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# **Report of the National Institute of Corrections Advisory Board Hearings**

## **Faith-Based Approach to Correctional Issues**

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National Institute of Corrections  
Advisory Board Hearings

Faith-Based Approach to Correctional Issues

June 6–7, 2005  
Alexandria, Virginia

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## Panel Recommendations

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Advisory Board hearing on a Faith-Based Approach to Correctional Issues was held in Alexandria, Virginia on June 6–7, 2005. Members of the NIC Advisory Board Faith-Based Committee, as well as the Board Chair, the Hearing Committee Chair, and the NIC Director, participated. During the 2-day hearing, four panels were assembled to hear from a range of stakeholders in the field of corrections and from the faith-based community. This Executive Summary includes highlights from those presentations. More detailed representations from each panelist are included in the full text of this report.

### The Purpose of the Hearings

The following three questions were posed to all of the presenters as a framework for their remarks:

- Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations, as well as public-private partnerships, that meet the secular goal of reducing recidivism and making our communities safer places for all citizens?
- What roadblocks, if any, hinder such collaborations from expanding and meeting additional secular and civic goals?
- How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and law enforcement agencies and people in faith-based organizations who want to work with corrections to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?

By gathering answers to these questions, the Board will be able to begin to structure a plan to increase the involvement of faith-based organizations in the corrections system.

Following the 2-day hearing, recommendations for a faith-based approach to corrections were drafted by a subcommittee and submitted to NIC for possible action. Those are included at the end of this section.

## Panels

### Panel 1: Advocates

This opening panel featured representatives from faith-based groups that currently work in corrections. Several of the panelists had experience working with faith-based groups as inmates and gave personal testimonials on how that interaction impacted their life in prison and how it influenced their transition back into the community. Their first-hand knowledge of what can happen when there is effective collaboration between the corrections system and faith-based service providers was indicative of the potential benefits of this kind of partnering.

The panelists all described the challenges they face in trying to provide services to offenders and what they think NIC can do to make them more effective in their work.

**Recommendations:**

- Examine closely faith-based programs that appear to have worked well in the prison environment for inmates and staff and share that information so that correctional administrators and practitioners can make informed decisions.
- Identify why some faith-based programs implemented in a prison environment have not worked well and share that information so that correctional administrators and practitioners can make informed decisions.
- Set the standard for the culture within a prison environment as one that places its emphases on public and community safety when offenders are released to the community.
- Provide training on personal safety for faith-based mentors working with inmates. Mentors need to know how not to take anything personally, how not to trust until it is earned, and how to hold inmates accountable.
- Provide state and local public forums that include representatives from correctional facilities, parole, probation, and community aftercare services to encourage collaboration and cooperation between key stakeholders in state and local jurisdictions.
- Develop incentives for prisons so they will be more open and accommodating to faith-based organizations.
- Support best practices and research-based findings to measure faith-based programs and develop effective practices based on these findings.
- Develop a plan for offenders to reenter the community and share that plan with offenders, mentors, and parole and probation officers (when applicable) before the offender is released to the community.
- Provide training that will foster collaboration and a better working relationship between faith-based groups and the corrections system while inmates are confined and after they reenter the community.
- Provide training for faith-based organizations on how to work effectively with offenders as they transition from confinement to the community.
- Encourage collaborative relationships between community corrections (e.g., parole and probation) agencies and community organizations that work with offenders (e.g., aftercare) in the community.

## **Panel 2: Resources**

This panel featured chaplains currently working inside institutions and an attorney looking at what activities are permissible under current interpretations of the Constitution. The chaplains talked about their experiences working with inmates, their challenges, and their experiences working with faith-based groups from the community.

### **Recommendations:**

- Provide an opportunity to “platform” the role of the chaplain since the role has changed significantly over the years. Today’s role as prison chaplain includes such duties as volunteer administrator, psychologist, spiritual advisor, and secretary.
- Support research and longitudinal studies on the effects of faith-based groups on institutional costs related to prison security, inmate and staff safety, and self-sufficiency.
- Promote mentor programs that match an inmate with a mentor and the pairing goes on during the inmate’s incarceration and continue after the inmate is released.
- Promote programming that extends to inmate post release residential programs to assist inmates with transitioning from prison to the community.
- Include faith-based programs on equal footing with other institutional programs.
- Provide training for faith-based and other volunteers on how to work effectively with inmates and to do more than provide worship services.
- Commission a policy study on how constitutional factors, cost, security interests, and the availability and use of non-government organizations to respond to the secular need and the demand for accommodation can be combined to promote nondiscriminatory policies.
- Publish constitutionally appropriate guidelines to help corrections professionals pioneer new programming relationships that address the needs discussed in this hearing.

### **Panel 3: Correctional Administrators**

This panel featured administrators working in correctional facilities and positions of oversight for operations of correctional facilities. All of the panelists were able to share their professional experiences working with faith-based groups to provide services for offenders inside the institution and to assist in their transition back into the community.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Lead a public education campaign and form strategic alliances with faith-based organizations and others for an effective and efficient corrections system.
- Be a leader in creating a dialogue between corrections professionals and faith-based organizations and create a set of guidelines for collaboration based on this dialogue.
- Hold town hall meetings with community leaders and faith-based and other key organizations in the states to discuss the impact of offender reentry on local communities, how local communities can get involved, and the types of services and assistance needed for offenders to reenter their communities successfully.
- Hold more hearings like this to bring wardens and faith-based groups together to discuss their expectations, training, services, and concerns.
- Use outside organizations to provide more evidence-based findings on what works. When an outside organization conducts the research, it tends to lend greater credence to the findings thereby increasing the involvement of faith-based organizations.

### **Panel 4: NIC Staff**

This panel featured members of the NIC staff who shared the work they are doing and how faith-based groups can help supplement the needs of the community. The topics they addressed included mental illness, offender employment development, transition, restorative justice, and evidence-based practices.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Work with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Housing and Urban Development as part of their homeless policy advocacy to form a bridge between the services they provide and faith-based and other organizations. Provide a train-the-trainer program on offender workforce development for faith-based organizations interested in providing offender employment assistance.
- Provide training and train-the-trainer programs on restorative justice to faith-based organizations working with prisoners and offenders in the community in an effort to increase public safety by helping offenders understand the impact of their crimes on their victims and on their communities.

## **Next Steps**

The Board proposed suggestions for its next steps. The first was to make a presentation at the next Advisory Board meeting that includes recommendations to NIC on how it might deal with this topic in light of the information presented in this hearing. The second was to assemble a working group comprising NIC faith-based committee members to meet with representatives from the panels to work with the NIC Board and staff to implement the next steps. A conference call will be held before the June 20 Board meeting to finalize that presentation and recommended follow-up.



## **Recommendations for Action**

### **Faith-Based Approach to Correctional Issues**

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Advisory Board Committee on Faith-Based Initiatives conducted public hearings in Alexandria, Virginia, on June 6 and 7, 2005, on a Faith-Based Approach to Correctional Issues. Based on the testimony and evidence presented, the Committee makes the following recommendations to the NIC Board.

#### **Training**

NIC should host a national forum that addresses the various facets of faith-based programs: legal issues, opportunities for involvement, security concerns, cultural considerations, research results, etc. In addition, NIC should promote state and regional forums that encourage stakeholders to engage one another.

#### **Research**

NIC should support research that demonstrates how faith-based groups impact recidivism, prison safety, costs, and other aspects of correctional work.

NIC should commission a study on how constitutional factors, cost, security interests, and the availability of nongovernment organizations can be combined to promote nondiscriminatory policies.

NIC should publish guidelines on constitutionally appropriate relationships between faith-based entities and correctional systems.

NIC should publish best practices data on faith-based initiatives in corrections.

#### **Technical Assistance**

NIC should contract with experts such as prison administrators, program heads, and legal advisors to provide technical assistance to Departments of Corrections interested in faith-based initiatives.

NIC should notify various corrections agencies of the availability of technical assistance on faith-based initiatives.

#### **Collaboration**

NIC should work with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other federal agencies on public policy initiatives involving the faith-based community.

