating the study we learn that

America's "deep belief in the power of religion is largely driven by an equally strong conclusion that American society today is suffering from an appalling dearth of morality, from declining values, family values, to rising materialism, from a lack of civility to excessive crime" (Event transcript, 2). Most people talk about moral decay and see religion as an antidote where faith improves moral behavior and personal conduct. Deborah Wadsworth, President of Public Agenda, went on to say, "if more Americans were more religious, the study shows, large numbers of people say crime would go down, families would do a better job raising their kids, there would be less greed and materialism, and many even think political leaders would make better decisions" (Event transcript, 2).

They found that 56% of Americans favor school prayer as an effective way to improve adolescent behavior and 75% agree that religion should be a part of raising children. They do note a distinct value in separation of church and state citing a need to accommodate religious diversity (Event transcript, 2). The Reverend Eugene Rivers of the National TenPoint Leadership Foundation pointed to a 1984 Harvard study on black male labor force participation, citing that there was a correlation between church attendance and employment (Event transcript, 3). The basic conclusion of the forum was that the American people favored religion, viewing it as a means of fostering morality in this country and dealing with a litany of social ills that jeopardize communal success.

In 2007, Pew published the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, a comprehensive poll of over 35,000 Americans aged 18 and older to qualify religious orientation and support. The study found that only 1.6% identified themselves as atheist, with 16.1% unaffiliated with a specific religion, and the majority 78.4% identifying themselves as Christian. Younger adults, between 18 and 29 were much less likely to identify with a particular religion (25%)

than any of the other age groups (Report – Summary of Key Findings). A 2001 survey (Cullen, et al., 2001) of 327 respondents assessing public support for faith-based programs found that all but 4% of Americans believe in God or a universal spirit. 90% believe in Heaven, 73% Hell, 65% in the devil, 79% in miracles, and 72% in angels. 60% report church attendance monthly, with 40% reporting weekly, and 80% believe that “religious beliefs help them to respect and assist other people” (Cullen, et al., 31).

The Cullen study focused specifically on questions of religious involvement in the correctional setting finding that “Americans, especially those who believe in a forgiving and loving God, are persuaded by the transformative powers of religion, including the ability of faith to reform offenders” (Cullen et al., 31). The 2009 Annual Religion and Public Life Survey found that 69% of Americans favor faith-based programs with the majority 38% (non-religious 23% and government 31%) favoring religious organizations providing counseling and education services to incarcerated men and women. Despite the optimistic findings, the Cullen study points to three significant considerations: 1) though religion is a protective factor against crime, the effect is moderate when considering other risk factors; 2) studies showing positive effects for religious-based programs are plagued with selection bias and reliant upon a voluntary prescription where participants may self-select; and 3) concerns over the ability of faith-based organizations to deliver full array of social services (Cullen et al., 32)

From these studies we see that American citizens view religion favorably as a utilitarian tool in shaping morality that has some implication within the correctional setting and on crime in general. However, the question remains the extent to which the public favors investing public resources to support religious based programming. Here a distinction is

necessary when looking at how religion is practiced within a correctional setting. There are generally three forms of religious participation and practice: the individual level through prayer and private worship, as part of an organized group in bible study or group prayer and services, or as part of a formalized faith-based program that is funded and outcome oriented. At the individual level, there is no public fund investment, nor any type of programmatic logistics in making accommodations. Here an inmate has an opportunity to engage and reflect at the individual level at random. For an organized group setting, there is typically no cost outside of making accommodations within the prison setting available. Group leaders are typically volunteers from the local community who administer bible study or official religious services. Correctional administrators may have to dedicate specific officers which could result in staff costs, but generally the cost is minor. The third option presents the greatest concerns and policy implications for restorative justice. The adoption and investment of a formalized program with a direct link to some observed religious philosophy may require specific policy and funding to support the needs of the program. It is here that a formal discussion of faith-based initiatives is necessary in order to properly frame the public perception argument.

Faith Based Initiatives

The Bush administration's emphasis in supporting faith based initiatives and the continuation under President Obama has provided a contemporary framework for considering this issue, situating religion at the forefront of political debate. Historically, churches and faith-based organizations have played a role in providing education, health, and social services in the community, leveraging public and private financial resources. Prior to the

Bush administration, public funding of faith-based organizations was limited and often required secular controls that prevented many organizations from fully participating in the obtainment of federal grants. Many organizations such as Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services developed fully operational secular arms to control federal funding for social programs.

On January 29, 2001 the Bush administration formally established the White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives (WHOFBCI) which was designed to create a "...national effort to expand opportunities for faith-based and other community organizations and to strengthen their capacity to better meet social needs in America's communities" (Black 297). This move opened the door for many pervasively sectarian organizations to actively compete for federal resources in establishing socially based programs, including offender reentry.

December 12, 2002, Executive Order 13279, Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations was signed, requiring that federal aid be given without discrimination based upon religious belief or the ideology of the group's administration (Black, 302). The order expanded the reach of charitable choice, a model designed to foster tax breaks for non-profit organizations with religious affiliation and a requirement of secular program delivery, by increasing the share of federal social-service funds to smaller faith-based providers and expanding and enforcing protections for the religious autonomy of faith-based grantees (Daly 33).

In 2008, the Bush administration issued *Innovations in Compassion – The Faith Based and Community Initiative: A Final Report to the Armies of Compassion*: detailing efforts of the Bush administration to fund religiously based organizations to support social

service delivery ranging from substance abuse and recovery to fighting hunger internationally. It is estimated that billions of dollars flowed freely to support religious based program participation in providing vital social services during the eight years of his presidency. No distinction however, is made as to whether these initiatives were strictly the work of the WHOFBCI and faith-based funding or if they were impacted as part of the overall sphere of government support. This is often the case when politicizing records of administrative action, but it leaves many questioning the overall validity and outcomes of these efforts. There is really no way to distinguish the benefits of faith-based involvement vs. the success of more secular organizations.

“Unfortunately, outcome evidence is scarce, as it is uniformly in social services. It is even difficult to measure the effect of the initiative on the proportion of providers that are faith-based” (Carlson-Thiess, 2008, 932). There is no universal evidence to support continued funding of these types of programs, as most evidence remains experiential or subjective. In looking at prisoner reentry and substance abuse, two of the areas receiving much praise from Bush and faith-based supporters, we can see only anecdotal evidence of success. The *Ready4Work* program received federal funds through the WHOFBCI and was characterized by a network of support for offenders returning to the community. Businesses provided employment opportunities and faith-based groups partnered with community organizations to provide housing, mentors, and vital services to enhance the opportunities of emerging offenders contributing to their ability to become productive citizens. It is estimated that thousands benefited from this collaborative partnership, but it is difficult to determine the degree to which faith-based participation strengthened the overall program. We can also look at the Access to Recovery Funds (ATR) which was a voucher program to support

recovery in the community combining spiritual approaches with secular services (Carlson-Thiess, 2008, 940). It is estimated that over 250,000 people benefited from these services, but again it is impossible to gauge the effectiveness of participation from the religious community.

On July 1, 2008, presidential candidate Obama proclaimed that he was committed to the expansion of faith-based initiatives. Shortly after being elected he pledged to further the Bush initiative through his White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He has emphasized a strong commitment to fully engaging faith-based organizations on an equal footing with secular organizations. He has been critical of Bush's politicization of faith-based giving without increasing funding and developing a system of accountability. He has emphasized the secular good that faith based groups need to accomplish and supported open hiring practices for staff with pervasively sectarian roots as well as overall operational philosophy (Carlson-Thiess, 2008, 946).

Millions of federal dollars have been funneled through state government supporting justice-related faith based programs to support offender reentry, substance abuse treatment, and a myriad of other initiatives to target a reduction in criminal behavior and enhance the opportunity structure for offenders and their families. The 2001 Pew study reported that three-fourths of the American people favored allowing religious organizations to apply for government funds to provide social services. Of the respondents, 44.3% found that faith-based and secular programmatic models were equally effective (Cullen, et al., 37). In a separate 2001 Pew study, entitled "Faith-Based Funding Backed, But Church-State Doubts Abound," 72% of respondents note the care and compassion of religious workers in supporting faith-based programs. Of those reporting they were strongly in favor of faith-

based funding, the 18-29 age bracket had the highest report rate at 37% followed by ages 30-49 (29%), 50-64 (26%), and 65+ (18%) (Introduction and Summary, 2). A follow-up poll in 2009 found that 69% favor and only 25% oppose this type of funding with the majority (80%) from the 18-29 age brackets. Here again we see strong support for publicly funded aid through faith-based organizations, with the strongest support coming from young people.

Research Questions

The research suggests strong support for religion as a tool to improve moral behavior and strong support exists to support faith-based funding, despite a lack of data to support outcomes. It stands to reason that the public supports religion as both a tool for effective rehabilitation and in reducing crime, however little research has been conducted to gauge the public's interest in using tax dollars to foster religious participation of incarcerated people as an effective programmatic tool. This research is designed to fully address the following questions: Does the public support religious participation in prison, as well as funding of non-secular religiously-based programs? Does the public believe that religious involvement and the investment of public funding have a positive impact upon reducing future criminal behavior?

Methodology

This research utilizes survey responses to gauge the level of support for religious programming within correctional facilities. Over the past decade millions of dollars in federal government funding has been distributed to support faith-based initiatives including reentry programs for incarcerated adults and juveniles. The overall success of this initiative

has been debated and little research has been conducted to justify the policy. This research and the results of this survey should provide some data related to the public perception of these practices. A link to an on-line survey was emailed to a sample of 500 Towson University graduate and undergraduate students randomly generated by the Registrar's Office to ascertain the degree to which individuals support the use of religious practice within the correctional setting. Towson University is a liberal arts college within a Mid-Atlantic state that attracts students from the surrounding region. Maryland remains one of the strongest politically liberal states in the country, a fact that could impact this survey in terms of public financing and support for religious involvement. States that are Jesuit or from other more religiously affiliated regions of the US could have dramatically different results. Additionally, research indicates that individuals within the 18-29 age bracket which will include Towson University students, represent the highest rate, 37% of those who strongly favor faith-based funding according to the 2001 Pew Study. In the 2009 follow-up, this same age bracket had the highest favorability in support of this type of funding at 80%. It is anticipated that this survey should yield results supporting religious-based practice within the correctional setting, however the sample may not support publicly financed religious programming specific to incarcerated people.

The survey consisted of five demographic and ten substantive questions related to experience with religion and the criminal justice system that have been combined with a series of fourteen statements that are based on a Likert Scale. These statements were designed to gauge the opinions and interests of the sample related to specifically identified questions on religious involvement among inmates and financial support of religiously

based-programs within the correctional setting. The survey results will provide a framework to draw conclusions to justify government policies and correctional practices (Appendix A).

The initial survey entitled “Pathway to Salvation? Public Perceptions of the Impact of Religion on Criminal Behavior and Recidivism,” was administered over a three week period with a reminder generated a week following the original distribution. A total of 106 responses were recorded with 97 individuals or 91.5% completing the survey. Four indicated that they would not consent to the survey and the remainder did not complete all questions. Answers to specific questions allowed some respondents to skip certain non-applicable questions providing varied results for specific questions.

