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Religion and Crime: A Study of Inmates in State and Federal Prisons in the United States

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Public Health  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Public Health in Community Health

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by  
Dhanalakshmi Thirumalai  
May 2004

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Dr. Tiejian Wu

Keywords: Religion, Prison, Inmates, and Crime

## ABSTRACT

Religion and Crime: A Study of Inmates in State and Federal Prisons in the United States

By

Dhanalakshmi Thirumalai

Persistent high levels of crime in this country have provided support for the need for public programs that help in reducing crime rates through effective interventions. Spirituality and religion are considered to play a major part in determining an individual's attitude towards committing a crime. This study analyzed if inmates in State and Federal prisons in the US are involved in prison religious activities and personal prayers in order to determine if criminality (measured by offense type) of inmates affects their participation in religious activities. Based on logistic regression analysis, gender, race, and marital status of inmates were found to be significant predictors of inmates' religious participation. Offense type was not a significant predictor in determining inmates' participation in religious activities. The study showed up to 60% of the inmates participated in some kind of religious activity. The implications for further research are discussed along with the potential for further evaluation of the relationship between religion and crime.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents Dr. Vimala and Dr. Thirumalai for sending me this far to achieve my educational goals.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I thank God for giving me the opportunity to work towards a master's program. I am indebted to my parents for their faith and trust on me. I love you amma and naina very, very much. Without your blessings and support, my dream of a Masters degree would never have been accomplished. I thank my brothers for their monetary support and without them I would never have made this far.

This thesis topic came out of a casual talk with my Professor Dr. Joanne Walker Flowers. I am grateful to her for all her support and guidance to complete this task. Thank you Dr. Flowers for being there for me, always. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Anderson for all his precious time spent in editing my paper and correcting my language. I feel lucky to have you as my committee member. Thanks a bunch for all your sincere efforts to make my paper look better. Thank you Dr. Wu for your help in data analysis and for all of your good suggestions in improving my thesis. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Seier for meeting with me amidst her busy schedule to answer all of my statistical questions. Thank you very much Dr. Seier.

I extend my thanks to my dear friend Haritha for providing me a suitable environment to concentrate on my work. Thank you dear, for your unconditional love and support. Thanks Vinodh for your delicious dinners when I came home hungry. Thanks to you, Krishna, for all your phone calls and visits to check on my progress.

Last but not the least, many thanks to my best friend Mr. Shankar Balasubramanian for having confidence on me and for his encouraging words that kept me lively.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Federal Bureau of Investigation in its Crime Clock (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002) reported that there was one larceny theft every 4.5 seconds; one burglary every 14.7 seconds; one motor vehicle theft every 25.3 seconds; one aggravated assault every 35.3 seconds; one robbery every 1.2 minutes; one forcible rape every 5.5 minutes, and one murder every 32.4 minutes in the United States, in the year 2001. Preliminary Uniform Crime Report (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002) released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation states that the overall crime rate decreased by 1.4% when compared to the crime rate of previous year. Yet, violent crimes like murder increased by 0.8%, and forcible rape increased by 0.4%. Although the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program states that the 2002 Nation's Crime Index dropped down by 0.2% from the 2001 index, crime rates are still not under control. The State department expenditures on prisons and jails have increased more drastically over the past two decades than for any other area (Irwin, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 1999).

There are several factors that can influence an individual's decision in committing a crime; these include psychological status, social status, and situational status. Criminal behavior can be defined as a deviation from normal moral behavior. Religion is considered as one of the factors that inculcate moral behaviors in a person. An exploratory study to find if Christianity and Islam (Miller, 2002) support any kind of violence indicated that both the religions condemned criminal violence. Religion is said to have positive effects (Donahue & Benson, 1995) on an individual's attitude and behavior towards altruism.

### Statement of the Problem

As crime rates remain very high in this country, there are numerous programs being developed to reduce crime rates in the community. Recently, spirituality has been widely used as a key factor in the promotion of non-violence and peace when considering the reduction of violence rates in many workplaces and institutions. Peace is based on the spiritual practices of the people, the inner state of being calm and promoting non-violence and cooperation. Continuing high violence rates places stronger emphasis on the need to explore these issues in terms of the spirituality of those people involved in committing an offense. Being spiritual is viewed as being sacred and close to God, which can be attained through involvement in religious activities.

Some of the common assumptions about religion and violence include that

A person's spirituality is associated with his attitudes of committing a crime.

Crime rates are associated with the spirituality of the people.

More research in this topic would be helpful in examining this assumption about crime and spirituality. This study will determine if inmates in State and Federal prisons are engaged in religious activities and if there is a relationship between criminality of the inmates and their participation in religious activities in the prison. The specific objective of the study is to explore whether there is an association between the types of crime committed that resulted in incarceration of inmates in State and Federal prisons and participation in religious activities in the prison during the period of incarceration.

### Overview of Study

The study used the survey conducted by the Bureau of Census (2000) for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Federal Bureau of Prisons in the year 1997. This survey included data collected from inmates of both State and Federal prisons about their criminal history, social background, family background, and personal characteristics. Variables describing inmates' participation in religious activities in State and Federal prisons were used to determine inmates' religiosity. Variables that indicated the offense type for which the inmates were incarcerated were also taken into account. Other variables included age, sex, race, ethnicity, educational status, geographic region, occupational status, and marital status.

### Significance of Study

Although many studies had been conducted to determine the relationship between criminality and religiosity among youth and the general public, there is a lack of studies on people who have already committed a crime. Studies relating to inmates and their religious behavior are definitely lacking in the literature. Many studies have measured religiosity in terms of an individual's church attendance. Controversies prevail in this aspect, especially in accounting church attendance as a measure of a person's religiosity. Some studies have investigated people's attitude towards committing a crime in terms of their religious affiliation. This study was based on a prison population that analyzed the inmates' participation in religious study groups and Bible groups since their admission in to the prison and their involvement in religious activities during the past week before the interview, which were then matched with the type of offense that they had committed.

### Research Questions

1. What proportions of incarcerated criminals participate in some kind of religious activities?
2. Is there an association between the type of criminal behavior of inmates and their participation in religious activities?
3. Is participation in religious activities affected by age, gender, race, ethnicity, educational status, and geographical region of inmates?

### Definition of Terms

For this study, criminality was defined by the type of crime that an inmate had committed. It included violent, drug, property, public order, and other offenses. Religiosity of inmates was measured by their participation in prison religious activities. There were three different variables that indicated the inmates' participation in religious activities: (i) In the past week, have you engaged in any religious activities, such as religious services, private prayer, or meditation, or Bible reading or studying? (ii) Since your admission to the prison have you joined or participated in a Bible club or other religious study group? (iii) Other religious activities.