## **Introduction**

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Advisory Board periodically convenes planning meetings that bring together a variety of points of view to address critical issues currently confronting, or likely to confront, the criminal justice system and corrections. The goal of these public hearings is to engage NIC stakeholders in discussions designed to assist NIC in its planning process. NIC gives considerable weight to the testimony of participants at these meetings in developing new initiatives and revising current ones. This report summarizes the hearings that were conducted in Alexandria, Virginia, on June 6–7, 2005, to discuss a faith-based approach to correctional issues.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of these hearings was to gather information from correctional professionals and faith-based providers in order to determine:

- Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations, as well as public-private partnerships, that meet the secular goal of reducing recidivism and making our communities safer places for all citizens?
- What roadblocks, if any, hinder such collaborations from expanding and meeting additional secular and civic goals?
- How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and law enforcement agencies and people in faith-based organizations who want to work with corrections to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?

### **Questions Addressed**

The following questions were offered to the presenters as a guide to help frame their remarks to address some of the issues up for discussion:

- Can faith-based organizations be determined to provide a meaningful source of intervention?
- Can you share examples of sacred and secular partnerships within corrections that can be examined?
- How can the approaches used by faith-based organizations contribute to a reduction in recidivism rates?
- What are the impediments to more effective interventions by faith-based organizations in corrections?
- What are the legal issues (church/state) that must be resolved when working with faith-based organizations?
- What is the best way faith-based organizations can contribute to assist corrections in meeting secular goals?
- What can NIC do to assist in meeting the needs of the field in terms of using faith-based organizations as a meaningful intervention to recidivism?

## **Organization**

The hearings were organized into four panel discussions. Each panelist was given 15 minutes to present prepared remarks to the Board, and then there was a period for questions and answers from the Board and audience members. The panels featured speakers who brought expertise in these areas and who shared their findings and experiences with the Board. The appendix to this report lists Board members, panelists, and other participants, together with their affiliations.

The report is organized to reflect the material presented by the panelists and the discussions between the panelists and the other participants, in the order they occurred.

## **Objectives and Outcomes**

These hearings were designed to gather information from the field in order to raise the awareness of the impact of meaningful collaborations with faith-based organizations in correctional settings, and thereby provide NIC with insight on how to assist agencies and correctional facilities (including prisons and jails) in engaging faith-based organizations for a variety of prisoner services. Those services can be prison and jail programs that address issues including education, life skills, counseling, mentoring, restorative justice, and religious instruction. Additionally, the information gathered through these hearings helps NIC be better equipped to establish collaborative relationships between faith-based organizations and noninstitutional correctional entities such as probation, parole, and other community corrections practitioners regarding aftercare programs for recently released offenders. For example, knowledge gained through the hearings could help NIC to understand how best to enhance the work of effective faith-based organizations in providing services that address current aftercare and prisoner reentry dilemmas such as housing, transportation, employment, and various social support networks through congregations.

The hearings concluded with Board members offering specific steps they will take to present this information to the full Board in order to begin to formulate an action plan.

## **Opening Remarks**

The hearings were conducted by Morris Thigpen, NIC Director, and Dr. Byron Johnson, Hearing Chair. The participating members of the Board were: Reggie Wilkinson, Advisory Board Chair; Jack Cowley, Sheryl A. Ramstad, and Cheri Nolan, members of the Faith-Based Committee; and Diane Williams, Chair of the NIC Hearing Committee.

Each Board member, as well as all other participants and audience members, shared their name and the name of the organization they represented. There was a broad spectrum of participants that represented many areas of interest and a cross section of geographical areas.

The group was welcomed by Morris Thigpen and Reggie Wilkinson, and Byron Johnson explained the format for the hearings. Mr. Wilkinson discussed how these hearings came about and why they were important. He reinforced the commitment made by NIC to have discussions about faith-based involvement in corrections not because it was politically expedient, but because people in the field have real experience in this area and they are seeing some real results. Because the mission of NIC is to serve offenders in the corrections system, it is important to look at how faith-based activities can have a positive impact on offenders, and in turn how those outcomes will improve life in our communities across America. The goal of this hearing was to get some honest, candid feedback from the participants and questions from the group to look at how faith-based organizations and programs can contribute to the work we all do, and what NIC can do to support and encourage more participation in the corrections system by these groups.

## Participant Presentations

### Panel 1: Advocates

#### Speaker 1:

**Pat Nolan**  
**Prison Fellowship**  
**Lansdowne, Virginia**

This year and every year, 630,000 inmates are coming out of prison. This is three times the number of people in the U.S. Marine Corps. With this many people rejoining our communities each year, we need to find a way to make offenders better inside to make safer communities outside. When we talk about recidivism we are offender focused, we need to talk about making safer communities. Instead of reducing recidivism rates, we need to talk about reducing the number of victims. About 95 percent of inmates will get out, and they need the tools to become active members of the community, because they all will become members of the community.

Mr. Nolan's background includes 21 years as a reserve Deputy Sheriff, time as a Republican leader in the California State Assembly, work as a victim's rights advocate, and 25 months in prison for racketeering. He noted that when he was a legislator he visited more prisons than any other assemblyman; he was active in implementing "tough on crime" policies; he received an award from Parents of Murdered Children; and he was very involved in the victim's rights movement and helped to get the Victim's Bill of Rights on the ballot. As an inmate, he discovered that many of the policies he had fought so hard to implement were not working the way they were intended. This personal experience caused him to rethink many of his methods for reforming the system and to begin to advocate in a new way.

#### *Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?*

The InnerChange Freedom Initiative of the Prison Fellowship is a good example of collaboration between a corrections system and the church to deal with concerns. TOP (Transition of Prisoners) in Detroit is a terrific program. Koinonia House (Greek for Christian fellowship) in Wheaton, Illinois, has halfway houses in four areas. Several of the federal Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) programs are working very well; Shawnee County, Kansas, has a seamless system working with their local churches, they are a team.

#### *What roadblocks hinder such collaborations from expanding?*

The religious volunteers can give inmates something staff cannot, and that is love. Love changes lives. A sincere gesture of love can, over time, change a hardened criminal. The role for religious volunteers is to love the inmates, to bring loving, moral people to surround the inmates. Religious volunteers need to be seen as partners, not as cheap labor.

The biggest obstacle is the culture of the current prison structure. There are tremendous efforts under way in several corrections systems to focus on the bigger picture. Retraining the entire

structure from what they have always done is tough. If their focus is entirely on safety and security, they need to learn that while safety and security are important, in the long run, public safety is even more important. Staff needs to begin to make judgments and take risks instead of just saying no. Also, there is a need to change the standards by which we judge corrections people. People tend to do what the system counts. Perhaps developing a system of counting what happens once an inmate leaves as part of a rewards system would be effective.

Regulations for religious gatherings in some prisons dictate that inmates cannot gather without a chaplain present. This prevents three or four people from getting together to study the Bible or the Koran.

As for as the faith community, the church has been largely AWOL in this. There are a lot of volunteers, but not nearly the number we will need for the 630,000 people coming out. We have to create a system to start that personal relationship with the inmate in the prison and catch them when they come out; to walk with them, hold them accountable, and support them. The prison system can't just hand inmates off to anyone, there needs to be training and accountability for the volunteers. The prisons need to change, but the church system needs to be called to action.

The purpose of the judicial system is not to promote institutional safety, it is to make safer communities with fewer victims. If the employees of the prison see their jobs as promoting institutional safety, then the religious volunteer, and any movement on the yard, is seen as a threat to their institutional safety and security. If they recognize that the goal is to make safer communities afterwards, then we have to balance that potential threat to safety and security with the contribution the religious volunteer can make toward reaching that goal.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

Looking at programs that are working and sharing that information...funding some unique programs. Learn from some programs that may not work. Set the parameters for changing the culture of prisons to be one of thinking of public safety and community safety after release. Also, look at the current grants to see what is working, look for the evidence, and fund programs that are working.