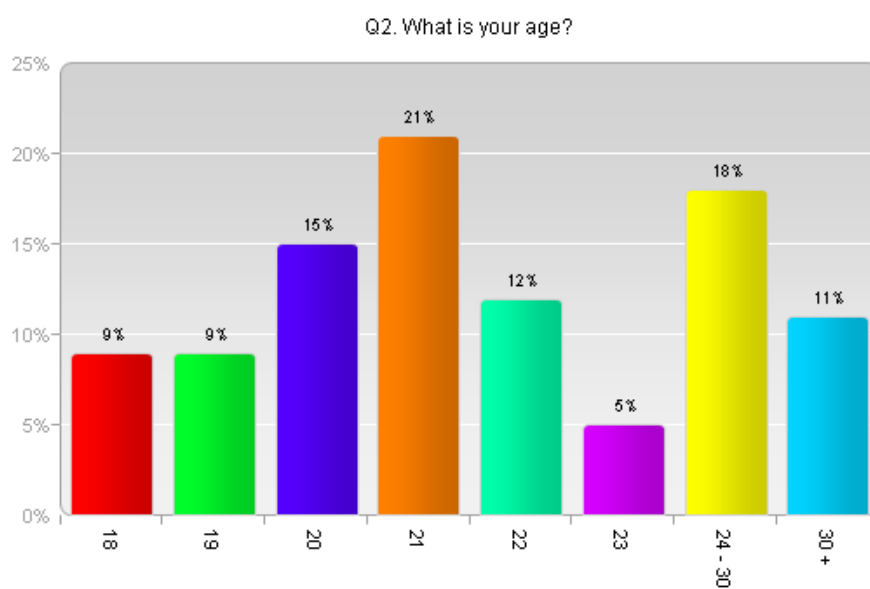
Results, Analysis, and Discussion

The overall response rate for the survey was 20%, of whom 91.5% completed the survey, raising some questions regarding the individuals who responded, which in this case were overwhelmingly female (71%) and having practiced some type of religion during their childhood (81%). This could indicate that many having some exposure to religion were more likely to respond to the survey. Religion is often a difficult topic for many, particularly within a college setting, and this may have impacted the overall rate of response. The three-week time period for respondents may also have been insufficient to maximize the overall level of response. Adjustments to future surveys could include a broader age group and longer duration for responses.

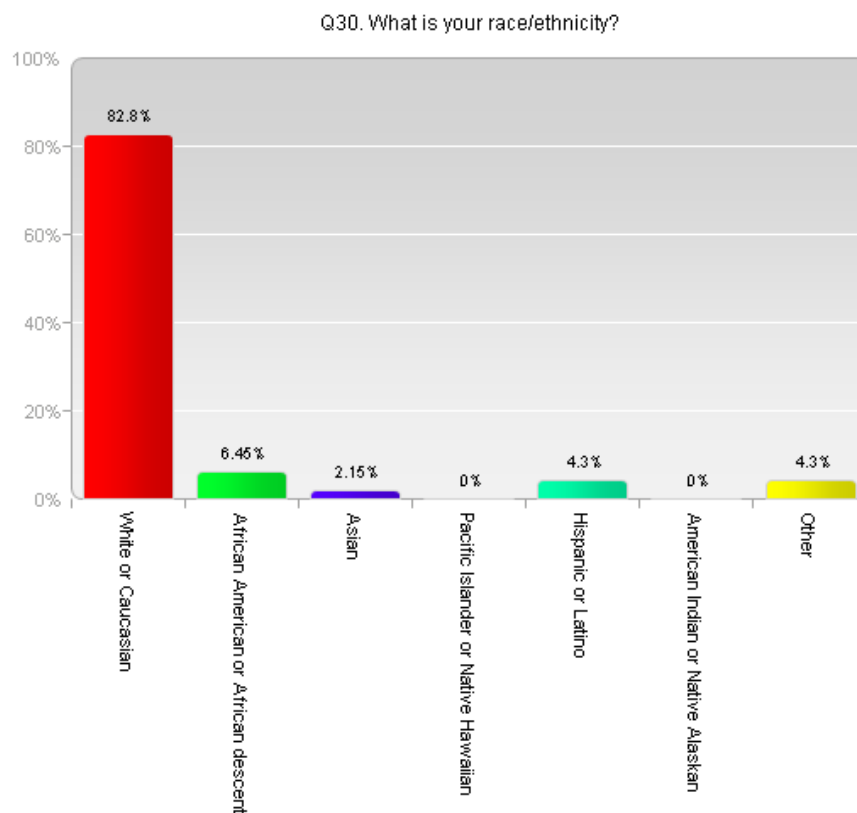
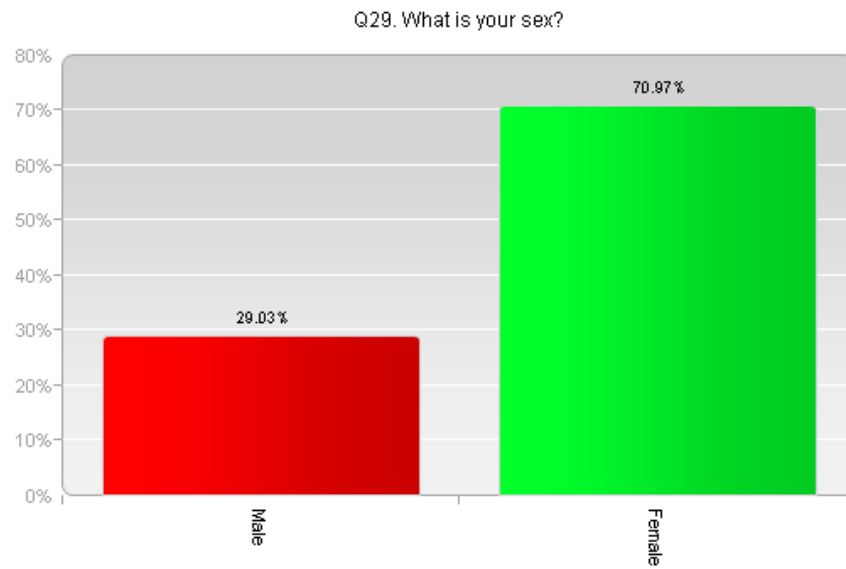
The survey results were examined to determine the respondent preferences regarding both the practice and use of religion as a method to reduce criminal trends. The data has been analyzed based upon past and current religious affiliation, as well as the level of

religiousness, as defined by frequency of religious practice. Additional questions were added to determine the overall level of exposure to the criminal justice system either through incarceration of the respondent or the incarceration or conviction of a family member/close friend.

The age distribution of respondents varied with the largest percentage responding in the 21 (21%) and 24 – 30 (18%) age brackets.



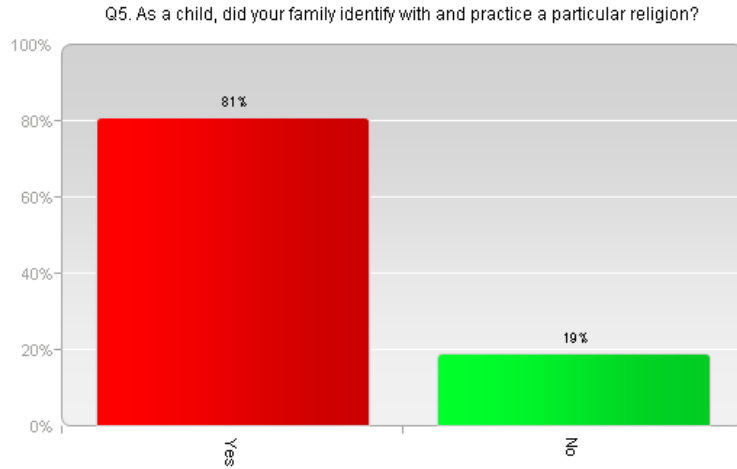
71% of the respondents were female with 29% male and the majority, 82.8% listed white or Caucasian as their race/ethnicity.



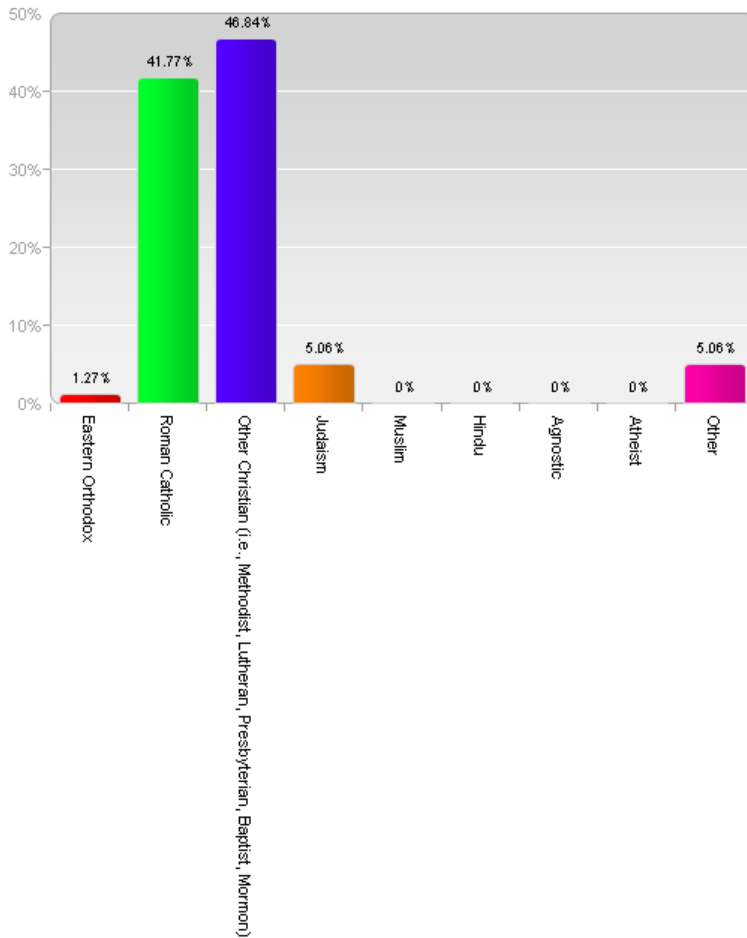
Religiousness of Respondents

For the questions designed to determine the overall level of religiousness of the respondent, 81% percent indicated that they identified with and practiced a particular religion

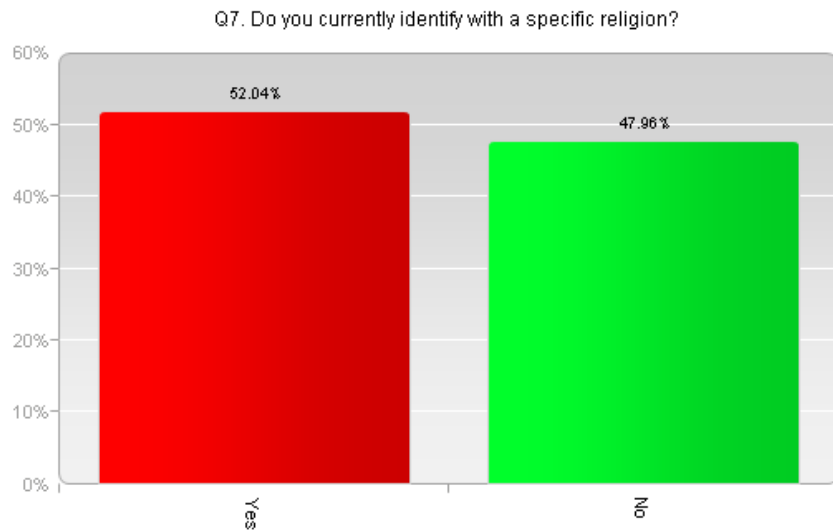
as a child, with the highest percentage indicating a Christian upbringing either Roman Catholic (41.77%) or other Christian (46.84%).

