NOT BY GOVERNMENT NOR FAITH ALONE:
RETHINKING PRISONER REENTRY

Byron Johnson

The process of reintegrating ex-prisoners into society has been a persistent and challenging social issue for decades. What is different in the contemporary landscape, however, is the sheer number of prisoners returning to American communities each year (Osborne & Solomon, 2006). And it is becoming clear that this unprecedented development is not a temporary trend. Between 1980 and 2006, the U.S. prison population increased by 467% (from 319,598 to 1,492,973) and the parole population increased by 362% (from 220,438 to 798,202) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2006). The increase in the number of prisoners returning to communities across the country has fostered a national debate about how best to handle what has become known as the prisoner reentry crisis and one of the most challenging dilemmas in U.S. correctional history (Travis, 2005).

A number of well-known correctional programs have been implemented over the years to help manage the difficult adjustment period when prisoners transition back to society. Halfway houses, community corrections, intensive supervision, and community reintegration programs represent a few of the various postrelease efforts designed to facilitate prisoner reentry to society, while simultaneously ensuring public safety (Petersilia, 2003). But despite corrections expenditures now in excess of $60 billion annually, the likelihood of a former prisoner succeeding in the community has not improved (Bauer, 2002). Indeed, about two thirds of all offenders released from prison are rearrested within 3 years of their release (Langan & Levin, 2002). In addition, growing parole caseloads have made effective case management by parole officers an increasingly difficult proposition, with an occupational by-product of increased stress on parole officers—a problem having to be addressed by a number of parole agencies (Finn & Kuck, 2003). As a result of the difficulty in effectively managing large numbers of returning prisoners, there is increasing concern that the number of ex-prisoners returning to society could pose a threat to public safety.

Although the problems confronted by ex-prisoners returning to society are readily identifiable, public efforts to address reentry and aftercare problems have been limited in scope (Travis & Vischer, 2005). In general, policy makers have been reluctant to support correctional policies that endorse or appear to favor offender treatment, job training, and counseling for ex-prisoners and their families in the community. Such efforts can easily be interpreted as taking a "soft on

crime" approach. One might argue that a prisoner reentry plan including such programs has the potential to significantly reduce recidivism and thus improve public safety. However, few policy makers have been willing to publicly defend such programs. Not surprisingly, law-and-order crime policies have consistently trumped those favoring offender treatment models (Cullen, 2002).

Moreover, the lack of a comprehensive governmental response to prisoner reentry is influenced by budgetary constraints. Creating new offender treatment and support programs in prisons as well as in communities would place a significant financial burden on correctional budgets that are already regarded by many as too high. In an era of finite resources and ever-tightening budgets, efforts to significantly expand existing educational, vocational, and counseling programs in prisons and communities have not received serious consideration. However, it is both unrealistic and unwarranted to lay the sole responsibility of comprehensive prisoner reentry on government.

Although often overlooked, the role of religion, religious volunteers, religious programs, and faith-based organizations in the criminal justice system has been a constant in U.S. history. This oversight is unfortunate because numerous theoretical perspectives, published research, and common sense suggest that communities of faith have the potential to be a powerful partner with government in the development of a comprehensive prisoner reentry plan.

The following section reviews research documenting the role of religion in prisons and prisoner reentry, and reviews research connecting religion to crime reduction as well as prosocial behavior; and thus provides a basis for inclusion of a faith-based approach to prisoner reentry.

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**THE RELEVANCE OF RELIGION
IN PRISONS AND PRISONER REENTRY**

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The Role of Religion in Prisons

The evolution of the U.S. correctional system has been accompanied by the continual influence of religion and religious workers. For example, terms such as corrections, penitentiary, reformation, restoration, and solitary confinement can be traced to religious origins (McGowen, 1995; Peters, 1995).

The historical role of religion in prisons continues to be prominent and pervasive in correctional institutions today. Faith-motivated volunteers in prisons are as likely to be involved in life-skills training or instruction in General Equivalency Diploma (GED) programs as they are to conduct

Bible studies or lead worship services. Thus, religious volunteers have played and continue to play a vital role in the vast majority of U.S. correctional institutions.[1] Indeed, beyond work, education, or vocational training, religious activities attract more participants than any other type of personal enhancement program offered inside a prison.