**Speaker 2:**

**Tony McMullen**  
**Catoosa, Oklahoma**

Mr. McMullen's journey to prison ministry included 15 years inside a maximum-security prison. He is now going back inside prisons to minister to the inmates. He feels strongly that the focus needs to be on reaching offenders before they get out. He said that the religious volunteers were his sanity while he was inside.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?***

There is a university in Louisiana that is offering college courses for full 4-year degrees, at Angola prison. They are training ministers among the inmates who are then available to serve the offenders from the inside. A number of prisons are building churches inside the facilities. Those churches elect pastors, elders, and deacons, and function as a church. One facility noted they had a 300 percent increase in church attendance when they opened their own facility. The prison should help religious services in the institution, providing musical equipment.

Prison Fellowship Ministries, Kairos—they work. Bigger organizations are in a great position to train individuals and smaller groups to do this work.

***What roadblocks hinder such collaborations from expanding?***

The system is designed to address recidivism after the offender is released. By then it is too late. Inmates are released without the preparation they need to succeed. There is no training on how to live realistically. Churches could be trained to receive outcoming prisoners. The religious groups outside need more access to get involved with the inmates and the religious activities inside the prisons to serve as mentors, to teach the inmates, and to offer up the kind of love and support that the guards cannot. When corrections officers are trained, they learn that you never trust an inmate. This is an automatic hindrance to building a trusting relationship between staff and inmates. Religious volunteers can be the people who give that trust. With appropriate training, the volunteers can work with inmates from the inside through their release.

(Note: Pat Nolan added that the warden sets the tone for the attitude (of accommodation or lack thereof) of the entire staff toward faith-based groups.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC can provide training for the mentors on how to protect their safety inside. Mentors need to learn not to take anything personally, not to trust until it is earned, and how to hold inmates accountable.

**Speaker 3:**

**John Thompson**  
**Kairos Prisons Ministry International, Inc.**  
**Winter Park, Florida**

Mr. Thompson's organization provides volunteers who minister in more than 300 prisons. Its 25,000 volunteers hold weekend-long intense programs and monthly reunion programs. The volunteers have donated more than 3.5 million hours of time to prison ministry.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?***

The Marion Correctional Institution in Marion, Ohio, brought in three Kairos programs to an environment that had high conflict and few rehabilitative programs. The programs became the groundwork for other prison ministries. The results have been a dramatic decrease in grievances, inmates going to segregation, use of force on inmates, and inmate drug abuse.

Kairos currently works in collaboration with several ministry partners. Promise Keepers is a program that is working well.

It also needs to be determined if the faith-based groups are positioned to provide programs that cover material beyond religious content. Can they provide anger management, parenting, relationship support, and transition training inside the facility?

***What roadblocks hinder such collaborations from expanding?***

Access. There has never been an administration that is more welcoming to faith-based organizations, but the corrections system is not giving these volunteers the access they need to fulfill their mission. In some places, budget cuts have reduced the staff needed to badge and train the volunteers.

Space. Many prisons have limited meeting space and many prisons have limited A/C.

Chaplaincy: When prison administrations demand that a chaplain be present for any faith-based program, a facility with one chaplain for 1,000 inmates cannot provide sufficient time for a weekend program.

Attitude. Some staff members resent a ministry program that seems to reward undeserving inmates.

Education. Employees, inmates, the public, and faith-based organizations need more training on the process of incarceration and reentry.

Budget. If space, training, chaplaincy, and education are impediments, correcting them would involve budgetary commitments.

Collaboration: Faith-based organizations need to collaborate, not compete.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC can educate the public and the department of corrections by facilitating forums that encourage stakeholders to engage one another. NIC can develop incentives for the prisons to be more open and accommodating to faith-based organizations. NIC can fund additional, well-qualified chaplains. NIC can support the goals of promoting best practices and research-based findings to measure programs and develop effective practices.



If the appearance is that it costs money to bring in volunteers, to train them and badge them, then it must be clarified that there are long-term savings with the work the volunteers are doing.

**Speaker 4:**

**Joseph Williams**  
**Detroit TOP (Transition of Prisoners, Inc.)**  
**Detroit, Michigan**

Mr. Williams began his presentation by talking about his history and personal experience with the criminal justice system. As a “career criminal” and heroin addict, his life was changed by the religious volunteers he saw in prison. He used his time after prison to get a bachelor’s and master’s degree. His organization, TOP, focuses on aftercare.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?***

Using a social integration model, TOP addresses the three segments found to be crucial to modeling a successful outcome. Church, family, and education and employment can be used together to keep people out of prison. A method needed to be established as a link between the church and the prison, and the church and the community. People coming out of prison want to have a new life, but they don’t have a connection to a spiritual and social network and they tend to go back to old friends and old behaviors that land them back in prison.

Only 18 percent of people who have come through the TOP program have had any further contact with the criminal justice system over 3 years. And only one of those went back to prison.

TOP is now trying to bring together other, primarily Christian, organizations that are interested in aftercare to pass along what they are learning. TOP will have four international conferences this year to share methods and findings.

Life Connections is proving to be effective in several prisons.

***What roadblocks hinder such collaborations from expanding?***

Many churches have prison ministries and prison aftercare, and they are interested and involved, but they realize that they don’t know what to do. Churches want the initial training and the continued support to serve this population. They also need the support to meet some of the physical needs of people coming out of prison. Most offenders are indigent and many of the churches need financial support to help people be successful. Small amounts of financial assistance to help with the material needs of the offender, like bus fare, work clothes, food, other minor expenses that must be met for someone to start a job before they get a first paycheck, can have a huge impact.

Better dialog between the service providers and the prison officials would be helpful across the board. If a warden feels that the volunteers make a contribution, that feeling travels down the line. The opposite is also true, if a warden feels the volunteers are a pain, then there is little cooperation.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

An intermediary organization between the churches and the corrections system would help prepare both entities to work more effectively. Both groups need training. Getting parole involved with people providing aftercare will help with collaborations. Training the people in the faith community to work with prisoners in aftercare has proven to be effective.

The TOP program develops a transition plan with the offender, and that plan is shared with the parole officer and the mentors. The mentors are responsible for keeping the offender on track. By encouraging more collaboration between parole and the organizations that are working with the offender in aftercare, a more successful outcome can be achieved.

## **Panel 2: Resources**

### **Speaker 1:**

**Imam Abu Abdul-Hafiz**  
**Chaplain**  
**Los Angeles Metropolitan Detention Center**  
**Los Angeles, California**

Chaplain Abdul-Hafiz discussed the very real challenges that exist for offenders who, thanks in part to sentencing guidelines, are moving into and out of prisons in increasing numbers. He also acknowledged and thanked the Board for including Muslims, who are often discussed but not always included. His remarks highlighted the role of the chaplain, and he explained what could be done to support the chaplain's efforts to serve more people more effectively.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?***

Partnerships with faith-based groups are necessary, and the Bureau of Prisons is doing things that are very innovative. There are many successful programs. Los Angeles has just completed their 27<sup>th</sup> Kairos weekend. Life Connections is a wonderful program. Catholic Relief has a history of serving people of all faiths, and it has been very successful in helping people in transition.

***What roadblocks hinder such collaborations from expanding?***

Inclusiveness is crucial to succeed in this area. Faith-based practitioners have to be there for people of all faiths, or of no faith. In the Muslim community, volunteering in the corrections system is not part of the culture. It has been very difficult to recruit volunteers. More education within the community would be helpful.

The chaplain is limited in his ability to work with halfway houses and other aftercare facilities to bridge transition. It is important to bringing awareness to churches and other facilities in the

community that there is such a need for their services, and they have an obligation to welcome people coming out of the system. As people are released into a limited number of communities, the faith community does not know that these people are there. We have to make them aware.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

The role for the chaplain has changed dramatically over the years. The chaplain is now the volunteer administrator, psychologist, spiritual advisor, and secretary. Keeping up with paperwork, accounting, and other clerical tasks has taken the chaplain away from the role as spiritual leader. Bringing in some clerical support for chaplains would make a tremendous difference in their effectiveness. There is an opportunity here for NIC to “platform” the role of the chaplain.