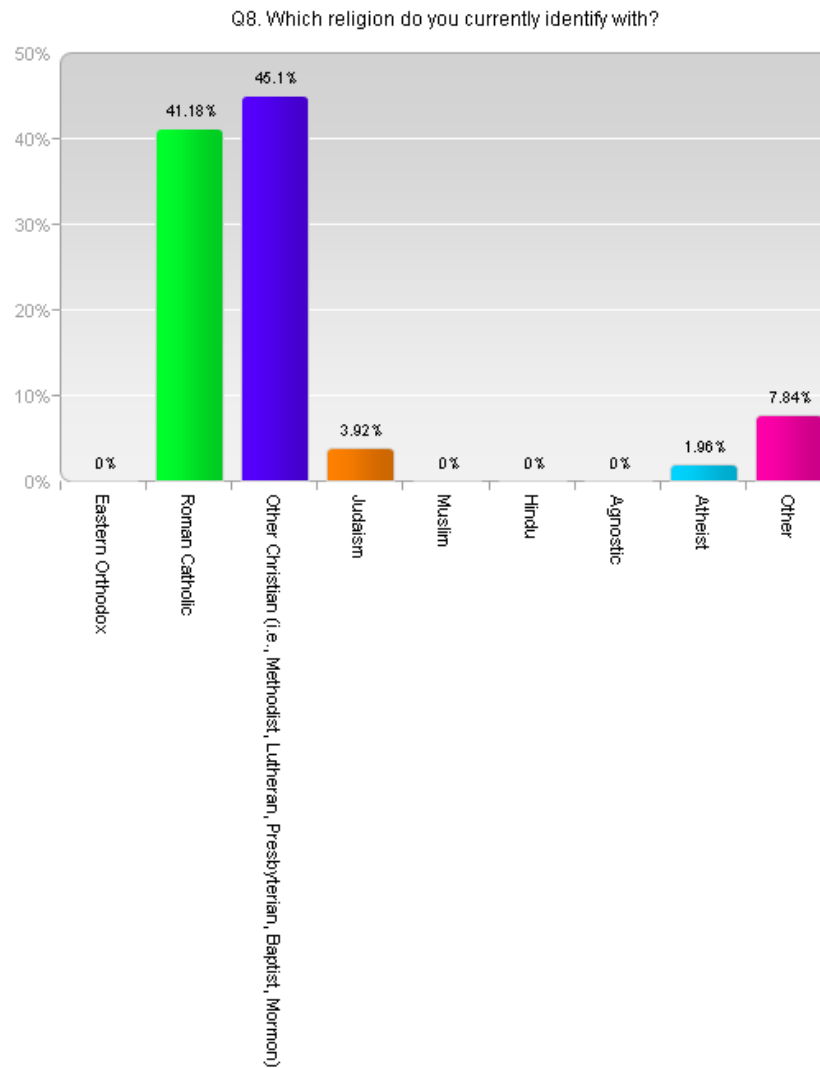


Q6. Which of the following categories best represents the religious orientation that you practiced as a child?



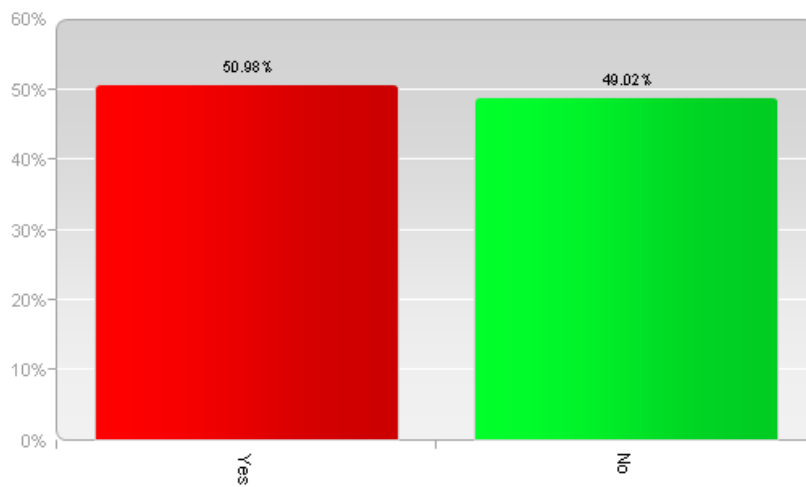
Despite the fact that over 81% were raised within a specific religion, when asked if the respondent currently identified with a specific religion 52% indicated yes and 48% did not currently identify with a religion. For those indicating a current religious preference, 41% identified themselves as Roman Catholic and 45% as Other Christian demonstrating that many continued to identify with the religion of their upbringing. The overwhelmingly Christian response rate is slightly higher than the results provided in the 2007 Pew U.S. Religious Landscape Survey which found that 78.4% of the respondents identified Christian as their religion (Pew, 2007).



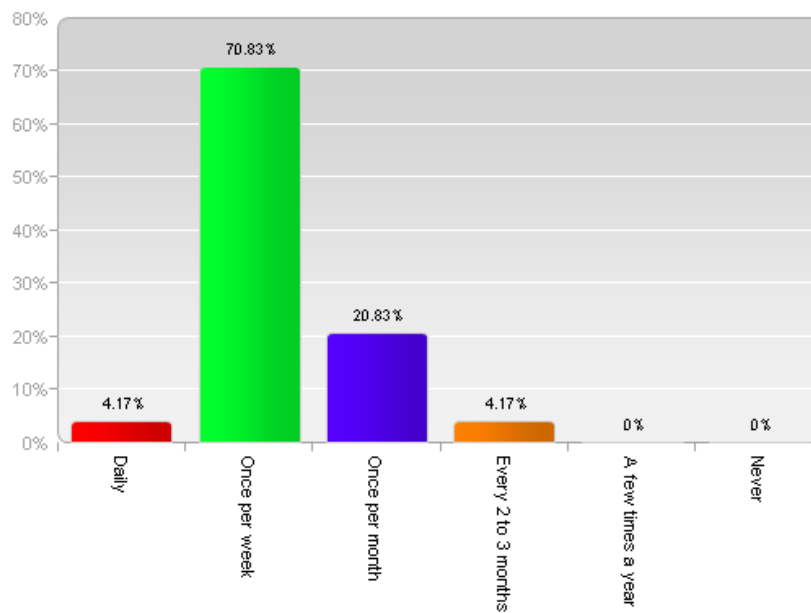


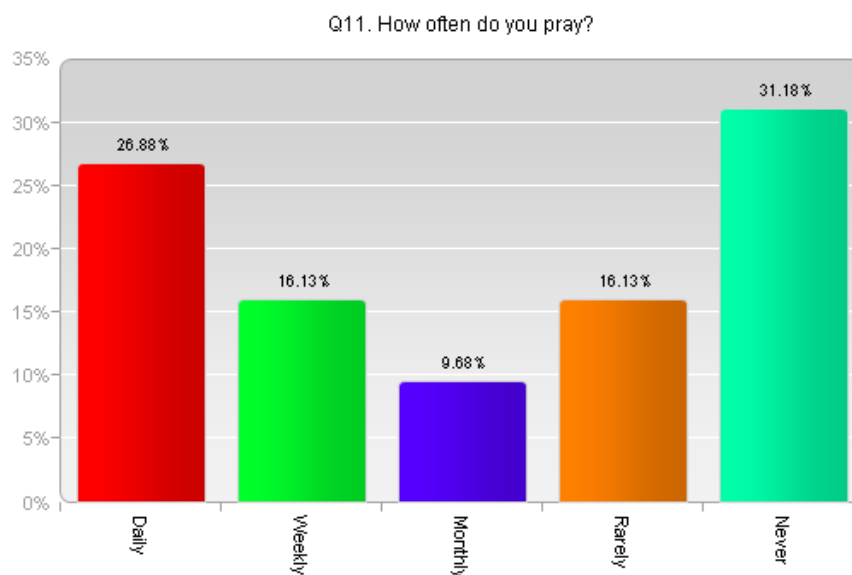
Of the respondents currently identifying with a particular religion, the frequency of practice was questioned with the majority of respondents with 71% indicating that they engage in a formal worship service once a week and 21% once a month. Frequency of prayer was also gauged to better understand the level of religiousness of the respondents, and of the 93 responses, 31% indicated never, 27% daily, 16% weekly, 10% monthly, and 16% rarely.

Q9. Do you actively participate in religious services?



Q10. How often do you participate in formal worship services (i.e., prayer groups, fellowship, formal worship services)?



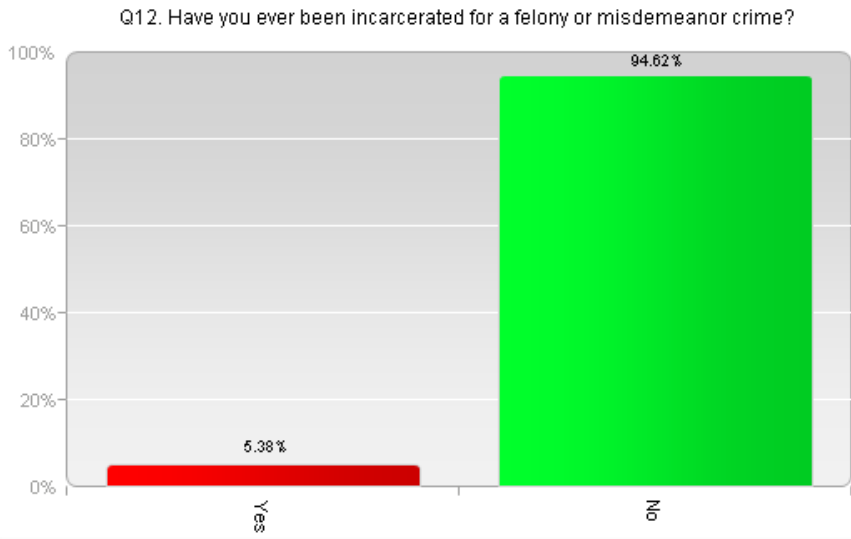


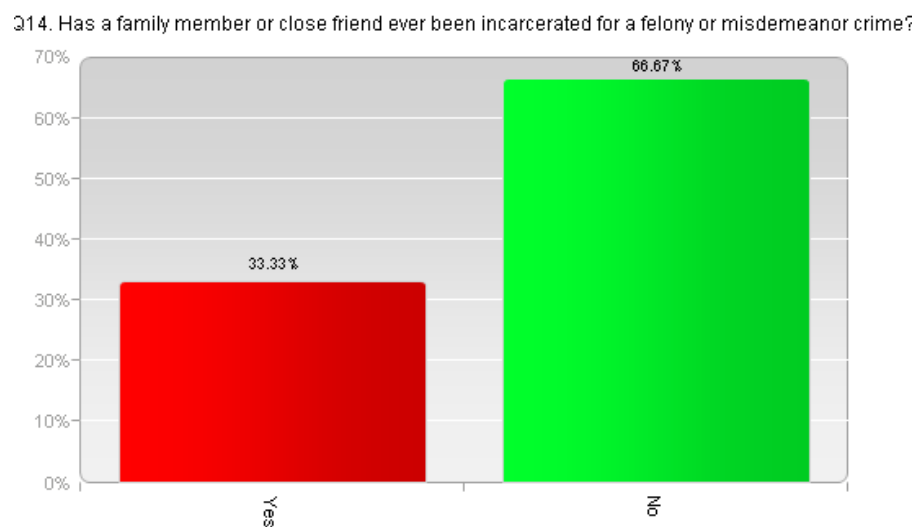
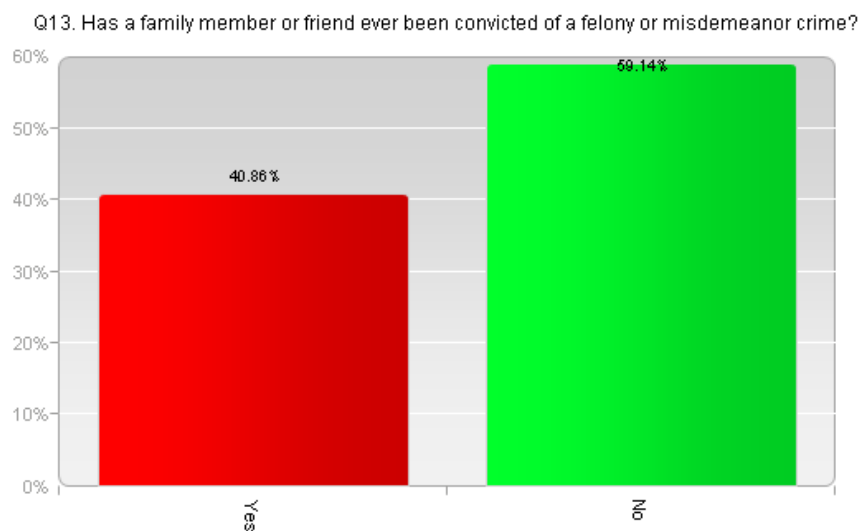
Exposure to Criminal Justice System

These questions were generated to identify exposure to the criminal justice system which could have an impact upon the overall level of understanding of offender-based programming. Individuals either having been convicted or close to someone who was convicted of a misdemeanor or felony, or were either themselves incarcerated or close to someone who had been could impact the way in which the qualitative questions were answered in either direction. The individual or close family member may have benefitted from offender programming enabling them to lead a productive life following release. They may also have been exposed to a “career criminal” seeing no indication that programming, whether based in a religious or secular context was beneficial in rehabilitating an offender. Also, there may be a level of ignorance associated with respondents indicating no exposure to the criminal justice system. Their experience could easily have been shaped by mainstream media skewing their answers in either direction, and could have an impact upon the way in which they responded to each of the questions. For analysis purposes, the intent

was to identify individuals with some type of exposure to the criminal justice system and compare certain responses to those individuals indicating no exposure.