There are many ways that religion can be consequential for prisoners and ex-prisoners. However, where correctional decision-makers and policy stakeholders are concerned, the one overriding outcome is whether an intervention reduces recidivism. In the mid-1990s, Prison Fellowship (PF), a nonprofit religious ministry to prisoners, commissioned research to determine the effects of faith-based interventions on prisoner recidivism. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, the study examined the influence of religious programs on prisoner adjustment (i.e., institutional infractions or rule violations) and recidivism rates (i.e., postrelease arrests) in two matched groups of inmates from four adult prisons in New York State.[2] One group had participated in programs sponsored by PF; the second group had no involvement with PF programs. Researchers found that after controlling for level of involvement in PF-sponsored programs, inmates who were most active in Bible studies were significantly less likely than their matched comparison counterparts not participating in the PF-sponsored programs to be arrested during the one-year follow-up period (Johnson, Larson, & Pitts, 1997).

A second study, conducted with an additional 7 years of follow-up data, documented that after dividing the sample into groups of high and low levels of participation in Bible studies, high-level participants were less likely to be rearrested at 2 and 3 years postrelease (Johnson, 2004). The study concluded that more research is necessary to determine how religion might be related to offender rehabilitation, inmate adjustment, and prisoner reentry. This small but growing body of research suggests that participation in religious programs and activities can contribute to positive inmate adjustment while in prison, as well as reduce the likelihood of recidivism following release from prison (Johnson, 2003, 2004).

From Bible Study to Faith-Based Prison Programs

An overarching implication of this relatively new body of research is that religious volunteers and faith-based programs have the potential to play a significant role in contributing to prison management, safety, and offender rehabilitation. For example, preliminary research suggests that faith-based dorms and housing units have the potential to significantly counteract the negative and often debilitating prison culture that permeates so many U.S. correctional institutions (Clear & Sumter, 2002; Johnson, 2003).

A 6-year evaluation of a faith-based prison program called the InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI)[3] found that inmates completing the program were significantly less likely than a matched group of offenders[4] to be rearrested (17% versus 35%) or reincarcerated (8% versus 20%) during a 2-year follow-up period (Johnson, 2003). The study revealed a stark contrast between the areas of the prison controlled by the faith-based program as compared with those areas housing prisoners from the general population, which were typified by the presence of a distinct prison code of behavior that often condones rule-breaking and other inappropriate behaviors.

In contrast, the faith-based side of the prison was characterized by educational classes, study, work, worship services, little free time, and the absence of television. Further, the faith-based program enjoyed an atmosphere promoting forgiveness, honesty, and personal accountability. Faith-based efforts like IFI and Kairos, another faith-based prison program, are designed to discourage antisocial and destructive behavior and to encourage transparency, contrition, and spiritual transformation—all of which runs counter to the pervasive prison code or culture that often works to undermine the very premises on which a rehabilitation model is based (Clemmer, 1958).[5]

Preliminary research lends support for the notion that faith-based units can create an environment that is conducive to effective treatment and to rehabilitation programs more generally (Johnson, 2003). In this way, faith-based interventions have the potential to enhance the achievement of a secular goal and civic good; namely, lower recidivism.

FAITH-BASED PRISONER REENTRY:
STRENGTHS AND SHORTCOMINGS

As important as volunteer work within correctional facilities might be, it does not diminish the fact that reentry and aftercare tend to be largely overlooked by most religious volunteers and organizations. Compared with reentry, prison ministry is a much easier task to pursue and a safer service opportunity in what many consider to be an unsafe environment. Prisoners often appreciate the attention they receive from the outside world, and these exchanges tend to be overwhelmingly positive and nonthreatening for volunteers. Prison ministry, therefore, can be found in many U.S. congregations, and thousands of religious volunteers visit prisons every day.

Similarly, faith-based organizations disproportionately opt for in-prison ministry as opposed to out-of-prison services because reentry and aftercare are anything but easy or safe. For example, Prison Fellowship Ministries, the largest faith-based prison ministry in the United States, has always recognized that reentry and aftercare are vitally important, but their efforts have only

been marginally involved in reentry and aftercare, an oversight recently acknowledged by the organization. PF has stated an intention to remedy this imbalance by significantly expanding its emphasis on aftercare.[6]

While the disproportionate emphasis of volunteerism is in prisons rather than on aftercare in communities, it would be inaccurate to suggest that faith-based prisoner reentry programs are nonexistent. Unfortunately, it is unclear how many faith-based reentry programs are operational, although it is likely they exist in many of the communities where prisons are located. These reentry programs tend to be small, isolated, and in need of coordination as well as evaluation.