The following definitions of terms were taken from the Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 1997 (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000), First Inter University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Edition, May 2000.

Correctional Facility: "Buildings operated by a government agency or by contract with a government agency for physical custody of sentenced persons or persons subject to criminal proceedings. Correctional facilities include prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, detention centers, and

community-based facilities such as pre-release centers and work-release facilities such as boot camps. It excludes lock-ups” (p.99).

**Victim:** One who is harmed or killed by another; person who is tricked or swindled.

**Serve time:** “Spend a period of time in a correctional facility because of a sentence. It does not refer to time in a correctional facility pending a trial or sentencing unless that time is later applied to the sentence” (p.99).

**Violent Offense:** “An offense in which a victim is involved. In a violent crime, the offender must physically harm or threaten to harm a person” (p.178).

**Drug Offense:** “Any offense that involves the illegal possession, manufacturing, distribution, sale, or use of a drug” (p.179).

**Property Offense:** “Any offense in which a property is taken, damaged, or destroyed directly or by fraud or deceit; any offense involving the illegal possession, sale, distribution, or use of money or property. General categories include arson, burglary, fraud, larceny, motor vehicle theft, stolen property, and theft” (p.179).

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

#### Theoretical Background

There can be many reasons for people to not engage in crime irrespective of their religious beliefs. Religious participation may represent a group identity by following a set of moral principles that are common to all. Most people refrain from committing a crime in order to respect their existing group values. Some religions believe that violating moral principles would result in eternal punishments. The following theories explain the theoretical basis for a person to refrain from criminal behaviors.

#### Hellfire Hypothesis

“Religion deters individual level criminal behavior through the threat of supernatural sanctions and promotes normative behavior through the promise of supernatural reward” (Baier & Wright, 2001, p.4). In 1969, Hirschi and Stark tested the hellfire hypothesis on high school students by studying their supernatural beliefs and attitudes towards committing a crime. They found no association between these two behaviors.

#### Social Control Theory

Marcos, Bahr, and Johnson (as cited in Baier & Wright, 2001) explained religious and educational institutions establish bond, commitment, and involvement with the society. Those institutions also inculcate normative beliefs and values in an individual. Hence, as per social control theory, religious institutions should deter crime by increasing attachment between people and their society. Cochran, Wood, and Arneklev (1994) said that according to social control

theory “religion has no direct relationship to criminality, its inhibitory influence is completely indirect and fully mediated through more proximate social controls” (p.95).

### Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory is based on people’s belief on eternal punishment after death for the offenses that they have committed. Religious people believe in eternal punishment and abstain from committing crimes due to perceived severity and certainty of the eternal punishment. They are most likely to be mortified and embarrassed from deviant acts (Grasmick, Bursik, & Cochran, as cited in Baier & Wright, 2001). On the other hand, non-religious people, who do not believe in eternal punishment involve in criminal acts.

### Moral Reasoning Theory

Moral reasoning theory (Kohlberg, 1984 as cited in Ellis & Peterson, 1996) claims that a person commits crime due to his “developmental immaturity in moral character” (p.766). Ellis and Peterson had also quoted many studies that showed an inverse relationship between criminal behavior and moral reasoning.

### Arousal Theory

Arousal theory is a biosocial theory (Ellis & Peterson, 1996) that explains criminality of people in terms of their neurological stimulation. This theory states that people react differently with respect to the functions of their brain. Some people require only low levels of stimulation while others require higher levels of stimulation to react to environmental stimuli. Those who require higher levels of stimulation are called sensation seekers (Ellis & Peterson) and are more likely to commit crime. They are also referred to as bored individuals (Cochran et al., 1994; Ellis & Thompson, 1989) who think religious activities are unsatisfying and tend to undertake riskier

behaviors like committing an offense. Involvement in religious activities satisfies normal individual's biological demand resulting in deterrence of crime.

### Reference Group Theory

Reference group theory (Clarke, Beeghley, & Cochran, 1990) explains that individuals tend to share similar belief and background with people whom they believe have an effect on their behaviors and attitudes. This group is called the reference group. If there is an increase in the morality of the reference group, the individual's morality will also increase accordingly. Cochran et al. studied reference group theory using the 1972-1986 General Social Surveys (GSS) data in measuring alcohol use by social class and religious class. Religiosity was measured based on people's religious belief and the intensity of following their religious principles. Religiosity had a negative correlation with alcohol use; social class had a positive correlation with alcohol use; religiosity and social class had a positive correlation. However, religious class was found to influence people's decision more than social class when considering the use of alcohol. The study illustrated how religiosity can affect a person's behavior in refraining from a deviant act, supporting reference group theory.

### Previous Research on Religion and Crime

Hirschi and Stark (1969) studied a group of high school students who showed no relationship between their church membership and criminal behavior. They reported that churches fail in teaching their members to love their neighbors. Burkett and White (1974) conducted a study to substantiate the findings of Hirschi and Stark showed that religion had a strong relationship with victimless crimes like alcohol and marijuana use. He also explained that individuals are influenced by secular factors in addition to the influence of their church. He indicated that church was not the only factor responsible for its members' criminal behaviors.



A survey indicated almost one third of the citizens in the U.S. and Britain believe that religion helps in deterring criminal behavior (Banks, Maloney, & Wittrock, 1975; Jensen, 1981 as cited in Ellis & Peterson, 1996). Ellis and Peterson studied crime data obtained from International Police Organization for 13 industrialized countries including the United States. The study was conducted to ascertain whether highly religious countries have lower crime rates when compared to less religious countries. Religiosity was measured by average church membership and church attendance. The results showed that criminal behavior had a strong inverse relationship with church attendance, and church membership than with other specific religious beliefs like belief in God, heaven, after life etc. This study supported neither rational choice theory nor social control theory. The strongest relationship was found between religion and property offense. The limitations of the study included very few number of countries being compared and generalization of the results without considering the variability within and among these countries, including the problem of ecological fallacy.

Baier and Wright (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of studies that investigated the effect of religion on crime. They analyzed 60 studies and concluded that religion has a statistically significant effect on crime. Samples obtained from highly religious communities showed stronger deterrence effect on crime, supporting reference group theory. The meta-analysis also indicated that religion had stronger deterrence effect on non-violent crimes than violent crimes (Elifson, Peterson, & Hadaway, 1983; Ellis, 1985; Fernquist, 1995). Studies involving mostly whites illustrated that religion had a low deterrence effect on crime. However, when diverse populations were involved, religion exhibited a significant deterrence effect on crime. Strong deterrent effect of religion on crime was also found in studies that involved small sample size.