Of the respondents, 5.83% indicated that they had been incarcerated for a felony or misdemeanor crime with 94.62% indicating no exposure, a metric that seems reasonable within a college student survey, however as the information was self-reported it should be understood that there is a significant margin of error in this regard. There were 59.14% indicating that a family member or friend had been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor with 33.33% indicating that either a family member or close friend was incarcerated for a felony or misdemeanor.





Attitudes and Opinions

Respondents were next asked a series of questions regarding their attitudes and opinions on the appropriate role of religion within correctional settings, as well as their perceptions of the potential impact of religiosity on criminal activity. A Likert Scale framework for possible responses was used: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. A different survey model may have eliminated the neutral response option to better gauge the support for the statement but may have unfairly required a respondent to

select a given option that may not have represented their true feelings on an issue. The neutral response option provided a more structured mechanism to demonstrate neither extreme support nor disagreement with a specific statement. We can see from the responses that specific questions elicited strong support or disagreement, while others yielded a much greater neutral response. We can better understand the rationale for each of the questions by focusing on the affirmative responses (AR) indicated by either agree or strongly agree versus the negative responses (NR) which included disagree or strongly disagree.

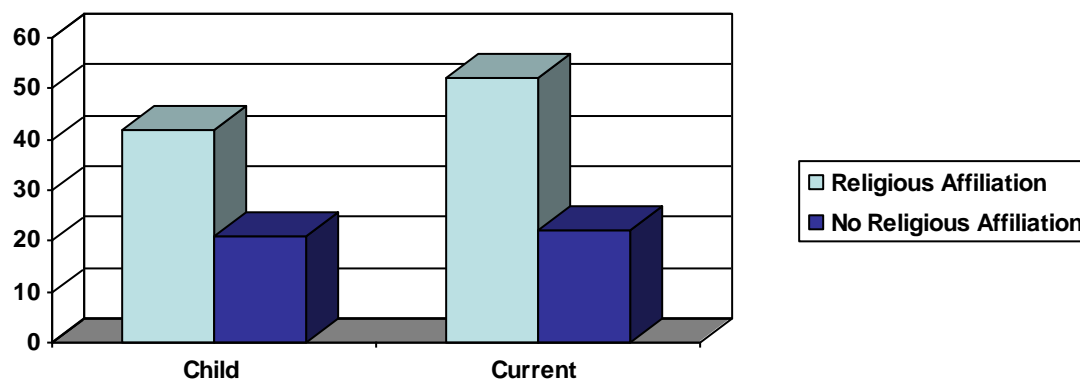
Qualitative Analysis

The questions were grouped to provide a framework for analysis along seven different areas: the impact of religiosity on criminal behavior in society (RCS), the freedom to practice religion during incarceration (FRI), prayer and incarceration (PI), religious participation and incarceration (RPI), religious vs. non-religious programming (RP), government funding for programming (GFP), and religion in general (RG). In considering the responses to these questions, the overwhelmingly high Christian response rate makes it difficult to gain any type of insight into the variance between religions, despite its close similarity to the Pew numbers from 2007.

Religiosity on Criminal Behavior in Society (RCS)

Two questions were designed to target RCS in question 15 and 16, producing high levels of neutral response, 34.41% and 29.02% respectively. The first, “Prayer and religious participation within a community can reduce criminal behavior in society” yielded a slightly higher affirmative response (AR) of 38% against 28% negative response (NR). When

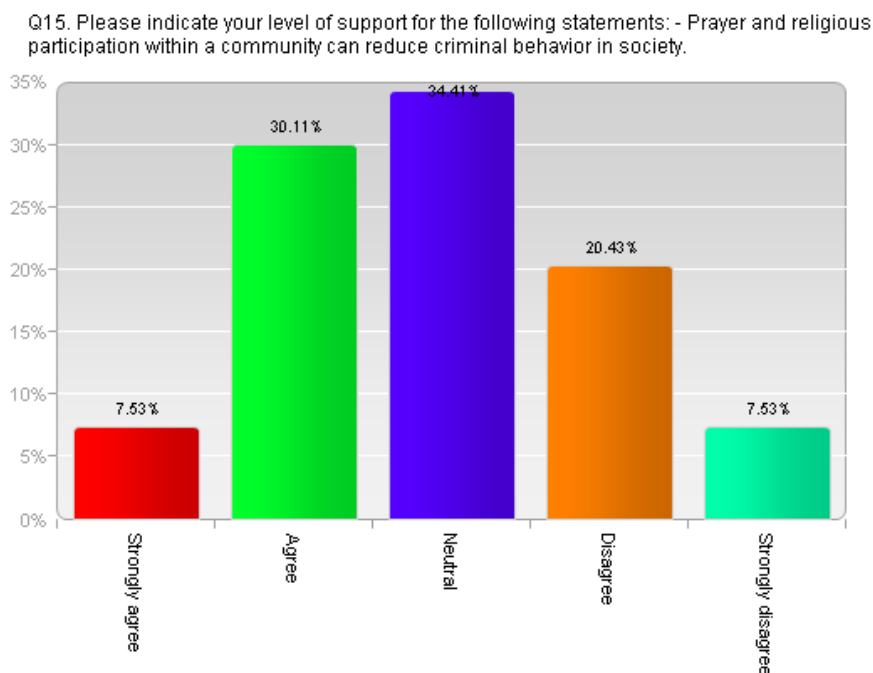
looking at the religiousness of the respondents there was a much higher AR for those having been raised within a specific religion (CR) at 42% than those without at 21%, a similar trend existed when looking at those currently identifying with a specific religion (R) with an AR of 52% and an NR of 22%. Additionally, 78% of the respondents indicating a level of religious participation either daily or once a week had an affirmative AR on this point. Similar results, with only minor variance were found when considering the same metrics for question 16, where the AR was higher for CR (42% vs. 31%) as well as the R grouping (48% vs. 28%).



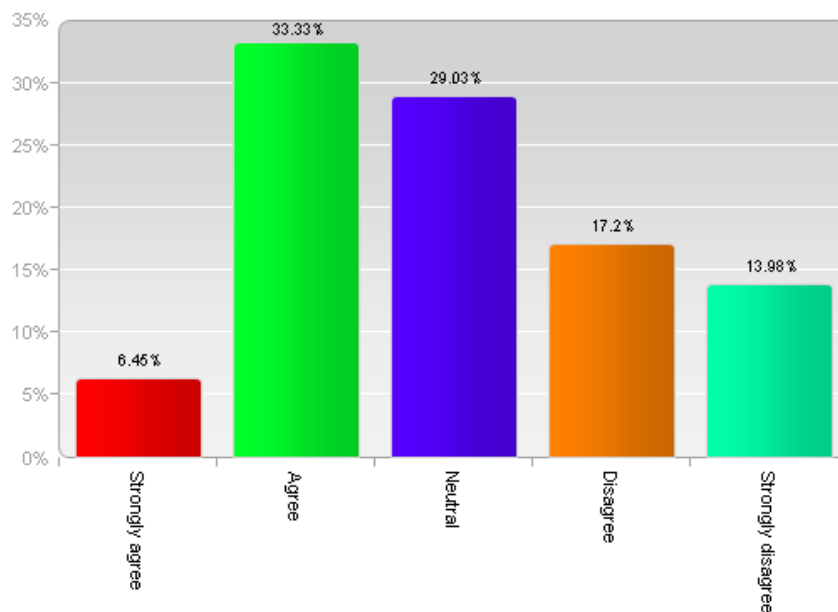
From this we can look back to Durkheim's Moral Community Hypothesis and the research of Stark et. al., (1982) where it is believed that religion can produce conformity and deter crime concluding that individuals having a strong identification with organized religion or individual faith see a stabilizing effect of religion within society. Those individuals categorized as identifying with a religion demonstrated a higher likelihood of supporting statements associated with the positive impact of religion within society, and those considered deeply religious, as practicing daily or once a week had the highest percentage of support for religion influencing society.

In looking at the same questions related to those with exposure to the criminal justice system we see similarly high rates of AR for both statements among those who were either

convicted of a felony or misdemeanor or had close personal ties to an individual who was convicted or incarcerated. A mean of the three questions (12, 13, and 14) yielded an AR of 47% and a NR of 32% for those having been exposed to the criminal justice system. For those indicating no exposure, an AR of 36% and an NR of 28% emerged, and similar results were found for question 16 with an average AR of 45% and an NR of 27% for those with exposure and an AR of 40% and an NR of 32% for those with no exposure, demonstrating an overall higher opinion of religion having a positive impact on crime within society for those with experience in the criminal justice system. The results seem to track with the Cullen study (2001), where it was concluded that “Americans, especially those who believe in a forgiving and loving God, are persuaded by the transformative power of religion, including the ability of faith to reform offenders” (Cullen et al., 31). Here again we see a belief in religion as a tool to fight future crime in society, but lack sufficient data in this study to see the impact on previously incarcerated men and women.



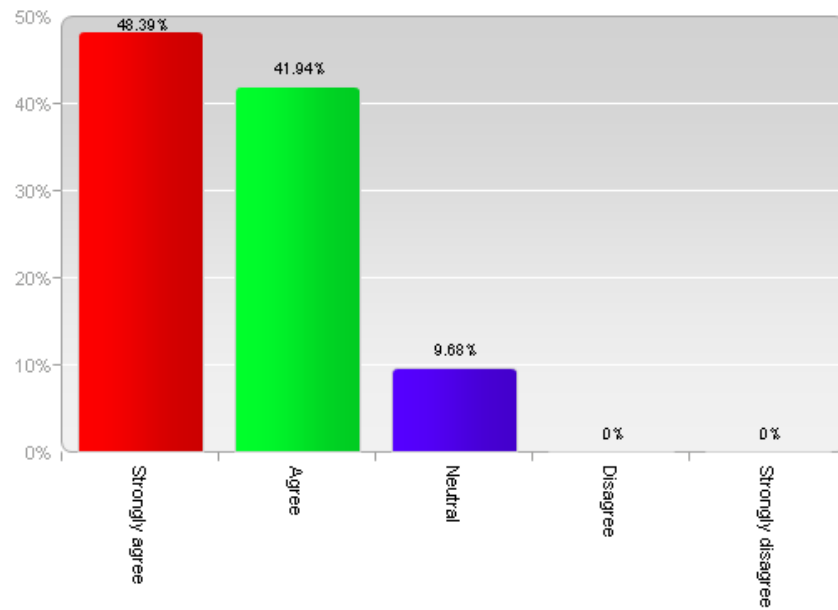
Q16. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Individuals who openly observe and participate with a specific religious faith are less likely to engage in criminal behavior.