The Link Between Religion and Crime Reduction

Systematic reviews and one meta-analysis of religion and crime literature have provided evidence that religious commitment and involvement are linked to reductions in delinquent behavior and deviant activities (Baier & Wright, 2001).[7] Recent evidence suggests that such effects persist even if there is not a strong prevailing social control against delinquent behavior in the surrounding community. For example, several studies found that young Black males from poverty tracts in Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia were much less likely to be involved in crime and delinquent behavior if they regularly attended church (Freeman, 1986; Johnson, Larson, Jang, & Li, 2000a). Similarly, research has found that highly religious low-income youths from high-crime areas are less likely to use drugs than less religious youths in these same disadvantaged communities. Further, these highly religious teens from crime "hot spots" were less likely to use drugs than less religious teens from middle-class suburban communities or "good places" (Jang & Johnson, 2001).

There is also evidence that religious involvement may lower the risks of a broad range of delinquent behaviors, including both minor and serious forms of criminal behavior (Evans et al., 1996). Research also shows that religious involvement may have a cumulative effect throughout adolescence and may significantly lessen the risk of later adult criminality (Johnson, Jang, Larson, & Li, 2001). Studies have shown that religion can be used as a tool to help prevent high-risk urban youths from engaging in delinquent behavior (Johnson, Larson, Jang, & Li, 2000b; Johnson et al., 2001). For example, the African-American church may play a key role in reducing crime among Black youths from urban communities (Johnson et al., 2000a). It is precisely these communities of disadvantage where many ex-prisoners will be returning.

There are many theoretical perspectives that help explain why and how religious beliefs and practices may ultimately influence behavior. To review these theories is beyond the scope of this paper; however, in sum, one can reasonably say that religious involvement helps some

individuals to learn prosocial behavior (i.e., actions that emphasize concern for others' welfare). These prosocial skills may instill a greater sense of empathy toward others and thus lessen the likelihood of committing acts that harm others (Johnson et al., 2000a).

Similarly, once individuals become involved in deviant behavior, it is possible that participation in religious activities may help steer them back to a course of less deviant behavior and away from potential career criminal paths (Johnson, 2008). One important study found that religion, as indicated by religious activities, reduced the likelihood of adult criminality as measured by a broad range of criminal acts. The relationship persisted even after secular controls were added to the model. Further, the finding did not depend on social or religious contexts (Evans, Cullen, Dunaway, & Burton, 1995).

In sum, religiosity is now beginning to be acknowledged as not only a key protective factor that buffers or protects from harmful outcomes, but also as a variable promoting prosocial behavior (Johnson, 2007). If congregations can be viewed as institutions dedicated to improving the plight of at-risk populations, it may be that faith-based and community-based organizations represent key factors in helping ex-prisoners transition back to society.

HARNESSING HUMAN AND SPIRITUAL CAPITAL
THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES

In January 2001, President Bush signed an executive order establishing the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.[8] Over the next several years, Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives were created in 11 federal agencies through a series of executive orders.[9] In his executive orders and speeches on this initiative, the President acknowledged the long tradition of faith-based and community-based organizations helping Americans, especially those confronting serious disadvantages. President Bush also believed that the federal government had not been a very good partner to faith-based and community-based groups working to target serious social problems and that the federal government had made it difficult for faith-based and community-based groups to compete for funds on an equal standing with secular nonprofit service providers.

A 2001 White House report, *An Unlevel Playing Field,* systematically reviewed federal funding and identified the barriers to effective government partnerships with faith-based and community-based organizations.[10] For example, the report revealed that the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice estimated it would award about 0.3% of total discretionary grant funds

($1.9 million of $626.7 million) in fiscal year 2001 to faith-based organizations and 7.5% ($47.2 million) to community-based providers of social services.

Since 2001, considerable progress has been made in alleviating obstacles that have deterred faith-based and community-based organizations from seeking grants to build capacity and thereby strengthen outreach to underserved populations, including prisoners and ex-prisoners (prior to 2001 references to faith-based groups were virtually absent from federal funding announcements covering social service delivery or demonstration projects). In addition, conferences for faith-based and community-based groups have been offered in all regions of the United States in order to identify the federal funding processes.