**Speaker 2:**

**Richard Lewis**  
**Senior Associate**  
**Caliber Associates**  
**Fairfax, Virginia**

Mr. Lewis’ remarks focused on findings from a research study conducted by Caliber on the Kairos Horizon Communities, residential, faith-based communities inside prisons. The research looked at how participation in this program impacted prisoners in terms of prison safety, ex-prisoners and successful reintegration and public safety, and the families of prisoners. The study used participants and graduates from the program, a matched group assembled from the general prison population and a group of people on the waiting list to get into a Horizon Community who did not get in to the program.

Highlights of the research findings:

- The program has operated as it was originally designed; some activities have experienced changes that may impact outcomes, including changes to some of the education programs.
- The Horizon program has experienced some unintended consequences, including a high attrition rate; participants frequently discover they are not prepared to meet the rigorous requirements.
- The Horizon program offers a variety of services that meet the security needs of a correctional environment.
- Program participation promotes a safer correctional environment, particularly during and immediately following participation.
- Horizon program participants had significantly lower rates of discipline reports and segregation stays than nonparticipants.
- Less than one-third (32.7 percent) of Horizon program participants were rearrested during the followup period (this period averaged 15 months), and the participants had fewer total charges across all arrests.

- Among participants, 19.2 percent were rearrested during the first 6 months after release, and 30.4 percent were rearrested in the first year after release.
- Overall, Kairos Horizon Communities participants had a longer period of time before rearrest, 3.5 months versus 1.4 months in the matched group.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?***

This study looked at the outcomes from the Kairos Horizon Communities program. This study found that this program is a successful endeavor and can result in cost savings.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC can spread the word that faith-based organizations can increase prison safety and help to move people toward self-sufficiency. There is a need for more, longer studies on the impact of these programs. A longitudinal study would be great.

Questions From Board Members:

Q: Is a 2-month delay significant in the time for rearrest?

A: Mr. Lewis felt it was a significant time to get the offender some intervention and more mentoring.

Q: How does the study address obstacles to success, including housing and employment concerns?

A: The study addressed substance abuse and employment issues, but did not focus on housing.

Q: Is there some sort of connectivity between the program and the release data? Do the program supports stop at the prison gate?

A: That would be ideal if there was continuing care outside the prison, and if there are supports, and there is more time to implement them, then the 2-month delay becomes even more significant.

Q: Are the numbers studied from rearrest or reincarceration?

A: They are the rearrest numbers.

**Speaker 3:**

**Chaplain Alex Taylor  
Chaplaincy Services Administrator  
Florida Department of Corrections  
Tallahassee, Florida**

Chaplain Taylor came to the Florida Department of Corrections to open faith-based residential programs in Florida facilities. The first opened in 1999, and nine more opened by March, 2003. The Florida legislature passed a bill to embrace a comprehensive approach for people who transition through the criminal justice system. The bill called for 6 faith-based dorm programs and funded 78 full-time employees to enact the legislation. Six chaplains and six clerks went to the dorms. Ten chaplains were assigned to 16 of the state's 26 work release centers, and the rest of the employees were placed in the field for transition services. The result of this legislation is that Florida has become prominent in faith-based initiatives and transition services.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?***

Prison Fellowship and The InnerChange Freedom Initiative is a program that houses inmates together. Eligibility is based on length of stay in the prison. The program is designed in three 6-month phases. While this program is Christian in nature, it does not exclude non-Christian participants.

We have heard about the Kairos Horizon program. That has been a successful collaboration.

The Good News Jail and Prison Ministry provides chaplaincy services to 276 institutions in 23 states and many countries. It provides services with funds raised from the individuals and churches supportive of its work.

Satellite television programming from large churches is widely available to prisons. Many churches have offered to donate, install, and maintain the equipment to allow inmates the opportunity to view programming that addresses their religious, educational, and personal growth needs.

***What roadblocks hinder such collaborations from expanding?***

The adversarial environment in prisons creates tension between security and programming. Prison personnel see security as their primary function, and it is measurable and achievable. Programming can interfere with scheduled movements, and can involve nonsecurity personnel who may require more supervision.

Corrections professionals must stay personally uninvolved. The role for spiritual volunteers and mentors is to become personally involved. There is a need to examine these relationships and how they can coexist, and the value of a therapeutic religious relationship.

Space issues frequently limit the amount of programming available. Without appropriate space and supervision, particularly during the evening and weekend hours when volunteers are usually available, maintaining daily routines takes precedence.

The issues of equal secular and religious programs can create a roadblock. An attempt was made to provide a nonsecular environment similar to the efforts for faith-based dorms. Volunteers who were willing to provide similar life skills programming in a nonreligious environment were scarce. The problem arises if one cannot exist without the other. In addition, an attempt has been made to be inclusive of all religions in a more generic program. Chaplain Taylor noted that his findings indicate that when the religious aspect becomes generic, “the power of personal faith to change ones life becomes diminished significantly.”

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

Increase the use of volunteers in prison programming. Train the volunteers and use local volunteers, as well as special event groups. The volunteers need to learn that they are expected to do more than provide worship services.

Promote mentor programs that match one inmate with a mentor, and that pairing goes on during incarceration and after release. Also, promote programming that extends inmate postrelease residential programs to assist the inmate in transition, and include faith-based programs on equal footing with other programs.

**Speaker 4:**

**Michael Woodruff**  
**General Counsel**  
**Western Territorial Headquarters**  
**Salvation Army**  
**Long Beach, California**

Mr. Woodruff spoke to the legal aspects of this topic. He spoke about the need to build bridges across multiple disciplines. If you look at the stakeholders in the criminal justice system, which include the public, the victims, the inmates, corrections officers, and the taxpayers, collaborative efforts need to address benefits to all of them. New decisions in the Supreme Court have impacted the role for religious organizations in the corrections environment.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?***

Hybrid models—a combination of religious and secular organizations, or organizations whose work meets both secular and religious goals—can be very effective and address legal concerns. The InnerChange Freedom Initiative, which has been discussed already, is clearly a program with religious intent, but educational programming it offered, too.

***What roadblocks hinder such collaborations from expanding?***

Many of the roadblocks center on a lack of understanding within a corrections department about the role both religious and nonsecular nongovernmental organizations (NGO) can play within the system. While corrections cannot discriminate against an NGO solely for being a faith-based group, it cannot promote some faith-based organizations over others. The groups must rise or fall solely on their ability to accomplish the secular goal of the government. How to maintain a balance between meeting the secular needs of the government and maintaining respect for the religious liberty of the inmate is an area for discussion.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC could commission a policy study on how constitutional factors, cost, security interests, and the availability and use of nongovernmental organizations to respond to the secular need and the demand for accommodation can be combined to promote nondiscriminatory policies.

NIC could consider publishing constitutionally appropriate guidelines to help corrections professionals pioneer new programming relationships that can address the needs discussed in this hearing.

Q: How important is it to gain insight from inmates on this topic?

A: It depends on how important anecdotal information is in the discussion. Inmates can share their experiences with internal safety before and after programs: Are there fights? Can they determine a difference in the ratio of staff to inmates? Do some areas feel safer? This has an impact on inmates as well as staff.

A: (audience member) When the inmates and staff feel safer, there is an impact. In one California prison, where the staff felt safer, workers compensation claims actually went down.

A: We need to find the vocabulary to legitimate the relationships between prisons and faith-based volunteers of different faiths. We have to act as the guarantor that the prisoner's needs are being protected. The state's interest is to accommodate the inmate's religious need. We have to determine what standard is being applied. That conversation is going to be hard. We are going to have the same conversation about accommodation, but that is not the whole picture. We have the rest of the faith-base providing services under the collaboration that do not address the religious needs. This is going to be tough.