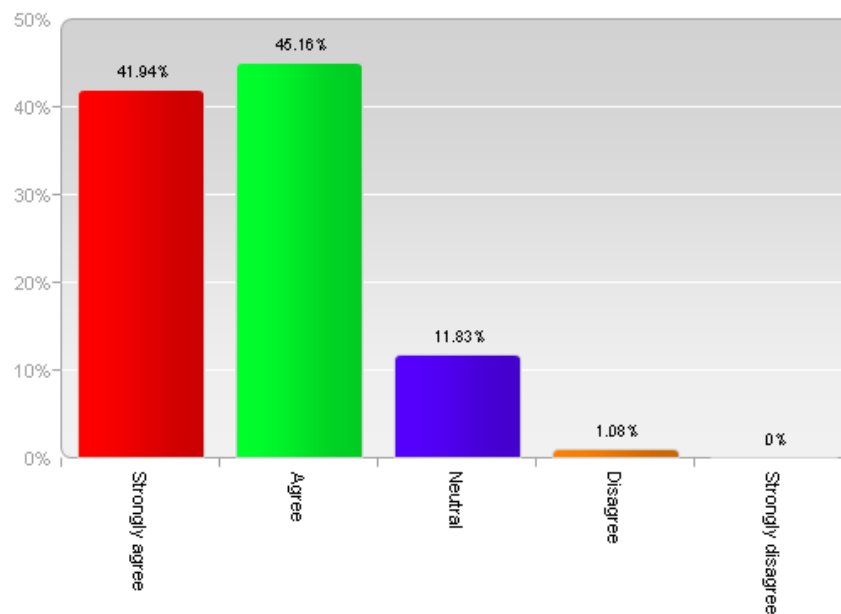
Freedom to Practice during Incarceration (FRI)

When considering whether or not incarcerated people had the right to practice religion during incarceration (FRI), the results were overwhelmingly affirmative. When questioned whether or not offenders had the right to practice the religion of their choice during incarceration (Q. 17) 90% fell within the AR category and 87% agreed that offenders should have the right to practice within a group (Q. 21). However, a smaller percentage (54%) indicated that they supported the designation of specific times and places with the correctional setting by administrators with an NR of 18%.

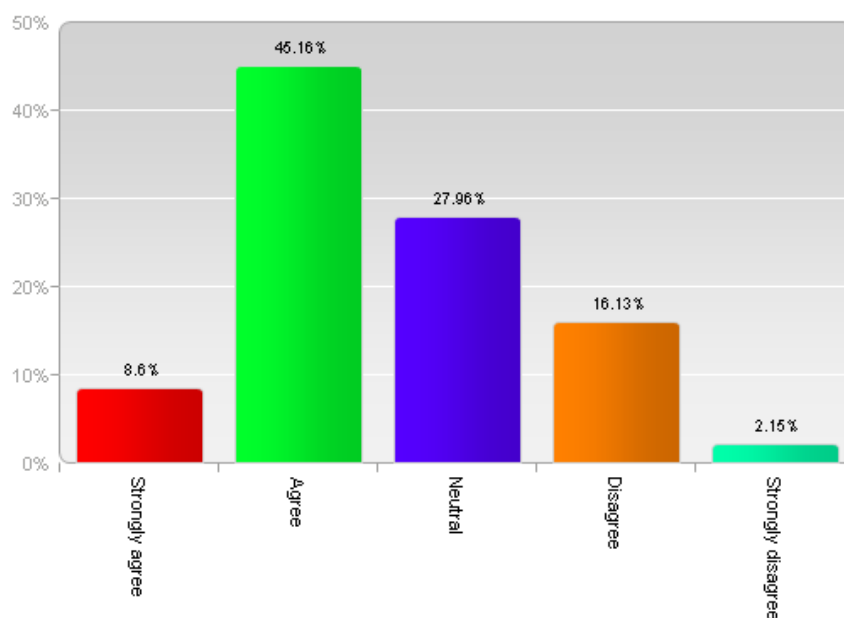
Q17. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Incarcerated people should have the right to freely practice the religion of their choice within the correctional setting.



Q21. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Incarcerated people should have the freedom to practice religion with a group inside prisons.



Q22. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Correctional administrators should designate specific times and places within prisons for incarcerated individuals to practice their religion.

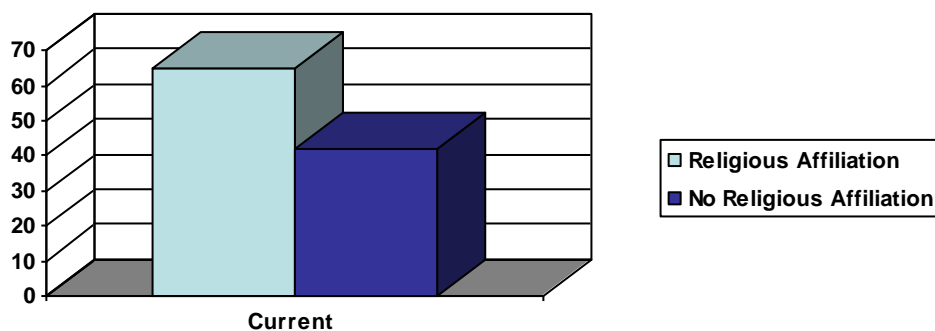


The survey shows that the overwhelming majority favored the freedom of offenders to pursue religious observance, a fact that corresponds to both federal and state policy regarding the corrections system. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 “established a single strict scrutiny standard for evaluation of the validity of any law or regulation that substantially burdens religious exercise.” Ultimately the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA) has become the standard for current correctional practice. This established standards for governmental actions and provides for the allowance of individual inmates to file private civil suits against governmental entities. Furthermore, the Justice Department is empowered to investigate alleged RLUIPA violations and may bring suit to enforce the statute.

Under these laws, inmates have the freedom to pursue whichever religion they choose and have the opportunity to engage in many of the customary practices contained within the religion. The Federal Bureau of Prisons recognizes eight religious groupings which contain a

variety of faiths within them: Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Native American, Buddhist, Hindu, Pagan, and Unitarians. The two largest groups in both federal and most state prisons are Christians and Muslims (Reynolds, 7).

When looking at the qualitative variations of religious preference regarding the provision of time and space dedicated to religious worship we see some trends in survey responses. Of the 74 responses indicating a religious denomination as a child, though 89% indicated that offenders had the right to practice religion during incarceration (Q. 17 and 21), only 60% felt that correctional administrators should designate specific times and places with 18% in the NR category. Of those who indicated current religious affiliation, though 92% supported religious freedom, only 65% felt specific actions should be taken by administrators to accommodate needs. For those without religious upbringing the number drops to 42% with a much higher percentage observing a neutral opinion and a similar 18% in the NR category.

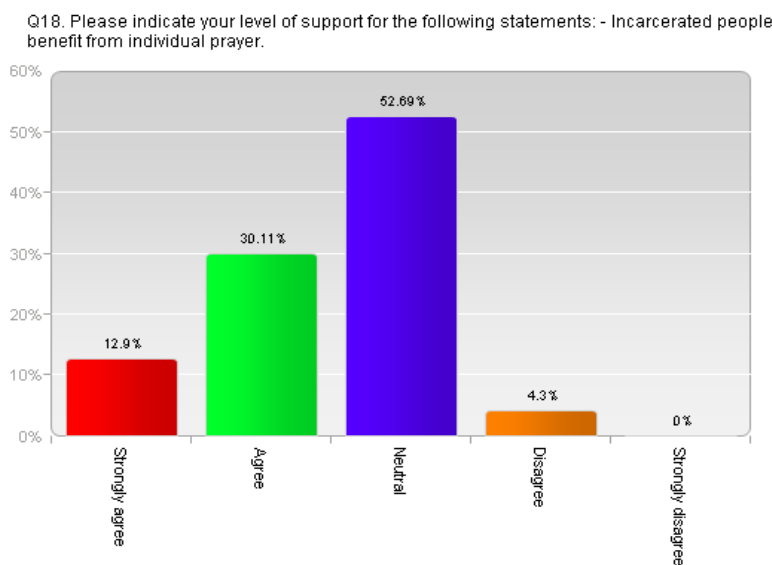


In examining responses from those with exposure to the criminal justice system, we find little variance within the AR and NR sections demonstrating similar feelings regardless of criminal exposure. Two questions were designed to identify respondent support for the freedom to practice religion (Q. 17 and Q. 21) where 90% and 87% of respondents looked favorably upon religious freedom by providing an AR, but only 55% supported the provisions of action on the part of correctional administrators to accommodate those needs

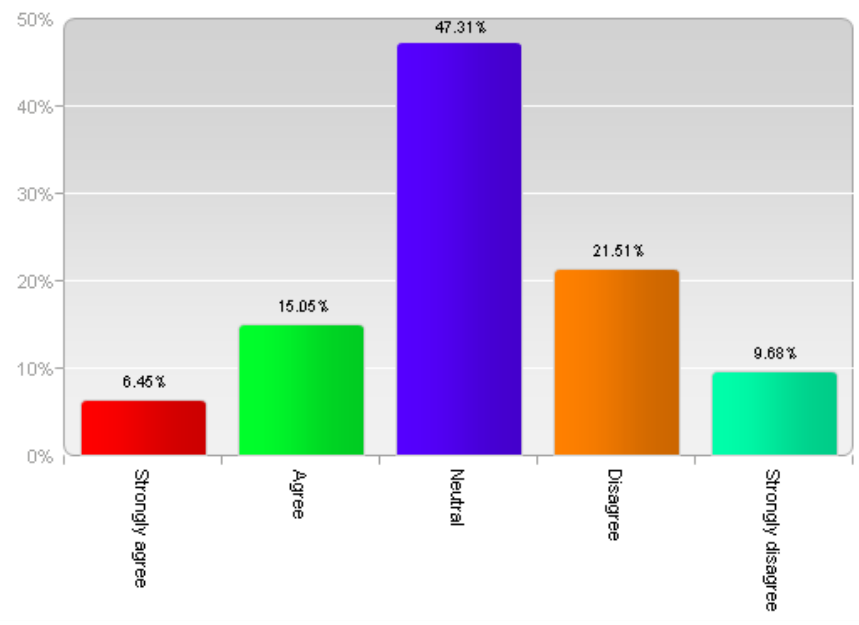
with 18% falling in the NR category. Despite support for religious freedom and nationwide policies dictating the enforcement and provisions required for offenders to practice, the survey raises questions as to the level of support for specific provisions to carry out this function, a question that will be further addressed when considering the level of support for government resources on religious based programs.

Prayer and Incarceration (PI)

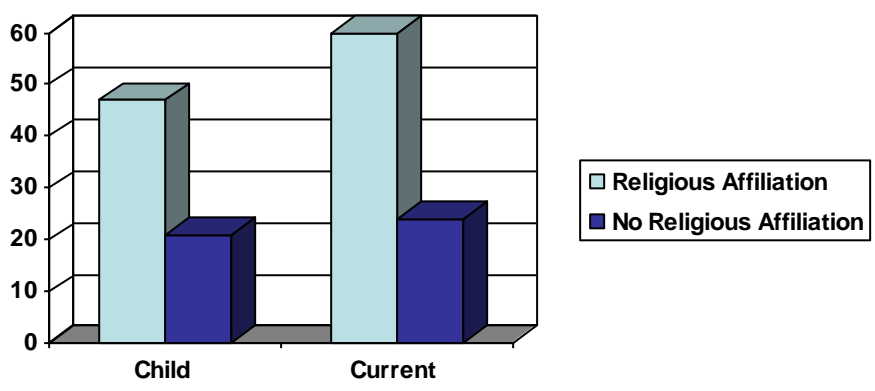
The next phase of the survey focuses on the level of support for prayer as a tool in rehabilitative programming (PI) by focusing on whether or not survey respondents agreed that prayer could benefit an offender (Q. 18), or if prayer could prevent future criminal activity (Q. 19). This grouping demonstrated a high rate of neutral response at 53% when asked if prayer benefits incarcerated people and 47% regarding whether prayer can prevent future convictions. The AR for individual prayer accounted for 43% of responses against the NR at 4%, however in terms of preventing future incarceration the AR was reduced to 22% and the NR increased to 31%, demonstrating a belief that prayer can benefit offenders, but may not prevent future incarceration.