President Bush has been a strong supporter of public-private partnerships whose mission it is to assist offenders, prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their children. Although he has indicated that the government has an important role to play when it comes to prisoner reentry, he has been equally clear that government is not equipped to provide the mentoring, care, and social supports that are essential for any effective and holistic plan for prisoner reentry. Stated differently, government cannot effectively address the prisoner reentry crisis by itself, nor can faith-based organizations and individuals effectively address the prisoner reentry problem by themselves. In fact, faith-based and secular partnerships represent a very viable avenue for developing an effective prisoner reentry strategy.

In their book *Prisoner Reentry and Crime in America*, Travis and Visher (2005) ask two important questions: "Is it possible to imagine a world in which the agencies of the justice system—corrections, police, courts, and parole—work together with other public and private institutions—housing providers, workforce development agencies, drug treatment providers, foster care agencies, and churches and other faith institutions—to systematically reduce the risk of failure around the time of reentry?...What would such a strategy look like?" (pp. 255–256).

As a result of President Bush's belief in the role of intermediaries as well as his interest in prisoner reentry, two major prisoner reentry initiatives are now beginning to provide some preliminary answers. A third and related initiative, commonly referred to as the Second Chance Act, has recently been signed into law in early April 2008.[11]

Ready4Work

In 2003, the Department of Labor launched Ready4Work, a 3-year pilot program to address the needs of ex-prisoners through faith-based and community-based organizations. Ready4Work emphasized job training, job placement, case management, mentoring, and other aftercare

services. Faith-based and community-based organizations were selected to provide services to adult ex-offenders in 11 cities.[12]

Ready4Work targeted participants with a high probability of recidivism.[13] Ex-prisoners in Ready4Work had extensive criminal histories and half of the participants had been arrested previously five or more times (Farley & Hackman, 2006). After individuals entered the program, they were eligible for services lasting up to one year. Participants were also matched with mentors in one-to-one and/or group mentoring relationships. Job placement specialists helped participants find employment and case managers continued to provide assistance after participants were employed.

The Ready4Work pilot ended in 2006 and the results indicate a total of 4,482 former prisoners enrolled in Ready4Work. Of these ex-prisoners, 97% received case management services, 86% received employment services, and 63% received mentoring services. Ready4Work sites placed 2,543 participants (57%) into jobs, with 63% retaining jobs for 3 consecutive months after placement (Farley & Hackman, 2006).

Public/Private Ventures (PPV)—an action-based research, public policy, and program development organization—oversees the Ready4Work demonstration project as an intermediary. PPV reported that only 2.5% of Ready4Work participants were reincarcerated within 6 months and 6.9% were reincarcerated at the one-year postrelease mark. Although Ready4Work does not incorporate a randomized design, the preliminary findings are impressive.

Over 60% of Ready4Work participants received mentoring as part of their services. Research has shown that mentoring matters for youths, but this study demonstrated that mentoring affects outcomes for Ready4Work participants. The results indicate that those Ready4Work participants who met with a mentor remained in the program longer, were twice as likely to obtain a job, and were more likely to stay employed than participants who did not meet with a mentor (Farley & McClanahan, 2007). PPV researchers concluded that "while mentoring alone is not enough, supportive relationships—which can be fostered through mentoring programs—should be considered a core component of any reentry strategy" (McClanahan, 2007, p. 3).

The Ready4Work initiative in 11 cities represents a major demonstration project. Overall, Ready4Work provides an important preliminary snapshot of what can potentially be achieved when an intermediary brings together public and private partnerships to address prisoner reentry in a comprehensive and coordinated strategy. The early results from Ready4Work support the notion that a comprehensive prisoner reentry plan is possible without a massive expansion of the

existing criminal justice system. Additionally, Ready4Work has helped to highlight the work of faith-based and community-based groups addressing prisoner reentry, such as Exodus Transitional Community in Harlem, Word of Hope Ministries in Milwaukee, or the Safer Foundation of Chicago.

The Prisoner Reentry Initiative

The Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI) was announced by President Bush in 2004 and grew out of the Ready4Work project. The PRI was designed to further test the proposition that prisoner reentry could be effectively accomplished with a comprehensive strategy designed to draw heavily from partnerships with faith-based and community-based groups. This project helps to connect former prisoners with faith-motivated groups as well as secular community-based organizations willing to help ex-prisoners locate employment and to stay out of trouble by following prosocial paths. Currently there are 30 PRI grantees across the country providing mentoring, employment, and other transitional services to thousands of ex-prisoners.

The PRI sites began serving program participants in spring 2006, and the preliminary results are promising. It is important to note, however, that these early outcomes are very preliminary and they are not based on a randomized design with strict controls. A total of 10,361 PRI participants had been enrolled as of November 2007, and about 6,000 participants have been placed into jobs. Participants' one-year postrelease recidivism rate is currently 20%.