## Panel 3: Correctional Administrators

### Speaker 1:

**John R. Fitzgerald**  
**Assistant Superintendent**  
**Community Corrections**  
**Hampden County Sheriff's Office**  
**Ludlow, Massachusetts**

Mr. Fitzgerald explained the unique role for the sheriff in Massachusetts. Inmates can be sentenced to the local jails for up to 2.5 years, and they experience frequent return visits (reincarcerated). In addition, there is very low turnover in this system. The sheriff was just elected to his sixth 6-year term. Many staff members have more than 30 years of experience. This gives the sheriff's office a long history of working with the volunteers, faith-based and non-faith-based organizations, and the local religious community. The office provides training to potential volunteers about the joys and pitfalls of working within the corrections system. Because it is a small community, offenders are released into an environment with few resources. The churches and other volunteers understand that people coming out of jail are coming home to their community and they get involved in the process.

### *Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations?*

Chaplains of all major denominations provide customary observances and counsel. Bible study and faith-sharing sessions are held regularly, facilitated by volunteers from area religious institutions. A nondenominational Christian weekend retreat called REC (Residents Encounter Christ) is offered several times each year in the medium- and minimum-security sites. Weekly "reunions" of participants that include prayer and songs as well as socialization are held in the community.

Faith-based mentors, recruited, trained, and matched by us, begin seeing mentees inside, and follow them on into the community. This is a long-term commitment, but it works. We do allow people with criminal records to participate. They can demonstrate like no one else that there is life after prison.

There are also Bible study programs in certain community churches that are attended by work – release and day-reporting offenders. In addition to the strictly religious functions described thus far, social and treatment services are obtained for our population in partnership with organizations such as the Salvation Army, the Council of Churches, and the Catholic Diocese. Such interventions include substance abuse treatment, employment preparation, and housing and fuel assistance, to name a few. These partnerships enhance our elevating the process from one of simple reentry to one of reintegration into the fabric of the community.

Community providers provide the jail healthcare services, and the inmates are matched with providers from their home zip codes so that they can continue with the same providers when they are released.



We have programs that use peer support and education. This has been very effective here. The program is monitored closely and is changed as needed. We have taken some calculated risks that have paid off. We have success stories. We are able to bring in the 12-step programs that are so effective.

***What roadblocks hinder such collaborations from expanding?***

While the missions of correctional agencies and faith-based organizations are theoretically very compatible, the cultures often are not. Corrections personnel, as well as religious people, can be more concerned about punishment than correction, or more focused on helping than on accountability. Experience has shown that by having open dialog, most misperceptions on both sides have been reduced or eliminated and have resulted in the formation of workable partnerships.

The issue of church and state is extremely serious and demanding of the best possible research and clarification. All parties are challenged to participate with rigorous honesty, prudent balance, and unflinching civility as we work to solidify public policy on this matter. Historically, our prisons have been “fortresses in the woods” where society can protect itself not only from the behavior of its malefactors, but also from the painful and frightening sight of them. This isolation has limited our ability to bring our expertise into the public forum that shapes public opinion.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and faith-based organizations to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC is well situated to be both a major convener of involved corrections professionals and the leadership of faith-based programs and organizations for dialog as well as to be an honest broker in the fashioning of guidelines for our collaboration. In this way, the assets of each can be leveraged to the benefit of all involved.

As the repository of best-practices data based on research it has funded, NIC could lead an aggressive public education campaign and form strategic alliances with faith-based organizations and others to lobby for a legal, effective, efficient, and moral correctional system.

Mr. Fitzgerald invited the group to find out more about their programs on their Web site, [www.hcsdmass.org](http://www.hcsdmass.org).

**Speaker 2:**

**Dennis Schrantz  
Deputy Director  
Policy and Strategic Planning  
Michigan Department of Corrections  
Lansing, Michigan**

Mr. Schrantz shared the work he is doing for this new department within the Michigan corrections system. They are working to develop a reentry program through an initiative headed by the governor. They have created a reentry process that focuses on three phases: the

institutional phase, the going home/reentry planning phase, and the staying-home phase. MPRI, the Michigan Prison Reentry Initiative, is based on what we have learned from the NIC program Transition to Community from Prison Initiative (TCPI) and the Reentry Policy Council. Our vision is to ensure that every inmate who is released from prison will have the tools necessary to succeed—every inmate, not just nonviolent inmates.

The reality is that you have to strike while the iron is hot; you have to take advantage of the strong interest in the Justice Department, in Congress, and among other elected officials, to get the work going. Each state has to design a program that works for it, and the programs cannot be duplicated, but the states can certainly learn from one another.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations, as well as public-private partnerships, that meet the secular goal of reducing recidivism and making our communities safer places for all citizens?***

There are a lot of programs, both faith-based and community-based, that have worked for years. They are providing housing services, employment services, and substance abuse treatment. Some are starting businesses to employ people in the reentry process. All of these things contribute to making our communities safer. What they are not doing is defining their work in terms that are consistent with other government service providers and therefore are not able to get the funding they need to continue doing the good work, and do even more.

***What roadblocks, if any, hinder such collaborations from expanding and meeting additional secular and civic goals?***

The faith-based groups have been working in the system for a long time, and having great success, but their challenges have been working with the government. How do you measure, under government accountability standards, hope, love, and faith? What is it that the faith-based communities are providing that can be proven accountable? They are used to doing good work, but knowing that is not usually enough to get government funding. The work they do has to be described in a way that defines how it impacts employment, housing, and other factors that not only are measurable, but are contributing factors to recidivism. Their work has to be connected to the issues we know are effective.

They all have to be evidence based. They have to prove, like anyone else, that the services they are providing are contributing, that they are meeting the same standards everyone else has to meet to work with the government.

We have to have a common language so that we are all talking about the same thing. If we are talking about evaluation, we have to be clear about what we are after. We have to be clear about what the faith-based groups have been doing for years.

The controversy over the basic topic is another roadblock. The political wrangling over whether faith-based initiatives are the realm of Republicans and whether an Office on Faith-Based Initiatives can operate under a Democratic Governor are adding unanticipated roadblocks to the people trying to develop more effective collaborations.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and law enforcement agencies and people in faith-based organizations who want to work with corrections to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC can keep doing what it is doing, and do it in more states. The mentoring provided by NIC and its service providers is phenomenal. Staff are very well informed, and they have a diverse team of people they can call on to offer help. The people on the ground have made the biggest difference in what we have been able to do in Michigan and they have enabled us to raise money from other sources (e.g., JEHT Foundation).

Note: The above response is in reference to NIC's Transition from Prison to Community (TPC) Initiative.

Q: How do we keep this going as a new way of doing business? What has to happen to incorporate these programs into the system?

A: When you make a change to the system, put it into policy. Make it official that you are changing the process. When you change the standards for employment programs, make sure the service providers are also changing their policies to meet the standards. It is critical for this effort to have the cabinet position there to implement policy changes.

We have the head of corrections, the head of labor, and the head of housing together in the same room to make policy changes that affect all of them. People with enough authority and moxie have to be right there to make clear decisions. Real collaborative decision making has a tremendous effect. Not all of the collaborations will be successful, but they will not fail for any lack of trying. The trust has to be there, and if you bring the faith-based organizations into the discussions, with their tremendous history and ability to say, "we love these people," it changes the dynamic of the decisionmaking.

**Speaker 3:**

**Jeanne Woodford**  
**Director**  
**California Department of Corrections**  
**Sacramento, California**

Ms. Woodford described how faith-based organizations have been filling in the gaps in services when funding has been cut. The faith-based groups came in and provided literacy training, peer education, anger management, parenting classes, and other programs when there was no more funding. The same man had coached the baseball team for more than 20 years, and when the funding was cut, he continued to coach the team through one of the faith-based groups.

California releases 120,000 people a year and those people are released in a few areas. People who are used to being in a structured environment are released into communities where there are often high rates of unemployment and no real support systems to get them integrated into the community. We need to find out what the communities need to help welcome people back into the community. We start working with offenders 210 days before release, but what we have not

done is prepare the community to be a bridge to welcome these people back. We hope to expand our efforts with the help of faith-based organizations.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations, as well as public-private partnerships, that meet the secular goal of reducing recidivism and making our communities safer places for all citizens?***

A self-help group called Criminals and Gang Members Anonymous, based on other 12-step programs, has been very effective. The program supports gang members who want to get out of the gang life. The inmates have developed this program with support from the faith-based groups, who have a member participate in the meetings. This program has just gone international.