Q19. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Incarcerated people who engage in individual prayer are less likely to be convicted of a new crime following release from prison



Individuals indicating a tie to religion either as a child or currently had a much higher AR (47% and 60%) than those lacking religious affiliation (21% and 24%).



However, for those indicating no religion as a child the NR was much higher at 11% regarding the benefits of prayer than compared to 3% for those observing as a child.

Further, for the group indicating a high rate of prayer, either daily or weekly, the AR was 29% versus 8% for those who pray rarely or never showing higher levels of support for the benefits of prayer.

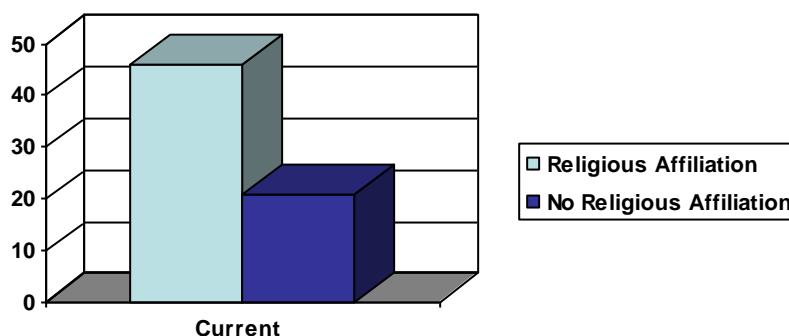
In considering the impact of prayer on future crimes, the CR group showed an AR of 24% and an NR of 31%, and for the R group the NR was more than three times higher at 38%. For those indicating active participation in religious services that AR was two times as many as those who do not actively participate in religious services, and the NR rate for non-practicing respondents, at 38%, was almost three times as many as those who practiced. For those who indicated a high rate of prayer as either daily or weekly, 16% had an AR and 5% NR, whereas the group associated with little prayer, rarely or never, 3% had an AR and 22% an NR, seven times as many. Here the distinction between those identifying with a religion and actively participating believed more strongly that prayer can benefit an offender in terms of reducing future incarceration rates. It would seem that there is common ground between the results and the research provided in the 2001 Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life where it was found that 56% of Americans favor school prayer as an effective way to improve adolescent behavior with over 75% agreeing that religion should be a part of raising children (Event transcript, 2). The same sentiment, though not as high as the data indicates for adolescents, can be seen in the public opinions regarding prayer and adult criminal behavior.

Religious Participation and Incarceration (RPI)

In an attempt to gain insight into the level of support for religious participation during incarceration (RPI), two questions (Q. 20 and 23) were included and both provided a high level of Neutral response. The first dealt with general observance and active participation eliciting a higher a higher AR at 31% than the NR at 23%. We see a slight difference when the question is phrased to include participation within a group setting with an AR of 19% to

an NR of 25%, a response that tracks with the earlier data indicating a high rate of support for the freedom to practice, but a drop when asked if administrators should make specific accommodations.

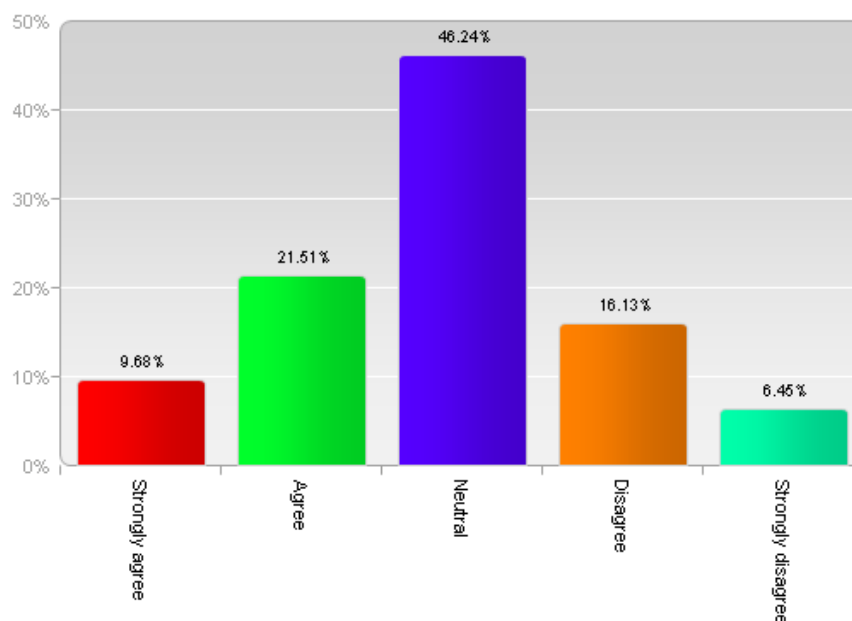
In considering religious observance and active participation (Q. 20), we again see a higher rate of support among the religiously affiliated groups over the non-affiliated groups with the greatest disparity coming from current religious observers (R) with an AR of 46% to 21%.



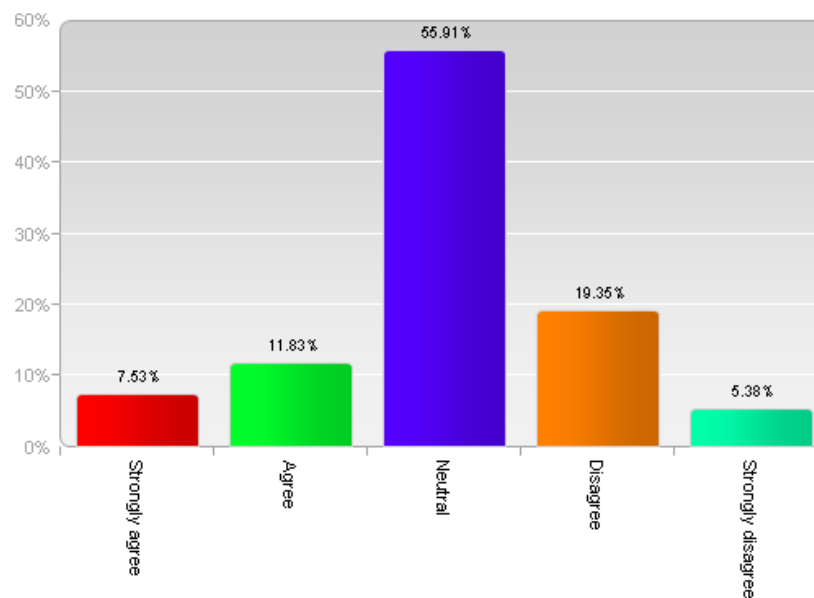
Additionally, for those indicating active participation within a religion, the AR was four and a half times greater (58% to 13%), whereas the non-religious groups were only a few percentage points off on the responses. We also see a greater level of support among those indicating a higher rate of prayer, 20% to 5% against those with a low rate showing an AR of 6% to 15%.

We see a much greater disparity on the issue of group activities. The NR rate is higher in almost all categories including religion as a child. For those indicating no current religious affiliation we see an NR of 29% to and AR of 9%. The frequency of prayer grouping shows the high participation group at 15% AR and 5% NR, and almost the exact opposite response for the less frequent group with an AR of 2% and an NR of 15%. On both issues there was higher AR for those with experience in the criminal justice system.

Q20. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Religious observance and active participation in religious activities during incarceration can reduce future criminal activities for ex-prisoners after release.



Q23. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Incarcerated people who participate in religious activities with a group setting are less likely to be convicted of a new crime upon release.



On these issues we see a trend in the data which tracks with much of the research that has been conducted regarding the impact of religiosity on crime in society and on incarceration. Those with deeply held religious beliefs, as identified by alignment with a

specific religion as a child or currently, as well as the frequency of religious practice, we see a higher rate of faith in the value of religious orientation on crime and behavior.

Additionally, those with some type of exposure to the criminal justice system have a higher rate of support in the reformative power of religious association, which is obviously motivated through their own experience or perhaps a general sense of hope that answers can be provided through religious observance and participation. We must now look at the responses in terms of how they are viewed specifically towards incarceration and the programming that is inherent to rehabilitation. The secular/sectarian argument has been part of our nations' discourse since our very founding, where the precept of religious freedom was acknowledged and codified in our Constitution. However, as history has shown, the very nature and existence of religion within our system of government has been challenged over time, giving rise to numerous questions as to how it should be understood and included within the context of governing, a question that this research could influence.

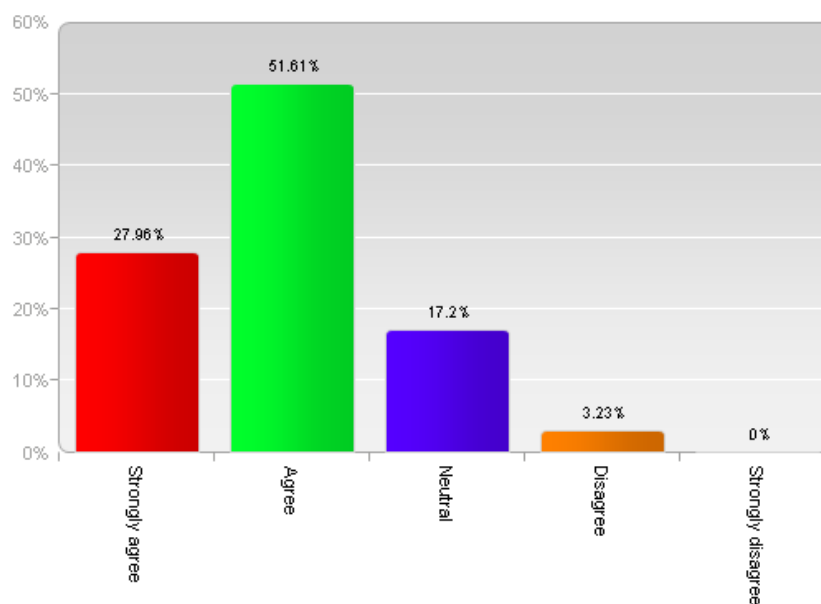
Religious observance has been part of the criminal justice system for centuries, but only in recent years has government sanctioned funding for religiously based programs placing it on an equal playing field within our social service providers. This has caused many to seek answers to the question of the value of religious based programming versus secular programs designed to target cognitive restructuring, education, and substance abuse treatment.

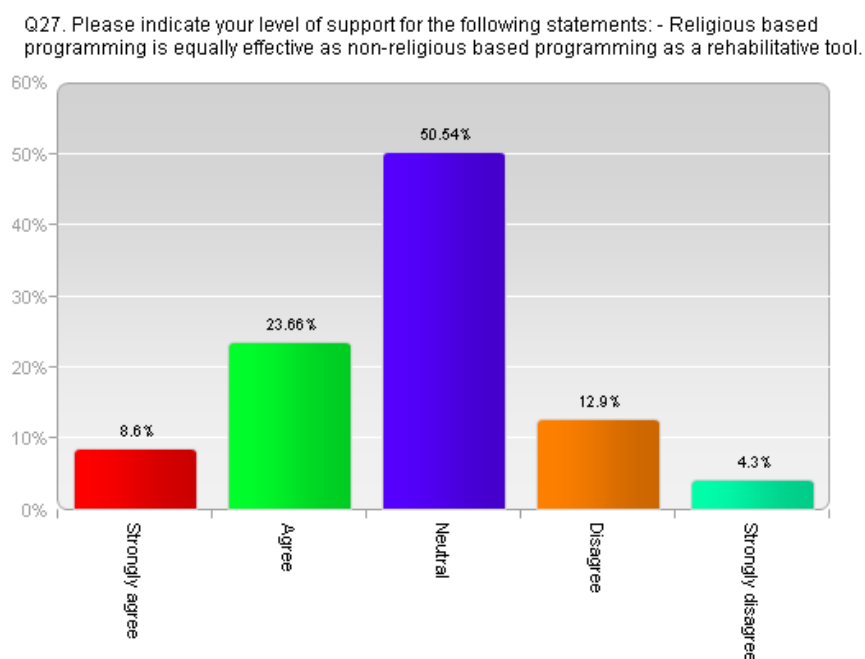
Religious versus Non-Religious Programming (RP)

When asked if respondents supported non-religious based programming for rehabilitative value an overwhelming 80% of respondents responded in support with almost

30% indicating strong agreement to the statement and only 3% indicating disagreement (Q. 24). A much higher neutral response at 50% was taken when asked if religious-based programming was equally as effective as a rehabilitative tool (Q. 27). Here we only see a 32% AR compared to a 17% AR, a statement showing a much stronger level of support for programming that is secular in nature, a stark difference from the 2009 Annual Religion and Public Life Survey which found that 69% of Americans favor faith-based programs (Cullen, 32), perhaps because this question was directed specifically as programs for the incarcerated.