Prior to the study of Baier and Wright (2001), Ellis (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of 56 studies that explained the relationship between religiosity and criminality. He classified the studies into several categories that included church membership, church attendance, religiosity

beliefs, and other unclear religious activities. There was a negative relationship between religiosity and criminality determined from the studies that used church membership (Elifson et al., 1983; Fernquist, 1995) as a measure of religiosity of a person. Studies that included belief in afterlife also reported an inverse relationship between religious behavior and criminal acts. Among studies that included belief in God, specifically personal God and supernatural beings, the findings were inconsistent. Studies that used unclear measures of religiosity showed ambiguous relationship between religiosity and criminality. Ellis also analyzed the effect of various religious groups on criminal behavior. He reviewed studies that incorporated religious denominations because different denominational groups have different levels of commitment to their religious beliefs (Fernquist). The results indicated Jews when compared to Christian denominations had lower level of criminal activities.

Controversies prevail in measuring religiosity of a person. Numerous studies have been conducted in this area of religion and crime using church attendance as the primary indicator of a person's religiosity. This method of identifying a person's religiosity is obscure because a person can go to church and not be religious. On the other hand, factors like social controls including parents, peers, and the community in which a person lives (Cochran et al., 1994; Fernquist, 1995) play an important role in determining a person's attitude towards committing a crime. Several theories claim that religion is a major determinant in the development of moral values of a person. However, moral values depend not only on one's religion, but also on the individual (Elifson et al., 1983). Elifson et al. inferred from their study that there exists a definite relationship between religious activities like personal prayers (Benda & Corwyn, 2001), religious salience, and criminal behavior. It involved 600 students of grades 9-12 from 21 public high schools in DeKalb County, Georgia. The majority of the population was whites from well-educated and affluent families living in a metropolitan county. Religious salience was measured by a question "All in all, how important would you say your religion is influencing the way you

live?” which included responses ranging from “extremely important” to “fairly unimportant”. The results of their study indicated religious salience, personal prayer, and orthodoxy were more significantly related to delinquency than church attendance. In addition, the authors delineated delinquency as victim and victimless crimes. Victimless offenses were more strongly related to religiosity than crimes involving victims (Baier & Wright, 2001; Fernquist). One important finding of their study was that religion was an insignificant predictor of criminal behavior when included in a multivariate analysis, which included other variables such as parental control and peer influences. The study concluded religion is one of the probable influences that help in building an individual’s moral behavior, and thus deterring crime. However, there are numerous other factors in the society that influence an individual’s moral behavior.

A recent study by Benda and Corwyn (2001) involved two random samples from public schools from the East coast and the South respectively. The main objective of this study is to determine if church attendance is a good measure of religiosity in determining its effect on criminality. The study also tested if religion has stronger affiliation with crimes involving property or crimes involving victims. The study concluded that religion and crime are inversely related (Fernquist, 1995). Also, the authors reported that church attendance being used as a measure of religion does not measure an individual’s religiosity. The measure of religiosity is the interest in practicing and following the principles of religion (Elifson et al., 1983) like attending a prayer meeting, Bible study group, etc. Church attendance can be compared to “classroom attendance” (p.78), which is a poor indicator of performance. For some adolescents, church attendance means nothing but physical presence in the church due to pressure from parents and the society. Religiosity was not dependent on geographical area because both the samples showed a negative relationship between religion and criminal behavior irrespective of their residential status. Important finding established drug use as a more commonly found practice

among adolescents who were also religious. Normalization of drug use among adolescents could be one of the reasons.

### Religion in Prison

Even though there were numerous articles published in the area of religion and crime, few studies had been conducted among prison population. Clear, Hardyman, Stout, and Dammer (2000) studied inmates' religious participation and their reasons for involvement in religious activities. They observed inmates' participation in religious activities for a period of 10 months and conducted interviews of both religious and non-religious inmates. Clear et al. indicated that religion in prison is influenced by "prison society" (p. 56), which includes the culture in prisons and the presence of different racial and ethnic groups etc. They also attributed the meaning of religion in prison in to two different levels, individual level and societal level. At the individual level, every inmate has different reasons for being religious. At the societal level, religiousness is influenced by social network of religious people in the prison. The objective of promoting religious programs for inmates is mainly to reduce recidivism. Clear et al. said, "the emphasis in promoting the expansion of religion-based programs indeed lies in the claim that faith in a higher power prevents relapse into criminal activity better than secular changes" (p. 53). The reasons for being religious were attributed to inmates' way of "dealing with guilt", to "find a new of life", "dealing with the loss, especially freedom", as a measure of "safety", to gain "material comforts", to get "access to outsiders", and to maintain "inmates relations".

Koenig (1995) performed a study to determine the effects of religion on old men that involved about 91% of all inmates of age 50 and over at the federal correctional facility in North Carolina. He reported religion as one of the most widely used coping mechanisms by the inmates (32%). He also reported that inmates who attended regular religious services had lower depression scores when compared to inmates who attended only a few services.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

#### Data Source and Sample

The 1997 survey of inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000) is comprised of personal interviews of selected sample of inmates who were incarcerated in State and Federal prisons in the U.S.. The survey was conducted in 1974, 1979, 1986, and 1991 for State prison inmates. The first Federal survey was conducted in 1991. During 1997, separate surveys were conducted both at the State and Federal prisons and were combined for the first time to be released as a unified survey.

Stratified random sampling method was used in selecting the samples for the survey. It was conducted in two stages from a total of 1409 State prisons and 127 Federally owned prisons (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). The first stage was selecting prisons and the second stage was selecting prisoners from the selected prisons. Interviews were conducted approximately for one in every 75 male prison inmates and one in every 17 female prison inmates in the state correctional facilities and approximately one in every 13 male prison inmates and one in every 3 female prison inmates in the federal correctional facilities. There were 14,285 interviews in the State prisons and 4,041 interviews in the Federal prisons completed by the end of the survey.

The survey (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000) was conducted through personal interviews that lasted for at least an hour. Computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) technique was used, in which computers provided the questions for the interviewer. Participation in the survey was voluntary and the participants were assured of their privacy protection. The survey provides information about the current offense and sentence, family background, social background, personal characteristics, drug and alcohol use before incarceration, treatment

programs, gun possession and use, and prison activities including religious prayers, programs, and services.

### Variables of Interest

Variables that are taken into consideration in this study are the age, sex, ethnicity, race, educational status, marital status, occupational status, type of prison (State or Federal) where they were incarcerated, geographic region, type of offense collapsed into five categories (violent, drug, property, public order, and others), time served in the prison to the date of interview, number of prior incarcerations, participation in religious study groups, participation in other religious activities, and participation in religious study groups in the past week like Bible study, private prayer and meditation. See Appendix B. for survey questions used in this study.