The Purpose-Driven Life: 40 Days of Purpose is a Christian spiritual growth program. It has been a success. In April 2003, 210 inmates at the Sierra Conservation Center institution joined the program. A total of 450 have completed the program, so far. The support for the program has come from the faith-based organization, at little or no cost to the facility. The effects have been reduced violence at the facility, improved inmate behavior, and improved safety for the inmates, staff, and the public.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) came to management at San Quentin and asked to be part of the orientation program for new officers. It was very helpful to have the officers understand what AA does and how it works with the inmates.

***What roadblocks, if any, hinder such collaborations from expanding and meeting additional secular and civic goals?***

We need more evidence-based findings on what works. When research is done by outside organizations, it lends more weight to efforts to increase the involvement of faith-based groups. We have to get the wardens to let the faith-based groups in.

Some changes are being made in the way we classify prisons, and we will identify prisons by their missions. By doing this, we will be able to tailor the type of service providers that will address the specific missions and make their service meaningful.

You have to get to the hearts and minds of the corrections officers so everyone at the table is respected, including the correctional staff.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and law enforcement agencies and people in faith-based organizations who want to work with corrections to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC can hold more meetings like this. Bring in wardens and faith-based groups. Wardens do not usually know how much experience and training exists among the faith-based volunteers.

NIC can come into the states and show them how to get the local communities involved.

Q: It is clear that we do need to prepare the community for the released offenders. How can we do that?

A: In California, we are going to give our offenders a certificate stating what they did while in prison to show potential employers that they do have skills. We are working with churches that run a lot of offender programs and having them come into the prisons to see who the offenders are, who will be coming into the community.

Q: What about bringing the different groups together in the community?

A: Because we had so many groups, all volunteer, working together in the prison system, we used to hold a quarterly meeting for them to share what they are doing. When we had everyone at the table, we were able to let them know what each group was doing, what they could do together, and how they could prevent duplicating efforts.

Q: Have you thought about holding wardens accountable for actions, including recidivism?

A: By dividing our prisons by mission, we are addressing that, but they will all have different standards. A maximum-security facility with people who will not be getting out will have different standards than a facility where people stay less than a year.

Q: How do you get the local authorities involved in the process, in a systemic way?

A: Getting board members of organizations, community activists involved in a town hall type of meeting where they can see how this does impact the community. Get the district attorney or the sheriff involved.

A: Using strategies to make community leaders see that these people are coming back into their communities, and they will be impacted personally by how successful their reentry is.

A: We need to rethink how we market these efforts. There is a political tide. We have to talk about economic reality, we talk about crime, we talk about victims, the discussion can't be about helping these poor guys, it has to be about how their reentry will impact the community.

A: We have to bring the staff and the expertise into the public forum.

The representative from Kairos pointed out that his group is there with the mission to share the joy of Jesus. This is not something that can be measured by usual government standards. To them, they are successful if they bring three people a month to Jesus, but that is not a measurable outcome. They do not want any government money, all they want is access.

One response from the audience was that it is important to realize that faith is not an add-on. It should be viewed as a partner, not as a way to do what the government wants to do on the cheap. The faith-based groups are doing something the government cannot. That is, they are providing love. The church should be a real partner with the correctional facility.

If faith-based groups are moving from coming in to preach, and they start describing what they do as a program, and they start to talk about it as ‘I want to help people succeed, therefore I want to help improve the parole rate,’ they need to become accountable for that.

Mr. Thigpen does not believe that faith-based groups are seen as an add-on.

Mr. Nolan disagrees. He said he witnesses it everywhere he goes. The faith-based groups are seen as part of the institution.

## **Panel 4: NIC Panel**

### **Speaker 1: Speaking on Mental Illness in the Corrections System**

**Fran Zandi**  
**Correctional Program Specialist**  
**Jail Division**  
**NIC**

There are thousands of inmates with mental illness who operate marginally in the jail setting. They tax the resources of state and local corrections. In the end, many return to the community, stretching the mental health and outreach resources to the limit.

Correctional administrators are acutely aware of the problem and feel a sense of frustration, if not inadequacy, in dealing with the identification, diversion, treatment, and return of the mentally ill to the community. That’s business as usual from a local jail perspective, but the street time is usually calculated in days not months.

Those of us working in this country’s jails, prisons, and community corrections are not mental health professionals. We have come a long way in the past 3 decades – providing training to correctional staff to help them recognize the symptoms of mental illness, providing constitutional levels of care to inmates in custody, and working with community groups to transition these inmates back into the community successfully.

The question remains, how do we “fix” this? Jail administrators see the same mentally ill inmates because there isn’t anywhere else for them to go. The jail isn’t one option for treatment in the community it is the only option for the indigent mentally ill. They create chaos in a jail and in the courtroom. Prison administrators see their segregation units filled with inmates who can’t obey the rules and are out of control, and they feel a sense of frustration because they know the segregation unit is not the place for the mentally ill inmate. Probation officers, already taxed with too many probationers on their caseloads, have to try to find scarce crisis beds for probationers that are needed by other mentally ill individuals who are not part of the criminal justice system. Community mental health providers, overwhelmed by their regular caseloads, are often willing to write off these inmate clients because they refuse treatment, miss appointments, can’t be found (they don’t have an address), are self-medicating with alcohol or street drugs, and many are already in jail or prison so are getting the treatment they need.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations, as well as public-private partnerships, that meet the secular goal of reducing recidivism and making our communities safer places for all citizens?***

Many are doing good work. The Council of State Governments (CSG) has worked to provide local, state, and federal policymakers and criminal justice and mental health professionals with recommendations to help them improve the criminal justice system's response to people with mental illness.

The Consensus Project was a true collaborative effort. That work continues today as NIC partners with the CSG to provide technical assistance to jurisdictions that are working to develop collaboration between corrections and mental health organizations. The Consensus Project document has become a tool to help jurisdictions see what the possibilities are in the area as they formulate policies for the mentally ill and the criminal justice system. CSG recently published several monographs profiling efforts in four states to promote the continuity of care for the mentally ill by ensuring their prompt enrollment in Medicaid and SSI.

The city of Denver recently launched a 10-year mission to abolish homelessness in the city. In a study conducted to establish reasons for becoming homeless, 12 percent reported mental illness, 14 percent substance abuse, and 7 percent discharge from prison or jail. The study identified one reason for each respondent, and some were hard pressed to identify only one reason since all three may be present. This could easily raise the rate to over 25 percent. The commission for this ambitious project represented state and local entities, private corporations, neighborhood groups, and faith-based groups—who have been on the front line in dealing with the homeless in the Denver area for years. A coalition of faith-based groups has worked together to house and feed people to end this problem.

***What roadblocks, if any, hinder such collaborations from expanding and meeting additional secular and civic goals?***

In all of these efforts, it is abundantly clear that this is not a jail, prison, or community corrections problem, it is a community problem, and unless we address it systemically, from the ground up, it will never get better. Our clientele most often rely on Medicaid, Social Security, or charity to meet their most immediate needs.

Stable and sustainable housing and access to medical and mental health care (including medications) are areas that the faith-based community has been advocating for. An inability to meet these basic needs keeps people with mental illness coming back to the criminal justice system to have their basic needs met.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and law enforcement agencies and people in faith-based organizations who want to work with corrections to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC could work with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on their homeless policy advocacy. There is a jail element,

and these agencies could work together to develop an action plan to address the mental health element in homelessness and criminal justice.

The President's New Freedom Commission was tasked to improve America's mental health service delivery system for individuals with serious mental illness. A subcommittee on criminal justice produced a background paper that reiterated the problems facing urban communities today, i.e., people with serious mental illness who cycle in and out of homeless shelters, hospitals, and jails. Rural America, while not experiencing the volume of mentally ill in its communities, has fewer resources to meet this challenge.