As can be seen in Table A-1 (see Appendix A), 9 of the 30 PRI grants were awarded to faith-based organizations; 21 grants were awarded to community-based organizations, and all but three of these secular organizations reported working with faith-based organizations. Indeed, collaborations with faith-based organizations appear to be equally important for faith-based as well as community-based PRI recipients. These alliances lend credence to the premise that faith-based and secular partnerships can be critical in establishing a social support network that is necessary for comprehensive and coordinated prisoner reentry.

A COMPREHENSIVE AND SCALABLE
PRISONER REENTRY PLAN

Any prisoner reentry plan that is comprehensive and can achieve scale will require new people and programs that do not currently exist in most jurisdictions. It is unlikely that the government will or can provide these programs; thus, faith-based and community-based groups represent a critical piece of the reentry puzzle that has yet to be tapped in a systematic fashion. A sustainable comprehensive prisoner reentry plan will require that partnerships between faith-based and

secular as well as national and community-based groups are strengthened. A healthy atmosphere of mutual respect must replace the suspicion that too often typifies relations between public and private organizations as well as between religious and secular organizations that often share similar social service missions. This represents another way that intermediaries can serve as a strategic bridge to build alliances to more effectively address social problems.[14]

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

Faith-based groups need to understand that accountability, assessment, and evaluation of their efforts—something that will surely follow if these groups partner with government—is an extremely useful tool. Overstating program effectiveness without empirical evidence has often been problematic for many religious volunteers and faith-based organizations. If faith-based efforts are to be considered seriously, then religious volunteers need to understand that faith-based programs should be evaluated objectively. This kind of accountability will go a long way in improving relationships with other private and public groups whose confidence faith-based groups need in order to provide a comprehensive and coordinated response to prisoner reentry.

The Role of Volunteerism in Prisoner Reentry

To effectively impact prisoner reentry will require somewhat of a paradigm shift. In addition to leading a Bible study in prison, many religious volunteers will need to consider developing strategies to improve, for example, the housing and employment conditions for ex-offenders already living in the community as well as prisoners who will eventually be returning home.

Further, the importance of mentoring relationships that are established in prison and carry over to the community cannot be overemphasized. Research confirms that mentoring matters not just for kids, but also for adults. However, there is a severe shortage of mentors, especially for prisoners and ex-prisoners. This is precisely why volunteer-rich communities of faith are uniquely positioned to assist (Cornwell & Harrison, 2004; Musick & Wilson, 2007). However, faith communities have not been approached in any meaningful way on a national scale to provide these mentors. Another possibility is having properly trained volunteers to specifically assist parole and other community corrections personnel. Ultimately, a comprehensive prisoner reentry

plan will require a very large number of committed and trained volunteers and partners as well as a willingness to connect them, along with their varied networks of social and spiritual support, to correctional, governmental, and secular entities committed to prisoner reentry and aftercare. Without a comprehensive approach that coordinates public and private, and secular and faith-based partnerships, the lack of effective prisoner reentry support will persist.

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

Some organizations have developed immensely successful strategies for recruiting mentors. For example, in the past 9 years, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America (BBBSA), the largest mentoring organization in the world, has more than doubled the number of children served.[15] Along with many other grantees, BBBSA has been a significant partner in the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) efforts nationally. While it took BBBSA 95 years to make 120,000 matches on their own, there are currently 250 MCP programs in 48 states partnering with more than 6,000 churches to serve at least 100,000 children.[16] The experience of Amachi, a program that recruits mentors to be matched with children of prisoners, also confirms that when people are asked to volunteer, many will do so (Musick & Wilson, 2007). A comprehensive plan for prisoner reentry that draws heavily on volunteers will need to develop strategies for recruiting mentors, although this effort will certainly look different than either the BBBSA or Amachi models.

The vast majority of the many thousands of correctional volunteers tend to come from volunteer-rich religious congregations (Musick & Wilson, 2007), and there are approximately 375,000 congregations in the United States.[17] Religious congregations not only mobilize volunteer labor for the church itself, but are feeder systems for many other nonprofit and voluntary organizations. Further, religious volunteers do not necessarily choose between volunteering for the church or a secular organization; many individuals do both (Clain & Zech, 1999; Cornwell & Harrison, 2004). Surveys have consistently found a positive association between religious affiliation and attendance and charitable behavior, both in terms of financial giving and volunteering (Brooks, 2006; Independent Sector, 2001). Putnam (2001) echoed this finding when he observed that "houses of worship build and sustain more social capital—and social capital of

more varied forms— than any other type of institution in America. Churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship provide a vibrant institutional base for civic good works and a training ground for civic entrepreneurs. Roughly speaking, nearly half of America's stock of social capital is religious or religiously affiliated, whether measured by association memberships, philanthropy, or volunteering" (p. 54).