### Data Analysis

Data were downloaded from the ICPSR website. Analysis was conducted using SPSS<sup>®</sup>. Descriptive statistics were conducted with the variables of interest. Graphs were drawn for selected variables of interest. Cross-tabs were done to match inmates' religious activities with their offense type and with other variables of interest including age, sex, race, ethnicity, geographical status, and educational status. Chi-square analysis was performed to determine the independence of each of the religious variables with other variables. Offense type of the inmates was regrouped into four categories, violent, drug, property, and other offense (includes public order offense) for multivariate logistic regression. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine the association between criminality and religiosity of inmates with other influential factors. Odds ratio, confidence intervals, degrees of freedom and significance value were reported for the analysis. Analysis was conducted independently for State and Federal level prisons.

### Limitations of Study

The study group consisted of inmates from State and Federal prisons in the U.S. The survey was a cross-sectional survey. Religious participation of inmates was measured at one point of time and studied in relation to the type of criminal behavior for which they were incarcerated. Hence, causal effect of religion on crime cannot be established. Also, religiosity is not only determined by people's participation in religious study groups and prayer meetings but also by other factors like their religious salience, social, and societal influences etc.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Description of the Sample

Table 1 shows a summary of demographic variables of the sample broken down by age, gender, ethnicity, race, geographical region, educational status, marital status, and occupational status at State and Federal levels respectively. A majority of the inmates (up to 68%) belong to age group of 25-44 years at both the levels. The percentage of Whites is high in Federal prison when compared to the African Americans. On the other hand, the percentage of African Americans is higher in State prisons than Federal prisons. Majority of the inmates had at least high school education or graduated from high school. Almost half of the sample was from the South, which is considered to be a highly religious community when compared to the rest of the country. Inmates who were never married form the majority in the marital status category in both Federal and State prisons. The sample had almost equal percentages of married and divorced people at both the types of prisons. It is also worthy to note that 52% percent of the population had a full time job at the time of committing the crime.

Offense characteristics of inmates are presented in Table 2. The percentage of drug offenders is higher in Federal prisons than State prisons by 13%. The percentage of public order offense is also high among inmates of Federal prisons. State prisons have the highest percentage of violent offenders, 20% higher than that of Federal prisons.

Table 3 gives an overview of inmates' participation of religious activities during their time of incarceration and revealed that nearly 60% of inmates participated in a religious activity a week before the interview at both State and Federal levels. About 30% of inmates at both State and Federal levels joined or participated in Bible study groups, other study groups, or other religious activities at least once after their admission in the prison.



Table 1

## Demographic Characteristics of the Sample Population of Inmates in State and Federal Prisons

Selected Characteristics of Inmates	Federal n=4041		State n= 14285		Total n=18326	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Gender						
Male	78.6	3178	79.5	11352	79.3	14530
Female	21.4	863	20.5	2933	20.7	3796
Age, y						
Less than 25	8.9	360	18.1	2592	16.1	2952
25-34	35.5	1434	38.8	5546	38.1	6980
35-44	30.3	1226	30.2	4314	30.2	5540
45-54	17.7	715	9.6	1377	11.4	2092
Greater than 54	7.6	306	2.7	387	3.8	693
Missing	0.0	0	0.5	69	0.4	69
Race						
White	55.6	2231	46.2	6575	48.2	8806
African American	36.6	1407	48.5	6910	45.9	8380
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.4	136	1.3	188	1.8	324
American Indian	3.7	148	3.6	511	3.6	659
Other	0.6	23	0.4	58	0.4	81
Ethnicity						
Hispanic	23.9	965	16.3	2332	18	3297
Non-Hispanic	76.1	3075	83.7	11943	82	15018
Missing	0.0	1	0.1	10	0.1	11
Geographical Region						
Northeast	13.2	532	14.5	2067	14.2	2599
Midwest	12.5	507	18.9	2707	17.5	3214
South	51.5	2082	45.2	6462	46.6	8544
West	22.8	920	21.3	3049	21.7	3969
Educational Status						
Never attended school	0.7	27	0.3	44	0.4	71
Less than High school	11.6	468	12.5	1786	12.3	2254
High School	57.8	2335	72.9	10409	69.5	12744
College	24.1	974	12.8	1824	15.3	2798
Graduate	4.9	198	0.8	121	1.7	319
Missing	1.0	39	0.7	101	0.8	140
Marital Status						
Married	29.7	1199	16.6	2366	19.5	3565
Widowed	2.5	99	2.5	355	2.5	454
Divorced	21.7	876	18.8	2691	19.5	3567
Separated	6.4	257	6.5	928	6.5	1185
Never married	39.6	1602	55.4	7921	52.0	9523
Missing	0.2	8	0.2	24	0.2	32
Occupational Status						
Full time	58.3	2354	52.1	7439	53.4	9793
Part time	8.6	349	9.5	1353	9.3	1702
Occasional	1.9	77	2.6	365	2.4	442
Missing	31.2	1261	35.9	5128	34.9	6389

Table 2

## Type of Offense Committed by Inmates in State and Federal Prisons

Offense Type	Federal n=4041		State n= 14285		Total n=18326	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Violent	21.4	863	43.3	6182	38.4	7045
Property	13.8	557	22.4	3199	20.5	3756
Drug	37.6	1521	23.1	3295	26.3	4816
Public Order	23.7	957	9.9	1411	12.9	2368
Others	2.2	89	0.2	33	0.7	122
Missing	1.3	54	1.2	165	1.2	219

Table 3

## Inmates Participation in Religious Activities in State and Federal Prisons

Religious Activities	Federal n=4041		State n= 14285		Total n=18326	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Engaged in religious activities during the past week						
Yes	59.7	2414	59.2	8459	59.3	10873
No	38.7	1562	39.6	5652	39.4	7214
Missing	1.6	65	1.2	174	1.3	239
Joined or participated in a bible club or other religious study group						
Yes	31.6	1278	32.5	4647	32.3	5925
No	66.7	2695	66.1	9444	66.2	12139
Missing	1.7	68	1.4	194	1.4	262
Participated in other religious activities						
Yes	32.7	1322	34.2	4884	33.9	6206
No	65.6	2651	64.5	9209	64.7	11860
Missing	1.7	68	1.3	192	1.4	260

Table 4 shows the frequency of inmates by their time served in prison for the current offense from the day of incarceration to until the day of the interview. More than 30% of inmates in both State and Federal prisons had spent one to three years in the prison. About five to eight percent of the inmates at both State and Federal prisons served 10 and more years of imprisonment.