This subcommittee identified three major areas of intervention: first, a diversion programs to keep minor offenders with serious mental illness out of the criminal justice system where they do not belong; second, services in correctional facilities for those with serious mental illness whose crimes are serious enough to warrant incarceration; and third, discharge planning, linking people with serious mental illness to community-based services when they are released from jail or prison.

The faith-based community has played a role in reaching out to the most troubled in our communities: the mentally ill, the homeless, the substance abuser, and those in our correctional facilities. They have been the resource for food, shelter, clothing, and, in some cases, treatment. Their mission as volunteers in many correctional facilities is to provide programs and religious services. Successful blueprints to end homelessness, for successful transition plans, and for mental health or substance abuse treatment involve a collaborative effort of state, local, business, and faith-based groups.

Q: Does your work in the jails show how changes in policy impact people with mental illness?

A: Many people with mental illness think it is not big deal to go to jail, but there are long-term ramifications. When looking for a job or for housing, or even for space in a mental health facility, they will always have to disclose that they have a criminal record, no matter what the type of crime is, and that can make them ineligible, automatically, for jobs, apartments, or social services.

Q: Is the local county jail really the mental health system for the indigent?

A: Yes. Due to regulations to provide a level of care, some of the urgency has been removed from the community mental health providers who can say "oh, they are in jail, they are off my rolls."

Q: Access is the key we have to see as an objective. We have to ensure that people are walking out of the institutions with the tools they need to continue to receive treatment. Frequently those tools include having a Medicaid or SSI card. Those services terminate when someone enters the facilities and it takes a long time to reinstate them. We need a way to make sure those services are in place upon release.



Q: We need to motivate the faith community to see mental illness as a moral issue. These folks are not criminals, they are sick. The faith community needs to find resources to serve these people.

## **Speaker 2: Speaking on Offender Workforce Development**

**Francina Carter**

**Correctional Program Specialist**

**Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement**

**NIC**

Employment is so important because an unemployed former inmate is three times more likely to return to prison. Programs that are most effective in reducing recidivism have an employment component. Traditionally there has been work on the inside with some job training, and work on the outside with some job placement, but we have always needed a bridge between these two systems. We learned from the reentry report that job placement assessment really begins at intake. We need to find out what the offenders' skill levels, education needs, and abilities are as soon as they enter the facility. This will allow us to tailor programs to address those needs and make offenders more employable upon release.

*Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations, as well as public-private partnerships, that meet the secular goal of reducing recidivism and making our communities safer places for all citizens?*

Connections to Success is a faith-based group in St. Louis that partners with federal probation and they have been very effective in the employment initiative in that jurisdiction. The U.S. Federal Department of Probation, Eastern Missouri District, has been studying the Connections to Success program for 3 years. Currently, its program participants have a lower rate of unemployment than the rate in the community. This program has now been replicated in Kansas City.

In Denver, Charity House Ministries started a program, the Reintegration Working Group, which includes an employment component, and invited other groups to join. There are now 100 members who meet bimonthly to discuss the work of the subgroups. The team formed subgroups to address specific reintegration issues, including employment, housing, and substance abuse. They have developed a workbook, and we want to help distribute it as a guide for other faith-based groups that want to enhance programming and train volunteers.

*What roadblocks, if any, hinder such collaborations from expanding and meeting additional secular and civic goals?*

We are finding that programs that are working with employers and talking to them in a business language rather than a community service language are finding some success. Employers need to address the bottom line, and while they may want to do good in the community, ultimately they need to be successful in business first and foremost. Making good employees of the offenders makes them good matches with the jobs that are available.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and law enforcement agencies and people in faith-based organizations who want to work with corrections to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

NIC offers a training curriculum, a train-the-trainer program for groups who want to work in this field. We found that a number of participants in the training were representatives of faith-based organizations.

Q: Have you done any work with the employers?

A: No, we work primarily with service providers and give them tips on skills development and approaching employers. In Baltimore, the mayor's office is working with employers

A: (Ms. Nolan) In Chicago we have the Sheridan Initiative, which starts inside the prison and works its way into the community. It involves the faith-based community in a number of different roles. The job training in the institution is a match with the labor market needs. A market analysis was done to determine what jobs are available, and the inmates are trained to do those jobs.

Q: The Department of Labor has restricted funding to grantees that are serving the most serious offenders. What do we do about that?

A: We have been trying to point out the problems with that.

Q: Community corrections has really cleaned out the less violent offenders, and put them back in the community, but the job resources have dried up for these folks, and the Department of Labor has really not helped communities support these efforts.

**Speaker 3: Speaking on Restorative Justice**

**Michael Dooley**  
**Correctional Program Specialist**  
**Academy Division**  
**NIC**

Working in the prison system in many different positions demonstrated how many of the systems that are in place do not work. Mr. Dooley saw first hand how people's behavior changed when their environment changed. Government had evolved to take the community completely out of the corrections system. He saw an opportunity to try to do something about that. They got a federal grant to start working with communities and families who then can work with the individuals. They were pioneers in what others were calling restorative justice.

Mr. Dooley then moved to NIC where they started to develop a training curriculum to work with agencies to get the principles of restorative justice out. It is important to work with victims, communities, and offenders, they should have opportunities to work in the process, and we have to rethink the role for the government in working with the community. When a victim is harmed, the government takes away the harm and gives it to the state, but when individuals are involved

in healing that harm, they can make a real difference in the community. The whole system need to bring people into the prisons to develop relationships. The faith community has the capacity to do that.

***Do successful collaborations already exist between sacred and secular organizations, as well as public-private partnerships, that meet the secular goal of reducing recidivism and making our communities safer places for all citizens?***

No examples given.

***What roadblocks, if any, hinder such collaborations from expanding and meeting additional secular and civic goals?***

We need to learn how to bring the faith community in to start a dialog, to develop relationships, and to use them to help heal the harm.

***How can NIC play a key role in the interface between correctional and law enforcement agencies and people in faith-based organizations who want to work with corrections to address concerns inside institutions and in the aftercare setting?***

We developed a week-long training program for agencies and a train-the-trainer program. We were able to pull in other community organizations to be part of the training programs. We packaged that program and it is available through our Web site.

Q: The foundation of restorative justice is that we need to do the right thing for the right reasons, which is compassion...the idea is not selling. Have we thought about changing the debate to public safety? Also, can you tell how often your training package is being downloaded?

A: Yes, now we can tell how many times the package is being downloaded in our new Web site design. Next, how can we have a relational approach to justice? There is an emotive factor that will add fuel to an intervention that is cognitively based.

A: (audience) I think we need to sell our faith-based initiatives to corrections administrators. The only way to really do this is to focus on public safety, and more specifically, on prison safety. If we cannot demonstrate that our faith-based programs are changing the prison environment and therefore changing behavior and making it safer, and then in turn have that impact on the outside, then it is not very useful for people involved in prisons.

A: In Michigan, we have framed the discussion as making better citizens for safer communities. But we have to sell getting involved not on safety, but on money. Employers want people who are going to show up on time and not cause trouble.

Q: What can NIC do to organize groups, or will they bring them together so that restorative justice can work?

A: Not really, NIC has some models, but they don't actually bring the people together.

A: Restorative justice is really about the offender understanding what they did to the victim. Historically the system has been set up so that the offender does his time and nothing else is expected of him. They were passive participants.

#### **Speaker 4: Speaking on Evidence-Based Practices**

**Rachel Mestad**  
**Correctional Program Specialist**  
**Community Corrections/Prison Division**  
**NIC**

What are evidence-based practices? They are a model developed as a way to look at issues in corrections. There are three components: Principles—what is the content; Organizational development—do your agency’s policies and practices support what you are trying to accomplish; Collaboration—how can we all help each other and how do we interrelate? The ultimate goal is to find out if we are working together to reduce recidivism.

We not only use this system to look at outside projects, we also make sure that our deliverables are evidence based. We defined evidence-based as follows: evidence-based policies are based on documented needs of the field, are designed according to the highest levels of evidence available, have measurable goals and outcomes, and have feedback loops for learning and adjustment. Basically, is what we are doing effective, and can we measure that?

We looked at what affects human behavioral change. Our findings do not necessarily match with what common thinking was in these areas.