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

The Role of the Intermediary in Prisoner Reentry

As discussed earlier, developing a truly comprehensive prisoner reentry plan is difficult because there are so many challenges that complicate an ex-prisoner's effort to successfully transition back to society. Focusing on housing without giving proper consideration to employment is a recipe for failure. Likewise, concentrating on transportation without giving consideration to mentoring and other social supports is likely to be unsuccessful. Any comprehensive prisoner reentry plan must coordinate a strategy to overcome all the major obstacles to successful reentry. Ready4Work and the PRI have provided a very preliminary and positive glimpse of a multifaceted reentry plan that owes much to the contribution of an intermediary organization to coordinate such efforts. In the case of Ready4Work, Public/Private Ventures is overseeing the demonstration project as a national intermediary. The PRI has utilized a different approach by essentially funding faith-based and community-based organizations to serve as local intermediaries coordinating reentry efforts (see Table A-1).

Honig (2004) offered a helpful definition of intermediaries and the role that they play: "Intermediaries are organizations that occupy the space in between at least two other parties. Intermediary organizations primarily function to mediate or to manage change in both those parties. Intermediary organizations operate independently of these two parties and provide distinct value beyond what the parties alone would be able to develop or to amass by themselves. At the same time, intermediary organizations depend on those parties to perform their essential functions" (pp. 65–87).

In recent years, the federal government has begun to use intermediaries to help faith-based and community-based organizations build capacity, strengthen programs, and improve the delivery of social services. Perhaps the best recent example is the Compassion Capital Fund (CCF), established by Congress in 2002, which provides funds to be distributed by the Department of

Health and Human Services to intermediary organizations across the country to provide training as well as technical and financial assistance to faith-based and community-based organizations.

The role of faith-based and community-based intermediaries in social service provision is still relatively new and underdeveloped. However, intermediary organizations may be the most important, yet underutilized, element in building successful prisoner reentry models that are intended to work with volunteers, especially volunteers who come from religious congregations. Intermediaries can be a bridge between ex-prisoners and social service providers and governmental agencies. Intermediaries can coordinate reentry efforts of faith-based and community-based organizations, volunteers, social services, mentors, and parole officers. Additionally, intermediaries can serve important roles by providing technical assistance and oversight to groups and organizations and offer ongoing training to strengthen capacity and sustainability.

Without this level of assistance, it is likely that small grassroots groups will ultimately fail. According to Mike Doyle, Executive Director of the Cornerstone Assistance Network, a faith-based intermediary organization in Fort Worth, Texas, failure to develop a sound organization will cause even successful programming to suffer if not surrender to financial and reporting pressures (M. Doyle, personal communication, March 5, 2008). Intermediaries can play a key role in coordinating the efforts of fragmented faith-based and community-based organizations (Fink & Branch, 2005). Too often these small organizations operate in relative isolation from each other and as a result are not able to build or sustain capacity. Rather than working in isolation, influential and well-networked intermediaries are well positioned to play a key role in coordinating resources locally and beyond. Organizations like the United Way are an example of how targeted mission statements can have substantial and scalable influence.[18]

Intermediaries are essential to a comprehensive and coordinated prisoner reentry plan that recruits a large number of skilled and trained volunteers, while developing private and public partnerships to confront key reentry and aftercare problems. Finally, intermediaries are suited to interact with governmental entities while drawing on the substantial human capital of volunteers as well as the social and spiritual capital of individuals and organizations in the private sector. Indeed, the CCF, the Faith and Community Technical Support Project, the Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives, and Nueva Esperanza are but a few examples of the unique role intermediaries can play at the local and national levels.