Table 4

Frequency of Inmates by Time Served for Current Offense in State and Federal Prisons

Time Served	Federal n=4041		State n= 14285		Total n=18326	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Less than 1 year	19.6	792	21.7	3103	21.3	3895
1.1 - 3.0 yrs	33.4	1350	32.9	4698	33.0	6048
3.1 - 5.0 yrs	19.2	775	18.1	2579	18.3	3354
5.1 - 10 yrs	21.5	870	17.1	2446	18.1	3316
10 yrs and more	5.1	207	8.2	1173	7.5	1380
Missing	1.2	47	2.0	286	1.8	333

Table 5 shows the frequency of inmates by the number of incarcerations prior to their current imprisonment. More than 40% of inmates in Federal prisons are first time offenders. The percentages of inmates who served 3 or 5 prior sentences in State and Federal prisons are higher when compared to all other groups except for inmates of who were not sentenced before.

Table 5

## Frequency of Inmates by Prior Number of Incarcerations in State and Federal prisons

Prior Number of Incarcerations	Federal n=4041		State n= 14285		Total n=18326	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
No prior sentence	42.0	1698	25.7	3677	29.3	5375
1 prior sentence	15.5	628	16.6	2366	16.3	2994
2 prior sentences	12.5	505	16.1	2298	15.3	2803
3 - 5 prior sentences	17.6	710	23.8	3400	22.4	4110
6 or more prior sentences	11.6	469	16.8	2403	15.7	2872
Missing	0.8	31	1.0	141	0.9	172

Table 6 explains inmates' participation of religious activities in State and Federal prisons by their offense type. Nearly 60% of the inmates, irrespective of their offense type, participated in religious activity a week before the interview date. About 30% of inmates participated in Bible study groups, other study groups and also in other religious activities irrespective of their offense type in both Federal and State prisons. Inmates of the other offenses group showed higher percentages of participating in some of the religious activities in both types of prison. This may be due to the small number of people in that group.

Table 6

## Inmates Participation of Religious Activities in State and Federal prisons by Offense Type

Offense Type	Past week engaged in religious activities		Bible study & other study groups		Other religious activities	
	%	n n=4041	%	n n=4041	%	n n=4041
Federal Prisons	59.7	2414	31.6	1278	32.7	1322
Violent	53.2	459	30.9	267	31.2	269
Property	60.5	337	29.1	162	32.5	181
Drug	63.2	962	34.1	518	33.9	516
Public order	58.4	559	28.9	277	32.5	311
Other	67.4	60	37.1	33	32.6	29
Missing	68.5	37	38.9	21	29.6	16
		n=14285		n=14285		n=14285
State Prisons	59.2	8459	32.5	4647	34.2	4884
Violent	59.0	3650	35.8	2215	35.3	2184
Property	57.9	1853	30.2	966	33.2	1063
Drug	62.7	2066	31.3	1030	34.6	1141
Public order	55.1	778	26.5	374	30.0	423
Other	63.6	21	39.4	13	51.5	17
Missing	55.2	91	29.7	49	33.9	56

Frequencies of religious participation in terms of different characteristics of inmates in Federal prisons are shown in Table 7. Females showed higher percentage of religious participation in all three variables than males. Inmates who belong to the age group of 35-54 tend to participate more in religious activities than all the other age groups. The percentage of whites who were engaged in religious activity is lower than other races. Inmates in Federal prisons showed over a 50% participation in some kind of religious activity during the past week before the interview irrespective of the characteristics of inmates.

Table 7

## Participation in Religious Activities in Federal Prisons by Selected Characteristics of Inmates

Selected Characteristics Of Inmates	Past week engaged in religious activities		Bible study & other study groups		Other religious activities	
	%	n=4041	%	n=4041	%	n=4041
Gender						
Male	56.0	1781	29.9	951	30.1	958
Female	73.3	633	37.9	327	42.2	364
Age, yrs						
Less than 25	51.4	160	29.9	93	28.0	87
25-34	58.2	825	31.6	448	31.8	451
35-44	62.1	764	32.4	399	33.6	414
45-54	62.9	468	34.9	260	36.6	272
Greater than 54	59.5	191	23.4	75	29.0	93
Missing	35.3	6	17.6	3	29.4	5
Race						
White	54.1	1221	25.9	585	29.6	669
African American	67.0	990	40.4	596	34.9	516
Asian or Pacific Islander	59.6	81	30.9	42	38.2	52
American Indian	70.9	105	29.1	43	48.6	72
Other	73.9	17	52.2	12	56.5	13
Ethnicity						
Hispanic	59.7	576	28.7	277	32.3	312
Non-Hispanic	59.7	1837	32.6	1001	32.8	1010
Missing	100.0	1	0.0	0	0.0	0
Geographical Region						
Northeast	62.8	334	31.2	166	31.8	169
Midwest	54.2	275	29.6	150	34.9	177
South	62.1	1293	32.2	671	31.5	655
West	55.7	512	31.6	291	34.9	321
Educational Status						
Never attended school	63.0	17	33.3	9	25.9	7
Less than High school	61.8	289	28.2	132	32.7	153
High school	56.9	1329	30.9	722	30.5	713
College	64.2	625	33.4	325	36.0	351
Graduate	71.7	142	42.9	85	45.5	90
Missing	30.8	12	12.8	5	20.5	8
Marital Status						
Married	67.1	805	34.5	414	36.9	442
Widowed	61.6	61	26.3	26	29.3	29
Divorced	57.2	501	9.3	257	32.4	284
Separated	63.0	162	34.6	89	31.5	81
Never married	55.2	884	30.6	491	30.3	485
Missing	12.5	1	12.5	1	12.5	1

Table 7 (Continued)

Selected Characteristics Of Inmates	Past week engaged in religious activities		Bible study & other study groups		Other religious activities	
	%	n=4041	%	n=4041	%	n=4041
Occupational Status						
Full time	61.1	1439	32.1	756	34.3	807
Par time	65.9	230	35.8	125	32.4	113
Occasional	66.2	51	29.9	23	36.4	28
Missing	55.0	694	29.7	374	29.7	374
No. of Prior Incarcerations						
No Incarceration	66.2	1100	32.5	539	36.9	613
1	62.6	391	34.4	215	33.1	207
2	57.7	290	31.9	160	30.3	152
3-5	55.3	389	32.6	229	27.7	128
6 or more	50.1	232	27.7	128	33.2	1313
Time Served in the prison, yrs						
Less than 1	64.9	508	26.6	208	33.2	260
1.1-3.0	61.9	824	33.3	442	34.2	454
3.1-5.0	58.3	444	30.9	235	31.2	237
5.1-10	58.2	498	36.3	311	33.8	289
More than 10	56.2	114	36.0	73	34.0	69

Table 8 shows the frequencies of participation of religious activities by inmates of State prisons with respect to their selected characteristics. Similar results with those of Federal prisons were obtained when age, sex, educational status, ethnicity, marital status, number of prior incarcerations, and the time served in the prison by inmates of the state were considered.