1. Assessing actuarial risk—we need to determine the level of risk and assess their needs; we need to know who we are dealing with and what they need.
2. Enhancing intrinsic motivation—talk therapy and preaching have not been found to be effective in behavior change; motivated participation is more effective.
3. Targeting intervention—we need to put more money into higher risk offenders; lower risk offenders do not necessarily benefit from more services, and they can be hurt by it.
4. Skill training and the right to practice—70 percent of the offender’s time needs to be filled with social activities; this is a good role for the faith-based organizations. Most people do not learn by education, they learn by doing.
5. Increasing positive reinforcement—better modeling, more positive reinforcement.
6. Engaging ongoing support in the community—churches, schools, the family, faith-based community, people want someplace to turn where they won’t be judged.
7. Measuring relevant practices—we need to evaluate and reevaluate offender behavior changes. Look at procedures and performance. Make adjustments as you go along to improve outcomes.
8. Measurement feedback—feedback builds accountability, enhances motivation, maintains integrity, and improves outcomes.

We can look at evidence-based practices and the faith community and they are not two distinct ideas. Faith-based organizations are staples in the community. People tend to relate better to

those with similar beliefs, they are a place for people to turn when they are troubled, and they provide good modeling and enhance prosocial ties. We have to ensure that the people who are involved have the training they need to work with offenders. We need to make sure the faith community wants to work with offenders and has the techniques to be effective. We also need more empirical research on the impact of faith-based involvement in recidivism. Is it a way to fill time, or is it more effective.

### **Speaker 5: Speaking on the Transition from Prison to Community Initiative**

**Kermit Humphries**  
**Corrections Program Specialist**  
**Community Corrections/Prison Division**  
**NIC**

Of the people going to prison this year, 99 percent will get out. And two-thirds of those people will go back to prison within 3 years. We were working to find out how release and supervision work. We realized that there were three components to our correctional system, an institutional component, the release decision component, and field supervision. We can work with the parole element, but if we didn't work with the institution, we were not going to be effective. We realized we needed to have a system in place to transition offenders out of the system into the rest of their life. Our goal is to have fewer crimes and fewer victims of crimes.

Our model was developed by practitioners in eight jurisdictions. We found that corrections agencies have a span of control in the life of the offender. The human services agencies have a span that covers the time after the corrections system is involved. Those agencies are not only government agencies; they can be faith-based groups. And the community element is involved long after the prison system is out of the picture.

Our process is not to give money to the states, but to provide technical assistance and a site coordinator to be a resource to help implement the model. State money is going into implementing the model, and the NIC people are helping with the implementation. Each state has organized differently. The policy team, the implementation team, each works differently, but they are all finding that there are a multitude of issues that involve the community, including housing, employment, and mental health.

In Kansas City, there is a program that actually has faith-based groups supervising offenders.

It is an issue of coordination, understanding the common purpose, and acknowledging that the offender population is a community issue. How do we collectively share information and work jointly together so there are fewer crimes in the community?

Q: TCPI had been evidence based from the beginning. We have been talking about whether the faith-based community can provide measurable results, or if it even wants to.

A: Before we started talking about reentry, a number of faith-based groups have been providing these services because their congregants needed those services. As government money was less available, the churches were filling in for their members.

A: The faith-based groups are coming forward willingly to provide services. That is where the issue of accountability begins to shape itself. Some faith-based groups are motivated to provide their message of salvation, and that is their foothold. For some inmates, that is their foothold, too.

A: Many of the faith-based groups do not see their work as measurable. When confronted, they can see an openness to the evidence-based side, and they might see how it can improve their mission.

A: Some of the roadblocks are created by looking for a one-size-fits-all system.

## Final Comments

These comments are from Sheryl Ramstad:

*What the Board heard is that while faith-based organizations have been involved in NIC's work in transition, mental health, offender reemployment, research-based practices, and restorative justice, we really haven't directed services to or focused on the faith-based, we have just included them in the discussion. How do we more directly capture the momentum on the President's Faith-Based Initiative by channeling NIC to work with the faith-based organization, whether it is bringing them together so that they can have the dialog about evidence-based practices with NIC, or they can focus on the mental health issue with NIC, and find their role.*

*We would like to recommend the following as our suggestions for next steps:*

*First, we would like to make a presentation at the next Advisory Board meeting, and that presentation will include recommendations to NIC as to how we might deal with this topic given this window that is starting to close. I think all of us are in agreement that Diane (Williams) should give the presentation.*

*Secondly, we recommend that there be a working group comprising NIC faith-based committee members, and that the committee meet with representatives from the panels to work with the NIC Board and staff to implement the next steps, and who would be involved with this.*

*We would like Pat Nolan, Joe Williams, Jeanne Woodford, Mike Woodruff, Steve McFarland, Task Force on Faith-Based Community Initiatives, U.S. Department of Justice, and Rich Lewis to be in that group, and we would like George Keiser from NIC to coordinate that. We would like there to be a conference call before the June 20 board meeting to finalize our presentation and recommended follow-up.*

Morris Thigpen commented that there may not be enough time to do this before the meeting.

*This will not be a time to issue an edict; it will help design a framework for discussion at the board meeting, and to get some feedback from the whole board.*

Dennis Schrantz pointed out that a Muslim representative was needed on the working committee. Imam Abdul-Hafiz agreed to participate.

**NOTE:** A subcommittee did meet following this meeting, and its recommendations for action are included after the executive summary in this report.

## Appendix: Meeting Participants

**Morris Thigpen**

Director  
National Institute of Corrections  
Washington, DC

### Panelists

**Imam Abu Abdul-Hafiz**

Chaplain  
Los Angeles Metropolitan Detention Center  
Los Angeles, California

**John R. Fitzgerald**

Assistant Superintendent  
Community Corrections  
Hampden County Sheriff's Office  
Ludlow, MA

**Richard Lewis**

Senior Associate  
Caliber Associates  
Fairfax, Virginia

**Tony McMullen**

Catoosa, Oklahoma

**Pat Nolan**

Prison Fellowship  
Lansdowne, Virginia

**Dennis Schrantz**

Deputy Director  
Policy and Strategic Planning  
Michigan Department of Corrections  
Lansing, Michigan

**Chaplain Alex Taylor**

Chaplaincy Services Administrator  
Florida Department of Corrections  
Tallahassee, Florida

**John Thompson**

Kairos Prisons Ministry International, Inc.  
Winter Park, Florida

**Joseph Williams**

Detroit TOP (Transition of Prisoners, Inc.)  
Detroit, Michigan

**Jeanne Woodford**

Director  
California Department of Corrections  
Sacramento, California

**Michael Woodruff**

General Counsel  
Western Territorial Headquarters  
Salvation Army  
Long Beach, California

### Participating Members of the Board

**Dr. Byron Johnson**

Hearing Chair  
Baylor University  
Waco, Texas

**Reggie Wilkinson**

Advisory Board Chair  
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and  
Correction  
Columbus, Ohio

**Jack Cowley**

Member of the Faith-Based Committee  
Alpha for Prison and Reentry  
Tulsa, Oklahoma



## **Participating Members of the Board (cont'd)**

### **Sheryl A. Ramstad**

Member of the Faith-Based Committee  
Minnesota Tax Court  
St. Paul, Minnesota

### **Cheri Nolan**

Member of the Faith-Based Committee  
Deputy Assistant Attorney General  
Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department  
of Justice

### **Diane Williams**

Chair of the NIC Hearing Committee.  
The Safer Foundation  
Chicago, Illinois

## **NIC Staff**

### **Francine Carter**

Correctional Program Specialist  
Office of Correctional Job Training and  
Placement

### **Michael Dooley**

Correctional Program Specialist  
Academy Division

### **Kermit Humphries**

Corrections Program Specialist  
Community Corrections/Prison Division

### **George M. Keiser**

Chief  
Community Corrections Division

### **Rachel Mestad**

Correctional Program Specialist  
Community Corrections/Prison Division

### **Fran Zandi**

Correctional Program Specialist  
Jail Division