Q24. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Non-religious programming to support substance abuse treatment, education, and job skills development is an effective rehabilitative tool for incarcerated people.





For the RP issue, among those currently identifying with a religious based orientation, we see 81% in support of prison programming, but when asked if religious based programming is equally effective that percentage is cut almost in half to 42%. A similar trend exists for those not currently identified with a religious preference where non-religious programming receives an AR of 78%, but only 22% support religious based programming. The NR for all groups was low, between 0 and 4% for non-religious programming, but increased to a range of 13 to 22% when asked if religious programs were equally as effective. A strong distinction regarding religious preference for rehabilitative programming is established by these questions among the cohort, which will continue when specific questions regarding the support of government funding are raised in the next round of statements.

Policy initiatives over the past decade have shaped the way that pervasively sectarian groups can access government funding to provide social services including rehabilitative programming within our nation's criminal justice system. Beginning in 2001, the Bush

administration issued an Executive Order creating the White House Office of Faith Based and Community initiatives designed to create a "...national effort to expand opportunities for faith-based and other community organizations and to strengthen their capacity to better meet social needs in America's communities" (Black 297). In 2002 he issued Executive Order 13279, the Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations, requiring federal aid be given without discrimination based upon religious belief or the ideology of the group's administration, thus expanding the reach of faith-based groups to provide social services (Black, 302).

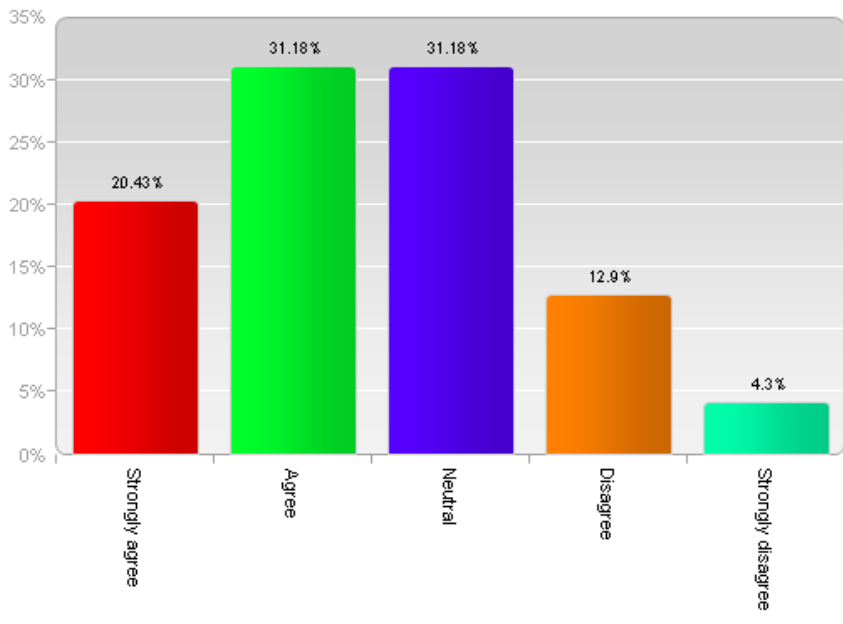
In looking at prisoner reentry and substance abuse programming under the Bush administration it is estimated that over 250,000 people received services offered by faith based programs (Carlson-Thiess, 2008, 940), but there is not a clear way to measure the success of such programs.

Government Funding for Programming (GFP)

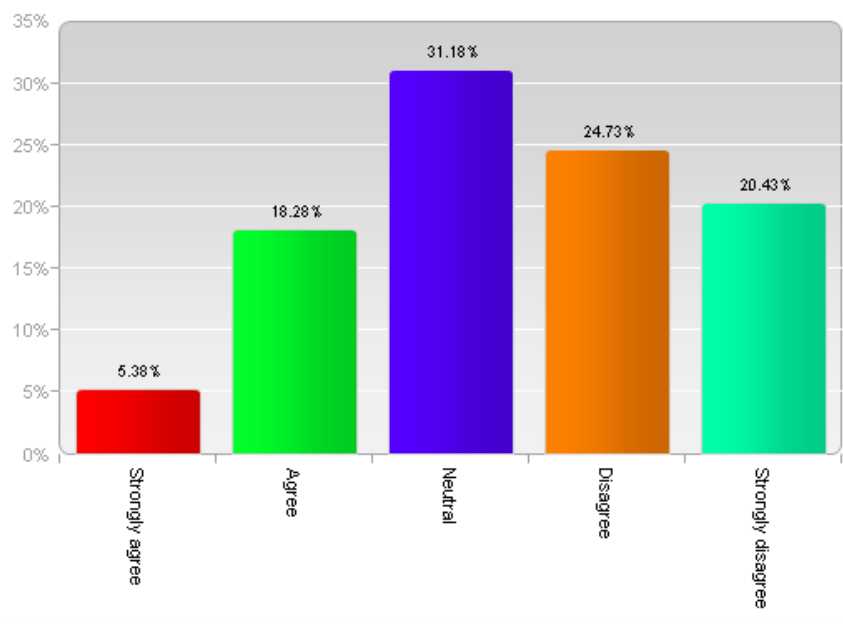
The 2001 and 2009 Pew Forums on Religion and Public Life showed public support for faith-based programming, but failed to address the issue of cost and the investment that the American public was willing to make in funding religiously based programming. Two survey questions were dedicated to determining the level of support for GFP showing a stark contrast in the level of support among the cohort. When asked if tax dollars should fund non-religious rehabilitative programming, 52% agreed, 31% were neutral, and only 17% disagreed (Q. 25). Regarding the statement, "Tax dollars should be used to support religious based programming designed to rehabilitate offenders" only 24% agreed, with 31% neutral and 45% falling issuing a negative response. The lack of support for accommodations as

well as funding for sectarian programs becomes starkly apparent within the response to these questions with 20% stating that they strongly disagree.

Q25. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Tax dollars should be used to support non-religious rehabilitative programming for incarcerated people prior to release.



Q26. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements: - Tax dollars should be used to support religious based programming designed to rehabilitate offenders.



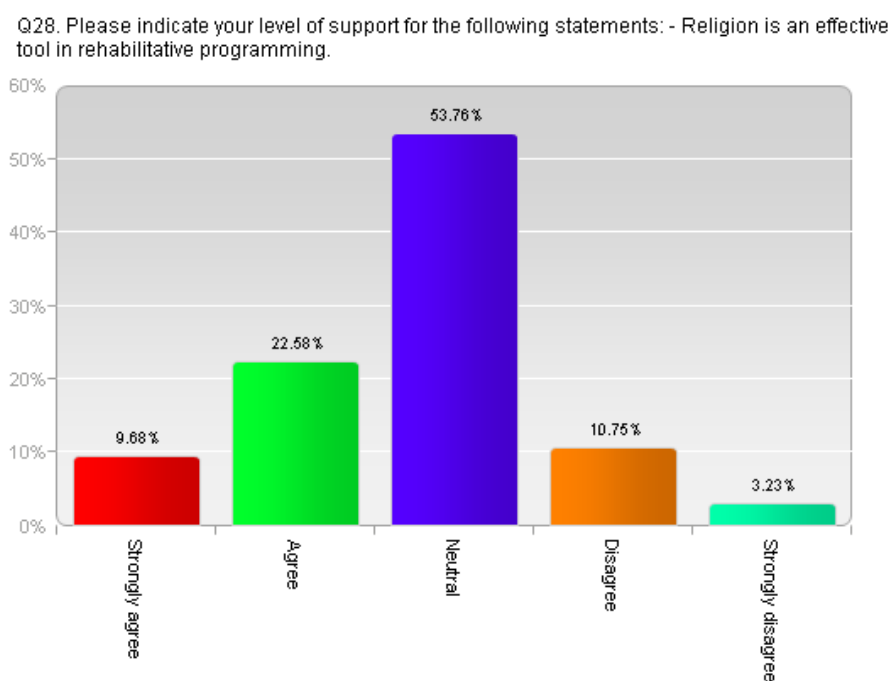
Similar to the questions regarding religious based programming, the RPI set has a shift when contrasting funding for non-religious versus religious – based programming. For those individuals indicating a connection to religion either as a child or currently, the AR for non-religious funding ranges from 46 to 58%, and the NR from 11 to 23%. However, when asked if the same group supported funding for religious programming the AR drops to a range of 17 to 29% and the NR increases dramatically with the greatest surge in those identified as not currently participating in services at 67%. There is also a dramatic increase in NR for the group with some type of exposure to the criminal justice system rising from a range of 13 to 20% for non-religious programming to 40 to 55% for religiously based programming.

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

The research provides some distinct conclusions related to public support for religious based programming within the criminal justice system, but certain questions regarding the survey respondents must be addressed. The study had a disproportionately high response rate from white females and those identifying a Christian background. According to data provided from Towson University officials, the overall gender breakdown of students in 2010 was overwhelmingly white at 69% and a higher percentage of women at 64%. Though the age breakdown of the student is unknown, the highest percentage of students graduating in 2010 were for Bachelor degrees at 3,625 and those for post-Bachelor work at slightly over 1,000. Traditionally, ages representing the largest population would have been between 18 and 22 for Bachelor's. The large percentage of respondents within the ages of 24-30 may demonstrate a selection bias among respondents, attracting a more mature

Towson University student interested in the topic of religion. Also the high rate of neutral response does demonstrate certain ambivalence to some of the questions isolating an AR and NR from a more actively engaged or affiliated religious respondent.

The research does, however show some level of support for the use of religion as a tool in rehabilitative programming, which despite a high level of neutral response to question 28 (RG), we see a higher rate of support at 32% than the NR at 14%.



There is a significant distinction in the level of support for religious programming both in terms of administrative action and government funding. Universally, the data indicates strong support for an individual's right to practice religion during incarceration, but a trend begins to emerge questioning the need for correctional administrators to make specific accommodations for prisoners. We also see a higher rate of disagreement when

asked if offenders are less likely to be convicted of a new crime if they engage in religious activities within a group setting.

Though the respondents support religion, they do not support funding for religiously based programming during incarceration. Several studies taken during the first decade of the 21st century indicate a positive level of support among people regarding faith-based programming. That data, however, failed to specifically ask whether or not the American public was in favor of publicly funding religious programming within our correctional setting. The data indicates that over 80% of respondent's support prison programming, but only 32% support funding for religiously based programming.