Table 8

## Participation in Religious Activities in State Prisons by Selected Characteristics of Inmates

Selected Characteristics Of Inmates	Past week engaged in religious activities		Bible study & other study groups		Other religious activities	
	%	n=14285	%	n=14285	%	n=14285
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	55.8	6336	30.5	3458	31.5	3571
Female	72.4	2123	40.5	1189	44.8	1313
<b>Age, y</b>						
Less than 25	49.7	1219	28.0	687	27.1	664
25-34	58.3	3211	31.7	1743	32.4	1784
35-44	64.2	2864	35.5	1582	37.9	1691
45-54	64.0	929	35.7	519	41.2	598
Greater than 54	57.5	231	28.1	113	36.3	146
Missing	29.4	5	17.6	3	5.9	1
<b>Race</b>						
White	53.8	3456	27.7	1824	31.3	2061
African American	64.3	4455	36.9	2559	36.9	2559
Asian or Pacific Islander	60.0	114	38.9	74	36.8	70
American Indian	59.5	306	32.3	166	33.7	173
Other	65.5	38	41.4	24	36.2	21
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Hispanic	56.6	1319	27.2	634	29.5	687
Non-Hispanic	59.8	7136	33.6	4011	35.1	4194
Missing	40.0	4	20.0	2	30.0	3
<b>Geographical Region</b>						
Northeast	54.9	1134	31.6	653	30.8	637
Midwest	56.2	1521	33.9	918	31.8	861
South	64.4	4162	36.3	2346	40.2	2595
West	53.9	1642	23.9	730	25.9	791
<b>Educational Status</b>						
Never attended school	38.6	17	22.7	10	18.2	8
Less than High school	56.0	1001	29.7	530	31.8	568
High school	58.5	6094	32.0	3331	33.6	3500
College	68.7	1253	39.9	727	41.6	758
Graduate	71.1	86	32.2	39	38.8	47
Missing	7.9	8	9.9	10	3.0	3
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married	66.7	1577	35.7	844	38.4	908
Widowed	62.8	223	35.5	126	44.8	159
Divorced	61.3	1649	34.0	914	36.9	992
Separated	63.5	589	34.9	324	39.7	368
Never married	55.7	4410	30.8	2436	30.9	2450
Missing	45.8	11	12.5	3	29.2	7



Table 8 (Continued)

Selected Characteristics Of Inmates	Past week engaged in religious activities		Bible study & other study groups		Other religious activities	
	%	n=14285	%	n=14285	%	n=14285
Occupational Status						
Full time	62.4	4642	34.3	2549	36.6	2720
Par time	61.3	829	35.6	482	33.5	453
Occasional	57.8	211	31.0	113	31.5	115
Missing	54.2	2777	29.3	1503	31.1	1596
No. of Prior Incarcerations						
No Incarceration	64.3	2328	37.5	1353	37.7	1360
1	60.8	1428	32.8	768	35.2	825
2	59.3	1351	33.8	770	34.6	788
3-5	59.8	2018	32.3	1089	34.4	1158
6 or more	53.5	1270	26.7	634	30.2	717
Time Served in the prison, yrs						
Less than 1	65.0	1998	28.1	861	33.9	1039
1.1-3.0	59.6	2769	31.3	1456	34.3	1595
3.1-5.0	56.6	1444	33.6	856	33.3	849
5.1-10	59.3	1433	38.2	921	37.0	893
More than 10	58.6	674	41.9	480	37.7	432

### Chi Square Analysis

A chi square analysis (see Table 9) was performed to test the independence of religious activities with other selected variables like age, gender, race, ethnicity, educational status, offense type, geographical region, occupational status, marital status, number of prior incarcerations, and the time served in the prison in both State and Federal level prisons. Inmates' participation of religious activities during their period of incarceration was significantly dependent on gender, race, and educational status in both State and Federal level prisons. Religious participation was not significantly dependent on occupational status and ethnicity in Federal prisons. At the State level religious participation was significantly dependent on ethnicity of the inmates. At the Federal prisons, inmates' religious participation was not dependent on the region where they are from (geographical region) except for engaging in religious activity in the past week. However,

involvement in religious activities was significantly dependent on geographical region of inmates in the State prisons. Religious participation showed dependency on age and marital status of the inmates except for participating in Bible study groups or religious study groups in the Federal prisons. Finally, religious participation was significantly dependent on the type of offense for which the inmates were incarcerated in both State and Federal prisons except for inmates' participation in other religious activities in Federal prisons.

Table 9

## Chi Square Analysis of Religious Activities and Selected Characteristics of Inmates in Federal and State Prisons

Selected characteristics of inmates	Religious activity past week			Bible Study or other religious study groups			Other religious activities		
	$\chi^2$	df	P value	$\chi^2$	df	P value	$\chi^2$	df	P value
Federal Prisons (n=4041)									
Gender	90.7	1	0.001	21.4	1	0.001	44.6	1	0.001
Age	14.8	4	0.005	12.2	4	0.16	13.5	4	0.09
Race	74.4	4	0.001	92.1	4	0.001	37.0	4	0.001
Ethnicity	0.02	1	0.885	5.3	1	0.021	0.12	1	0.721
Geographical Region	17.9	3	0.001	1.43	3	0.697	5.7	3	0.122
Educational status	25.5	4	0.001	15.0	4	0.005	23.4	4	0.001
Marital Status	41.1	4	0.001	8.8	4	0.064	13.1	4	0.010
Occupational status	3.3	2	0.185	2.0	2	0.362	0.75	2	0.687
Offense type	25.7	4	0.001	9.8	4	0.043	1.8	4	0.756
Prior incarcerations	54.3	4	0.000	5.7	4	0.216	21.2	4	0.000
Time served	12.23	4	0.016	20.6	4	0.000	2.1	4	0.712
State Prisons (n=14285)									
Gender	281.3	1	0.001	111.7	1	0.001	190.3	1	0.001
Age	163.9	4	0.001	53.0	4	0.001	123.2	4	0.001
Race	161.9	4	0.001	141.1	4	0.001	50.8	4	0.001
Ethnicity	7.6	1	0.006	35.6	1	0.001	27.0	1	0.001
Geographical Region	118.9	3	0.001	137.3	3	0.001	198.4	3	0.001
Educational status	87.8	4	0.001	51.4	4	0.001	52.9	4	0.001
Marital Status	113.4	4	0.001	29.5	4	0.001	96.7	4	0.001
Occupational status	3.3	2	0.184	2.7	2	0.258	7.8	2	0.020
Offense type	29.1	4	0.001	66.6	4	0.001	20.7	4	0.001
Prior incarcerations	70.6	4	0.000	76.6	4	0.000	35.6	4	0.000
Time served	46.7	4	0.000	20.6	4	0.000	13.7	4	0.008

$\chi^2$  – Chi Square value; df – degrees of freedom;

### Multivariate Logistic Regression

Multivariate logistic regression was conducted in order to determine whether religious participation could be predicted by any of the independent variables used in the chi square analysis. Logistic regression (Table 10 & 11) was performed for all the three religious variables in two steps each for Federal and State prisons individually. For logistic regression, variable race was recoded to make comparison easy into only three different race groups: Whites, African Americans, and Others. Offense type was also recoded so that public order offense was included in other offenses category.