CONCLUSION

Because prisoner reentry is a problem facing communities across the United States, the ultimate goal of any plan should be to establish a model that is not only effective in a particular area, but one that can be effective on a larger scale in multiple communities. It is one thing to have isolated success, it is quite another to have success at a statewide level. For example, while not a prisoner reentry program, Amachi Texas is a unique public-private partnership designed to reach scale statewide.[19] What has been missing until recently is a prisoner reentry model or template that links all the nonnegotiable elements of reentry together in a way that can be replicated and sustained in cost-effective ways in local communities, regionally, or statewide. Thus, a plan is needed where coordination and collaboration are central, where the goals of the reentry model are realistically achievable, where the specific elements of the plan are replicable in a broad range of communities, and finally, where the plan is affordable and does not add new costs to already overburdened correctional budgets.

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

NOTES

1. Data are based on face-to-face interviews with 13,986 inmates in 1991 and published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Similar surveys were conducted in 1974, 1979, and 1986.

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

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

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

5. The subculture of prison inmates has been an ongoing topic of sociological and criminological inquiry. Donald Clemmer coined the term "prisonization" in his book *The Prison Community* (1958), whereby inmates become socialized into prison culture. An assumption of prisonization is that inmates internalize prison culture, and their subsequent behavior is a reflection of this internalization.

6. Statement by Mark Early, President of Prison Fellowship Ministries, at a White House event on prisoner reentry in March 2007.

7. Baier and Wright (2001) reviewed a total of 60 published studies and found that (1) religious beliefs and behaviors exert a moderate deterrent effect on individuals' criminal behavior, and (2) conceptual and methodological approaches account for some of the inconsistencies in the research literature. In a second review, Johnson, Tompkins, and Webb (2006) reviewed 151 studies that examined the relationship between religiosity and drug use (n=54) or alcohol use (n=97) and abuse. The majority of these studies demonstrate that participation in religious activities is associated with less of a tendency to use or abuse drugs (87%) or alcohol (94%). These findings hold regardless of the population under study (i.e., children, adolescents, and adult populations) or whether the research was conducted prospectively or retrospectively. In this same study, Johnson reviewed 46 published studies that examined the religiosity-delinquency relationship. Among these studies, 78% reported reductions in delinquency and criminal acts to be associated with higher levels of religious activity and involvements.

8. Executive Order 13199 created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives on January 29, 2001.

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

10. Unlevel Playing Field: Barriers to Participation by Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Federal Social Service Programs. Washington, DC: White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives, 2006.

11. The Recidivism Reduction and Second Chance Act authorizes $165 million annually over 2 years to support mentoring programs, substance abuse treatment, literacy classes, job training, and other assistance intended to help ex-offenders pursue productive, crime-free lives after their sentences are up. The bill authorizes grant funding for fiscal years 2009 and 2010 for state and local governments to launch or continue programs to improve ex-

offenders' return to society. It also allocates competitive grants to faith-based and community-based nonprofits to offer programs that link ex-offenders with mentors or that help them seek and keep jobs. The bill includes elements of the Bush Administration's Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI), launched in 2004, which connects ex-offenders with religious and secular nonprofits for mentoring and other programs intended to help them make a successful transition to community life.

12. The 11 sites are: City of Memphis Second Chance Ex-Felon Program (Memphis, TN); Allen Temple Housing & Economic Development Corporation (Oakland, CA); East of the River Clergy, Police & Community Partnership (Washington, DC); Exodus Transitional Community (East Harlem, NY); Holy Cathedral/Word of Hope Ministries (Milwaukee, WI); Operation New Hope (Jacksonville, FL); SAFER Foundation (Chicago, IL); Search for Common Ground (Philadelphia, PA); Union Rescue Mission (Los Angeles, CA); Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church & the InnerChange Freedom Initiative (Houston, TX); America Works Detroit (Detroit, MI).

13. Participant eligibility for Ready4Work was determined based on three factors: (1) age of the ex-offender, (2) presenting offense, and (3) length of time pre- or postrelease. Ex-prisoners between the ages of 18 and 34 who had most recently been incarcerated for a nonviolent felony offense and were no more than 90 days pre- or postrelease were eligible to enroll in the program.

14. For additional examples of federally funded intermediaries, see (1) The Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives (funded by the Department of Labor), (2) Faith and Community Technical Support (funded by the Office on Violence Against Women), and (3) The Compassion Capital Fund (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccf).

15. See Web site for Big Brothers Big Sisters of American (www.bbbsa.org).

16. See Web site for Amachi: People of Faith Mentoring Children of Promise (www.amachimentoring.org).

17. See Web site for American Church Lists (www.americanchurchlists.com).

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

19. Amachi Texas, a joint initiative between the Office of the Governor, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Texas Workforce Commission, OneStar Foundation and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Texas, was launched in 2005. The program helps children of prisoners by working in communities throughout the state of Texas via mentoring relationships. The Amachi Texas initiative is currently the subject of a 3-year evaluation that incorporates a randomized controlled study.

