

Suggested Readings of FBO Evaluations

Three descriptive studies and one multivariate study, all of which have not been published, are worth reading. Two of the studies examined the effectiveness of Teen Challenge's drug treatment programs, while the other two focused upon faith-based programs to prisoners and former prisoners. The first study compared a sample of Teen Challenge drug treatment graduates, (i.e. those who successfully completed the program) with induction center dropouts (i.e. those who dropped out at the beginning of the program), and training center dropouts (i.e. those who were unwilling or unable to complete the program) between 1968 and 1975.³² All total, 366 individuals were identified, but only 54 percent of those completed surveys. Individuals who graduated from the Teen Challenge training center showed significant and positive behavioral change when compared with the two dropout groups over the seven-year period.

The second descriptive study surveyed former Teen Challenge participants who had successfully completed the four to six month induction program based in Chattanooga, Tennessee.³³ Alumni from a 15-year period (1979-1991) were identified ($n=213$) and a random sample of 50 was subsequently surveyed, from which 50 percent responded ($n=25$). Interestingly, based on responses from only 25 former participants who had successfully completed phase 1 of the program and without the benefit of any comparison group, the author concludes that a change in attitude, behavior, and lifestyle is apparent, significant, and long-lasting.

The third study compares the reentry to society of former inmates who had participated in Prison Fellowship's church-based aftercare program ($n=60$), with a matched sample of former prisoners ($n=60$) who did not participate in the church-based program.³⁴ Former prisoners in the church-based program were less likely than the comparison group to be returned to prison (25% vs. 34%).

The last of the descriptive studies examines prisoners ($n=59$) who had participated in Kairos Horizons, a faith-based program designed to improve behavior and literacy. Inmates participating in the Kairos program tended to have a more severe primary offense and significantly longer prison sentences than the general population to which they were compared ($n=741$). The Florida Department of Corrections reports that Kairos participants were less likely to than a sample from the general population to have disciplinary problems and more likely to attain higher literacy levels.³⁵

The results from four multivariate analyses provide at least preliminary positive evidence that participation in social service programs administered by faith-based organizations generate effective outcomes. In all four multivariate studies, the faith-based program was found to produce effective and statistically significant results. Three

³² Catherine B. Hess (1976). "An Evaluation of the Teen Challenge Treatment Program." Services Research Report, National Institute on Drug Abuse, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Public Health Service.

³³ Roger D. Thompson (1994). "Teen Challenge of Chattanooga, Tennessee: Survey of Alumni." Teen Challenge National: Springfield, Missouri.

³⁴ Thomas O'Connor (2001). "From Prison to the Free World: An Evaluation of an Aftercare Program in Detroit, Michigan." Center for Social Research: Maryland.

³⁵ Florida Department of Corrections (2000). "Comparing Tomoka Correctional Institution's Faith-Based Dorm (Kairos Horizons) with Non-Participants." Bureau of Research and Data Analysis: Tallahassee, Florida.

of the four multivariate studies evaluated the effectiveness of distinct programs affiliated Prison Fellowship Ministries (PFM), a volunteer organization which prisoners and former prisoners. In the first study, Mark Young and his co-authors investigated long-term recidivism among a group of federal inmates trained as volunteer prison ministers. Inmates were furloughed to Washington, D.C., for a two-week seminar designed to support their religious faith and develop their potential for religious leadership with fellow inmates in a program operated by PFM, and supported by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Recidivism data for seminar participants were compared to data drawn from a matched control group over an eight to fourteen year follow-up period. Chi-square analysis as well as survival analysis revealed that the seminar group had a significantly lower rate of recidivism than the matched group.³⁶

In the second study, Byron Johnson and colleagues examined the impact of religious programs on institutional adjustment and recidivism rates in two matched groups of inmates from four adult male prisons in New York State.³⁷ One group had participated in programs sponsored by PFM; the other had no involvement with PFM. PFM and non-PFM inmates were similar on measures of institutional adjustment, as measured by both general and serious infractions, and recidivism, as measured by arrests during a one-year follow-up period. However, after controlling for level of involvement in Prison Fellowship sponsored programs, inmates who were most active in Bible studies were significantly less likely to be rearrested during the one-year follow-up period. In both studies of Prison Fellowship samples, there was a statistically significant parallel between increases in bible study participation or program participation and reductions in the level of recidivism among former inmates.

In the third study, Byron Johnson conducted an exploratory analysis comparing the recidivism rates for two Brazilian prisons widely considered to be exemplars in a country facing an array of correctional crises.³⁸ One of the prisons was primarily based on vocational training and the use of prison industry to better prepare inmates for release and to reduce the cost of operating the facility (Braganca). The second prison was a faith-based facility run by local church volunteers who use religious programs to "kill the criminal and save the person" (Humaita). The study compared recidivism rates for prisoners released from these two facilities during a three-year post-release window from 1996 to 1999. The findings revealed that the recidivism rate (i.e., new arrest and re-incarceration) for former Humaita prisoners was significantly lower during a three-year follow-up period than that found for Braganca prisoners, and this finding held for high-risk as well as low risk prisoners.

The fourth study is a comparative evaluation of the Christian drug treatment program Teen Challenge. The study describes the history and procedure of Teen Challenge and its moral understanding of addiction is contrasted with the disease model of addiction found in other programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). In order to

³⁶ Mark C. Young, John Gartner, Thomas O'Connor, David B. Larson, and Kevin Wright (1995) "Long-Term Recidivism Among Federal Inmates Trained as Volunteer Prison Ministers," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 22:97-118.

³⁷ Byron R. Johnson, David B. Larson, and Timothy G. Pitts, (1997) "Religious Programming, Institutional Adjustment and Recidivism Among Former Inmates in Prison Fellowship Programs," *Justice Quarterly*, 14:145-166.

³⁸ Byron R. Johnson (forthcoming publication 2001) "Assessing the Impact of Religious Programs and Prison Industry on Recidivism: An Exploratory Study."

assess the effectiveness of Teen Challenge according to several outcome measures, a nonequivalent control group pretest-posttest design was employed using self-report telephone interview data. Outcomes considered were freedom from addictive substances, return to treatment, employment, and precipitants of drug use such as depression and cravings. The comparison group was composed of clients in short-term inpatient (STI) programs funded by Medicare or Medicaid. Aaron Bicknese's study of the Teen Challenge Drug Treatment Program demonstrated that offenders participating in the faith-based drug treatment program were more likely to remain sober and maintain employment than those that did not.³⁹ Far more Teen Challenge graduates were employed full time and far fewer Teen Challenge graduates returned to treatment than those in either comparison group.

³⁹ Bicknese, Aaron. (1999). "The Teen Challenge Drug Treatment Program in Comparative Perspective," Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University.