Females were more likely to participate in religious activities in both State and Federal prisons. Age was a predictor for participation in religious activities at State prisons whereas in Federal prisons age was not a predictor except for participation of religious activities in other religious activities. African Americans and other races were more likely to participate in religious activities than Whites in both State and Federal prisons. Ethnicity (Hispanic and non-Hispanic) was not a significant predictor of religious participation of inmates in both State and Federal prisons.

Geographical region of the inmates was not a significant predictor at the Federal prisons. However, at the State prisons, geographical region of the inmates significantly predict inmates participation in religious activities. Educational status was a significant predictor of religious involvement in State prisons. When educational status of inmates is taken into consideration, more years of education of inmates will increase the likelihood of their participation in religious activities in State prisons. In the Federal prisons even though education is a significant predictor of participation in religious activities, p value of the groups are higher than alpha value indicating no association for participation in religious activities with respect to the reference group. Marital status of inmates shows significance values in both State and Federal prisons with married inmates more likely to participate in religious activities than never married inmates.

Occupational status did not show any significance in both State and Federal level prisons. Even chi square analysis indicated that occupational status is independent of the inmates' religious participation. Inmates' prior numbers of incarcerations predict only their participation of religious activity in the past in Federal prisons. With the increase in the number of incarcerations, they tend to participate less in religious activities. The same trend is seen in State prisons for their participation in religious activities in the past week, Bible study groups, and study other groups. The amount of time served in prisons is significant in determining religious participation in Bible study groups and other study groups in both Federal and State prisons. Longer the amount of time spent in prison increased their participation in religious activity.

Offense type is significant in determining inmates' participation of religious activity during the last week in Federal prisons. However, offense type was a significant predictor of religious participation in State prisons in determining inmates' engagement in religious activity in the past week and in Bible study groups and other study groups. Inmates who had committed violent offense were more likely to participate in religious activities than inmates who had committed a victimless offense like drug, property or other offense (includes public order offense).

Table 10

## Multivariate Logistics Regression Analysis of Religious Activities and Selected Characteristics of Inmates in Federal Prisons

Selected characteristics of inmates	Religious activity past week			Bible Study or other religious study groups			Other religious activities					
	df	P value	OR	CI	df	P value	OR	CI	df	P value	OR	CI
Federal Prisons												
Sex												
Male (Ref.)												
Female	1	0.000	2.348	1.836-3.002	1	0.000	1.786	1.427-2.236	1	0.000	1.874	1.507-2.333
Age, yrs	4	0.024			4	0.039			4	0.306		
Less than 25 (Ref.)												
25 - 34	1	0.325	1.190	0.841-1.682	1	0.864	1.032	0.718-1.485	1	0.080	1.396	0.961-2.028
35-44	1	0.013	1.594	1.103-2.303	1	0.549	1.124	0.766-1.649	1	0.057	1.465	0.989-2.170
45-54	1	0.020	1.622	1.078-2.439	1	0.310	1.242	0.818-1.886	1	0.039	1.567	1.024-2.397
Greater than 54	1	0.050	1.615	1.001-2.605	1	0.130	0.670	0.400-1.124	1	0.272	1.322	0.803-2.175
Race	2	0.000			2	0.000			2	0.000		
Whites (Ref.)												
African Americans	1	0.000	3.104	2.498-3.857	1	0.000	2.479	2.010-3.058	1	0.000	1.808	1.468-2.226
Others	1	0.000	2.360	1.690-3.297	1	0.016	1.505	1.080-2.098	1	0.000	2.072	1.514-2.835
Ethnicity												
Hispanic (Ref.)												
Non-Hispanic	1	0.023	0.771	0.615-0.965	1	0.108	0.826	0.654-1.043	1	0.083	0.081	0.651-1.026
Geographical Region	3	0.046			3	0.548			3	0.111		
Northeast (Ref.)												
Midwest	1	0.695	1.071	0.761-1.506	1	0.394	1.167	0.818-1.666	1	0.041	1.431	1.015-2.018
South	1	0.121	1.229	0.947-1.596	1	0.157	1.208	0.930-1.570	1	0.312	1.142	0.883-1.476
West	1	0.567	0.917	0.682-1.234	1	0.221	1.206	0.893-1.629	1	0.059	1.327	0.990-1.778
Educational Status	4	0.066			4	0.025			4	0.001		
Never attended School (Ref.)												
> High School	1	0.683	1.233	0.451-3.372	1	0.976	0.984	0.349-2.773	1	0.096	2.942	0.826-10.477
High School	1	0.898	1.067	0.396-2.872	1	0.837	1.112	0.403-3.072	1	0.110	2.785	0.793-9.776
College	1	0.684	1.231	0.453-3.345	1	0.721	1.205	0.433-3.355	1	0.056	3.428	0.971-12.108
Graduate	1	0.242	1.877	0.654-5.393	1	0.207	1.990	0.684-5.792	1	0.009	5.588	1.529-20.416

Table 10 (contd.)