On almost all levels, individuals indicating a religious affiliation either as a youth or currently, have a higher degree of support for religious based programs within the criminal justice system supporting the findings of the moral community hypothesis. Additionally, in general terms there was a greater degree of faith in religion on behavior in society and in its rehabilitative impacts from those individuals with some type of exposure to the criminal justice system. But, the study raises certain questions that policy makers need to consider in making critical investments within our criminal justice system. The prison population continues to grow at an alarming rate causing leaders to focus on programs designed to support rehabilitation and reduce rates of recidivism. A much broader study encompassing a more diverse field could be conducted to support the data in this study. Specifically, a broader geographic field could provide further support to the argument giving policy makers more data to consider when making both financial and administrative investments.

A study involving the overall impact of religion on rates of recidivism and incarceration must also be conducted to provide a clearer direction as to the impact of

religiously based programs on successful reductions in criminal behaviors. This study provides some support for the conclusion that the public favors an incarcerated person's right to practice religion and among those who are religiously affiliated see a defined benefit to this type of involvement. However, they are not as supportive in directing government resources to support this type of activity, providing some framework to shape policy decisions by correctional administrators. Continued investment in faith-based programming and government resources dedicated to support religious worship may not be vehicles that the public favors as a rehabilitative tool. It is clear that more research is needed and must be broadened to ensure a diverse gender and ethnic response. Further, additional studies that specifically track recidivism and incarceration rates tied to an offender population affiliated with religious practice could provide consistent answers as to the reformatory power of religion on criminal behavior. This may provide a better framework to determine if faith, through religious orientation and practice, does provide a pathway to salvation strengthening the argument for specific policy actions within our criminal justice system.

Appendix A

Public Perception on Religion and Criminal Behavior – Charles Beeson

1. Principal Investigator - Charles Beeson, Towson University

The following survey is part of a Thesis designed to better understand public perception of the impact of faith on criminal behavior. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and will not impact your academic standing at Towson University.

All information about your responses will remain confidential and will not be associated with your identity. If you should have questions after today, you can call the Principal Investigator, Charles Beeson at (443) 739- 0225, or the Faculty Sponsor, Dr. Miriam Sealock (410) 704-5165 or call (410) 704-2236 and ask for Dr. Debi Gartland, Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants at Towson University.

Yes, I consent

2. What is your age?

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24 - 30
- 30 +

3. What is your current academic year?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate
- Other

4. What is your primary field of study (Major)?

5. As a child did your family identify with and practice a particular religion?

- Yes
- No

*** - if the answer to this question is no the survey should skip ahead to question 7

6. Which of the following categories best represents the religious orientation that you practiced as a child?

- Eastern Orthodox
- Roman Catholic
- Other Christian (i.e. Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, Mormon, etc.)
- Judaism
- Muslim
- Hindu
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Other

7. Do you currently identify with a specific religion?

- Yes
- No

*** - if the answer to this question is no the survey should skip ahead to question 11

8. Which religion do you currently identify with?

- Eastern Orthodox
- Roman Catholic
- Other Christian (i.e. Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, Mormon, etc.)
- Judaism
- Muslim
- Hindu
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Other

9. Do you actively participate in religious services?

- Yes
- No

*** - if the answer to this question is no the survey should move to question 11

10. How often do you participate in formal worship services (i.e. prayer groups, fellowship, formal worship services, etc.)?

- Daily
- Once per week
- Once per month
- Every 2 to 3 months
- A few times a year
- Never

11. How often do you pray?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely
- Never

12. Have you ever been incarcerated for a felony or misdemeanor crime?

- Yes
- No

13. Has a family member or friend ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor crime?

- Yes
- No

14. Has a family member or close friend ever been incarcerated for a felony or misdemeanor crime?

- Yes
- No

15. Please indicate your level of support for the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Prayer and religious participation within a community can reduce criminal behavior in society.				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Individuals who openly observe and participate with a specific religious faith are less likely to engage in criminal behavior.					
c. Incarcerated people should have the right to freely practice the religion of their choice within the correctional setting.		<input type="radio"/>			
d. Incarcerated people benefit from individual prayer.					
e. Incarcerated people who engage in individual prayer are less likely to be convicted of a new crime following release from prison.	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	
f. Religious observance and active participation in religious activities during incarceration can reduce future criminal activities for ex-prisoners after release.					
g. Incarcerated people should have the freedom to practice	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	

religion with a group inside prisons.

h. Correctional administrators should designate specific times and places within prisons for incarcerated individuals to practice their religion.

i. Incarcerated people who participate in religious activities with a group setting are less likely to be convicted of a new crime upon release.

j. Non-religious programming to support substance abuse treatment, education, and job skills development is an effective rehabilitative tool for incarcerated people.

k. Tax dollars should be used to support non-religious rehabilitative programming for incarcerated people prior to release.

I. Tax dollars should be used to support religious based programming designed to rehabilitate offenders.

m. Religious based programming is equally effective as non-religious based programming as a rehabilitative tool.

n. Religion is an effective tool in rehabilitative programming.

16. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

17. What is your race/ethnicity?

- White or Caucasian
- African-American or African descent
- Asian
- Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Native Alaskan
- Other

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C. Jeff Beeson

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OBJECTIVE

To develop comprehensive strategies to improve and enhance Maryland's future workforce.

QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

Several years of progressive experience developing workforce strategies for Maryland's untapped population including employment assistance, access to social services, and community support. Experience working at both the state and federal level accessing funding opportunities and developing successful policy initiatives through collaborative relationships. Experience in grant acquisition and data management to track outcomes and achieve funding requirements. Excellent communications and writing skills with experience developing publications and articles designed to promote office and agency initiatives.

EDUCATION

Towson University

The Graduate College – Expected completion date – May 2011

Master of Science Degree in Social Sciences

The College of Liberal Arts – Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science

EXPERIENCE

Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

Baltimore, MD

Director, Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (November 2010 to present)

410-767-2968

Provide leadership to Maryland's Apprenticeship and Training Program to develop and cultivate structured training programs for employees engaged in registered apprenticeship programs. Work with employers seeking to establish and recruit apprentices in a variety of industries, ensuring that placement and training meets nationwide standards. Direct all marketing and outreach activities to extend the scope of apprenticeship as part of the administrations efforts to enhance Maryland's workforce strategy. Present at state and national conferences targeting industry and business needs, develop materials and social media outreach to increase the number of apprenticeable trades, track data associated with over 9,000 apprentices statewide. Oversee budget development and all aspects of policy related to the unit, including staff recruitment and development. Leverage state and federal resources, including grants and federal contracts. Serve as the Department's representative on the Maryland Reentry Task Force and on the Board of the Maryland Center for Construction Education and Innovation. Provide leadership to the Maryland Correctional Education Advisory Board. Provide leadership and development for the Department's annual Apprenticeship Summits.

Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning

Baltimore, MD

Deputy Assistant Secretary (April 2010 to November 2010)

410-767-2968

Responsible for the integration and alignment of adult and correctional education programs within Maryland's workforce system. Developed policies to strengthen and align the Department's correctional education programs with industry needs establishing career pathways for individuals incarcerated in Maryland's prison system. Worked with adult education grant recipients to align graduates with career opportunities. Provided leadership in the development of a comprehensive strategy to enhance data tracking and oversight to align with the Governor's State Stat office. Served as liaison between the

Governor's Delivery Unit, local workforce offices, and Maryland business to drive graduates of correctional and adult education programs to the workforce. Developed outreach material designed to market the skill and experience gained while involved in adult education programs specifically for graduate recruitment.

Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary, May 2008 – April 2010

Special Assistant to the Secretary (July 2009 – Present)

Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary/Chief of Staff (May 2008 – July 2009)

Towson, MD

410-339-5096

Responsibilities included daily briefings with the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and executive staff members regarding critical mission specific Departmental initiatives. Responsible for the development and support of policies related to the Department's workforce development strategy for the inmate population. Serve as liaison to the Governor's Workforce Investment Board's Interagency Workforce Committee to ensure that Departmental objectives support the goals and priorities set forth by the Administration and the newly developed Skills2Compete Maryland initiative. Provide coordination and support to the Department's Public Safety Works projects in terms of identifying and managing relationships and contractual arrangements with community and government partners. Assist in the development of responses and staff briefing to the Department's StateStat and Baystat sessions. Staff the Prison Violence Task Force, a legislatively mandated entity designed to identify areas that contribute to prison violence and develop a set of comprehensive recommendations to reduce future violence within Maryland's prisons. Provide support to the communications team, including the drafting of publications and "white papers" to develop comprehensive media strategies designed to enhance the image of the Department. Oversaw the Department's internship program to ensure that college students were recruited to fill vital staff vacancies.

Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE), April 2004 – May 2008

Executive Director, Maryland Correctional Enterprises Management Council, Marketing Department, and MCE CARES (Continuing Allocation of Re-Entry Services)

Jessup, MD

410-540-5400

Responsible for all aspects of government relations including policy management, bill drafting, legislative review, lobbying, and testimony for MCE. Developed and directed MCE CARES, a program designed to provide critical educational curriculum and workforce acquisition strategies to complement the job skills and experience of MCE's inmate workforce. Responsible for the development of community partnerships to ensure that returning offenders had access to community support and services to strengthen successful socialization. Provided direction and leadership for the marketing operations of MCE, a \$50 million revenue generating agency, including direct management of marketing staff and the development of image enhancing and customer relationships. Served as the Director of the Management Council, a body which acts in the same capacity as a board of directors for private industry. Responsibilities included the planning and coordination of meeting agendas, topics, and the composition of the annual report on behalf of Council members.

Office of the Secretary, October 2003 – April 2004

Special Assistant to the Secretary

Towson, MD

410-339-5005

Responsibilities included the completion of special projects assigned by the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries for the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. Coordinated and staffed the Secretary during field visits and official appearances. Served as primary manager of Governor's correspondence and fulfilled all legislative requests and research for the Department.

Anne Arundel Community College

Prison To Work Instructor, July 2005 – July 2008

Jessup, MD

410-777-2918

Provided instruction in work readiness skills including successful strategies for filling employment applications, drafting resumes, and strengthening interview practices. Assisted in the development of curriculum to assist offenders in assessing their workplace skills and maximizing their employment

potential, working with offenders to transition from incarceration to employment ensuring that vital community services were accessible in order to ensure successful transition.

United States Senate, Office of Senator Barbara Mikulski

Logistical Coordinator/Press Assistant, August 2001 – January 2003
U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski

Washington, DC
202-224-4654

Responsibilities included the coordination of State and daily logistics for the Senator. Duties included management of schedule with Executive Staff and State Director for meetings and events with corporate, Senate, and other officials. Prepared daily advance duties for travel and meetings, including the preparation of briefing materials and communication with congressional offices, and served as the primary aid to the Senator during official State meetings. Responsibilities included the coordination and maintenance of the communication and structural organization of the Senator's press office. Drafted press releases and statements highlighting Senator Mikulski's legislative record. Duties included organizing and updating the vast media contact list within the office, processing field calls from media outlets requesting interviews and statements, distributed all press announcements to media market, handled all incoming grant announcements and interpreted their importance from a press perspective. Responsible for the design and maintenance of the office website.

Maryland General Assembly

Legislative Internship, January 2001-April 2001
State Senator Norman R. Stone, Jr.

Annapolis, MD
410-841-3587

Responsibilities included legislative research in regard to pertinent bills and communicating the information to the Senator. Handled constituent matters and responded to their concerns. Drafted weekly articles for the district's local newspaper summarizing issues related to the Maryland General Assembly.

MEMBERSHIPS

- Governor's Reentry Task Force (2011)
- Maryland Center for Construction Education and Innovation, Board Member (2011)
- National Association and State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors, Member (2011)
- Interagency Workforce Committee for the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (2007 - 2011)
- American Correctional Association, member (2006 – 2009)
- The National Correctional Industries Association (2005 – 2010)
- Workforce Creation and Adult Education Transition Council (2008)
- GWIB's Manufacturing Industry Initiative Steering Committee (2007)
- DPSCS Leadership Academy (2006)
- Program Chair, NCIA Annual Convention – Sales and Marketing Track (2006)
- Ridgeleigh Community Association – President (2005 – 2007)