APPENDIX A

Table A-1. Prisoner Reentry Initiative Sites

	Name of Group	Location	Population Served	Organization Type	Number of Faith Partners
1.	Primavera Foundation	Tucson, AZ	400 participants	Community-Based	1
2.	AZ Women's Education & Employment	Phoenix, AZ	400 male and female ex-offenders released in Maricopa Co, AZ	Community-Based	8
3.	Metro United Methodist Urban Ministries	San Diego, CA	200 adult ex-offenders	Faith-Based	50+faith-based groups (including 48 churches)
4.	Allen Temple Housing & Economic Development Corporation	Oakland, CA	200 adult ex-prisoners	Faith-Based	1
5.	Mexican American Alcoholism Program Inc.	Sacramento, CA	200 participants	Community-Based	1–mentoring
6.	Fresno Career Development Center	Fresno, CA	200 clients	Community-Based	20
7.	Empowerment Program	Denver, CO	200 recently released nonviolent ex-offenders	Community-Based	6
8.	Community Partners in Action	Hartford, CT	200 adult ex-offenders; main target men 25–40	Community-Based	None known
9.	OIC of Broward County	Fort Lauderdale, FL	220 nonviolent ex-offenders	Community-Based	1–(this FBO pulls from 15 different faith entities), OIC also works with 10 more faith groups
10.	Directors Council	Des Moines, IA	210 nonviolent ex-offenders released in the prior 6 months	Community-Based	2–mentoring
11.	Safer Foundation	Chicago, IL	300 formerly incarcerated individuals	Community-Based	6

(continued)

Table A-1. Prisoner Reentry Initiative Sites (continued)

Name of Group	Location	Population Served	Organization Type	Number of Faith Partners
12. Church United for Community Development	Baton Rouge, LA	200 participants	Faith-Based & Community-Based	Many
13. Odyssey House LA	New Orleans, LA	200 adult ex-offenders	Community-Based	2–mentoring
14. Span Inc.	Boston, MA	200 nonviolent ex-offenders	Community-Based	4
15. Episcopal Community Services of Maryland	Baltimore, MD	300 ex-offenders aged 21–40 with a history of drug/alcohol addiction	Faith-Based	1
16. Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency	Pontiac, MI	200 new parolees	Community-Based	2–mentoring
17. St. Patrick Center	St. Louis, MO	200 ex-prisoners over 18 nonviolent, non-sex–related offenses	Faith-Based (Catholic Charities)	7
18. Connections to Success	Kansas City, MO	200 adult ex-prisoners	Faith-Based	25-30
19. Career Opportunity Development	Egg Harbor/ Atlantic City, NJ	From Atlantic county	Community-Based	1–mentoring
20. The Doe Fund	Brooklyn, NY	200 primarily from Queensboro Prison	Community-Based	Unsuccessful in partnering w/FBOs; but utilize many faith-based mentors
21. Goodwill Industries of Greater NY and Northern NJ	Astoria, Newark, NJ	204 nonviolent offenders	Community-Based	None
22. Urban Youth Alliance International	Bronx, NY	400 returning prisoners from Rikers Island Jail aged 18–24	Faith-Based	1
23. Talbert House	Cincinnati, OH	200 ex-prisoners	Community-Based	3

(continued)

Table A-1. Prisoner Reentry Initiative Sites (continued)

Name of Group	Location	Population Served	Organization Type	Number of Faith Partners
24. S.E. Works	Portland, OR	200 participants	Community-Based	No mention of faith-based partners
25. Connection Training Services	Philadelphia, PA	208 recently released ex-offenders each year	Community-Based	2
26. WABC Central City Comprehensive Community Center	Houston, TX	Ex-offenders in Harris Co, TX	Faith-Based	4
27. Goodwill Industries of San Antonio	San Antonio, TX	400 returning offenders	Community-Based	2
28. Urban League Greater Dallas & North Central TX	Dallas, TX	400 participants	Community-Based	10
29. People of Color Against AIDS Network	Seattle, WA	200 nonviolent ex-offenders & subgroup of violent offenders of color	Community-Based	10
30. Word of Hope Ministries	Milwaukee, WI	200 formerly incarcerated individuals	Faith-Based	1

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