Selected characteristics of inmates	Religious activity past week				Bible Study or other religious study groups				Other religious activities			
	df	P value	OR	CI	df	P value	OR	CI	df	P value	OR	CI
Marital Status	4	0.000			4	0.010			4	0.011		
Married (Ref.)												
Widowed	1	0.078	0.594	0.332-1.061	1	0.078	0.581	0.318-1.062	1	0.061	0.574	0.321-1.027
Divorced	1	0.009	0.794	0.583-0.924	1	0.045	0.787	0.623-0.995	1	0.363	0.901	0.719-1.128
Separated	1	0.637	0.913	0.626-1.332	1	0.988	0.997	0.692-1.437	1	0.267	0.813	0.564-1.172
Never married	1	0.000	0.603	0.481-0.757	1	0.002	0.699	0.557-0.876	1	0.001	0.690	0.552-0.862
Occupational Status	2	0.240			2	0.968			2	0.408		
Fulltime (Ref.)												
Part time	1	0.340	1.135	0.875-1.474	1	0.803	1.033	0.802-1.331	1	0.474	0.911	0.706-1.176
Occasional	1	0.145	1.476	0.874-2.490	1	0.971	0.990	0.584-1.680	1	0.283	1.315	0.798-2.168
Offense Type	3	0.043			3	0.763			3	0.878		
Violence (Ref.)												
Drug offense	1	0.343	1.162	0.852-1.584	1	0.555	1.101	0.799-1.518	1	0.802	0.961	0.703-1.313
Property offense	1	0.005	1.420	1.110-1.818	1	0.282	1.149	0.892-1.480	1	0.669	1.056	0.822-1.357
Other offense	1	0.112	1.231	0.952-1.591	1	0.458	1.107	0.846-1.447	1	0.675	1.058	0.813-1.376
No. of Prior Incarcerations	4	0.004			4	0.407			4	0.695		
No prior incarceration (Ref.)												
1	1	0.623	1.065	0.829-1.369	1	0.164	1.192	0.931-1.527	1	0.546	0.927	0.725-1.186
2	1	0.018	0.733	0.566-0.948	1	0.847	1.027	0.785-1.343	1	0.404	0.894	0.686-1.164
3-5	1	0.007	0.709	0.552-0.911	1	0.712	1.050	0.812-1.356	1	0.160	0.833	0.645-1.075
6 or more	1	0.023	0.696	0.509-0.952	1	0.312	0.839	0.596-1.180	1	0.474	0.888	0.641-1.230
Time Served in Prison, yrs	4	0.780			4	0.003			4	0.762		
Less than 1 (Ref.)												
1.1-3.0	1	0.853	0.978	0.769-1.243	1	0.001	1.538	1.201-1.970	1	0.190	1.171	0.925-1.481
3.1-5.0	1	0.531	0.914	0.689-1.211	1	0.012	1.453	1.084-1.949	1	0.618	1.075	0.810-1.425
5.1-10.0	1	0.329	0.869	0.656-1.152	1	0.000	1.720	1.286-2.299	1	0.575	1.084	0.818-1.435
More than 10	1	0.809	1.057	0.674-1.659	1	0.013	1.806	1.135-2.873	1	0.681	1.100	0.699-1.732

df – degrees of freedom; OR – Odds Ratio; CI – 95% Confidence Interval

Table 11

## Multivariate Logistic Regression Analysis of Religious Activities and Selected Characteristics of Inmates in State Prisons

Selected characteristics of inmates	Religious activity past week				Bible Study or other religious study groups				Other religious activities			
	df	P value	OR	CI	df	P value	OR	CI	df	P value	OR	CI
State Prisons												
Sex												
Male (Ref.)												
Female	1	0.000	1.808	1.575-2.706	1	0.000	1.706	1.506-1.932	1	0.000	1.717	1.518-1.943
Age, yrs												
Less than 25 (Ref.)	4	0.000			4	0.011			4	0.000		
25 - 34	1	0.000	1.431	1.247-1.643	1	0.495	1.052	0.910-1.217	1	0.026	1.180	1.020-1.365
35-44	1	0.000	1.806	1.548-2.107	1	0.053	1.170	0.998-1.371	1	0.000	1.394	1.190-1.633
45-54	1	0.000	1.793	1.464-2.197	1	0.263	1.124	0.916-1.379	1	0.000	1.545	1.262-1.892
Greater than 54	1	0.020	1.434	1.059-1.942	1	0.061	0.733	0.529-1.015	1	0.048	1.362	1.003-1.851
Race												
Whites (Ref.)	2	0.000			2	0.000			2	0.000		
African Americans	1	0.000	1.855	1.671-2.060	1	0.000	1.473	1.327-1.634	1	0.000	1.289	1.163-1.429
Others	1	0.004	1.364	1.105-1.684	1	0.001	1.416	1.144-1.751	1	0.029	1.269	1.025-1.572
Ethnicity												
Hispanic (Ref.)												
Non-Hispanic	1	0.000	0.781	0.682-0.893	1	0.751	0.977	0.849-1.125	1	0.300	0.929	0.809-1.067
Geographical Region												
Northeast (Ref.)	3	0.000			3	0.000			3	0.000		
Midwest	1	0.462	1.061	0.905-1.245	1	0.320	1.086	0.923-1.277	1	0.991	1.001	0.850-1.179
South	1	0.000	1.427	1.242-1.638	1	0.171	1.103	0.959-1.268	1	0.000	1.356	1.180-1.560
West	1	0.712	1.031	0.878-1.210	1	0.003	0.774	0.654-0.916	1	0.002	0.764	0.646-0.903
Educational Status												
Never attended School (Ref.)	4	0.000			4	0.000			4	0.000		
Less than High School	1	0.072	2.086	0.937-4.643	1	0.386	1.562	0.570-4.279	1	0.126	2.341	0.787-6.963
High School	1	0.036	2.341	1.058-5.178	1	0.251	1.799	0.661-4.897	1	0.087	2.581	0.872-7.639
College	1	0.003	3.299	1.481-7.348	1	0.082	2.442	0.893-6.677	1	0.019	3.668	1.234-10.898
Graduate	1	0.001	5.228	2.058-13.278	1	0.182	2.093	0.707-6.200	1	0.027	3.689	1.159-11.746



Table 11 (continued)

Selected characteristics of inmates	Religious activity past week				Bible Study or other religious study groups				Other religious activities			
	df	P value	OR	CI	df	P value	OR	CI	df	P value	OR	CI
Marital Status	4	0.000			4	0.014			4	0.027		
Married (Ref.)												
Widowed	1	0.000	0.548	0.405-0.741	1	0.073	0.759	0.562-1.026	1	0.742	0.952	0.712-1.274
Divorced	1	0.000	0.766	0.660-0.888	1	0.184	0.907	0.785-1.048	1	0.044	0.864	0.749-0.996
Separated	1	0.000	0.692	0.563-0.851	1	0.969	0.996	0.814-1.218	1	0.883	0.985	0.808-1.201
Never married	1	0.000	0.682	0.598-0.777	1	0.002	0.820	0.721-0.931	1	0.003	0.825	0.728-0.936
Occupational Status	2	0.558			2	0.463			2	0.285		
Fulltime (Ref.)												
Part time	1	0.847	0.987	0.868-1.123	1	0.348	1.064	0.935-1.211	1	0.176	0.914	0.802-1.041
Occasional	1	0.285	0.883	0.705-1.107	1	0.472	0.916	0.722-1.163	1	0.343	0.892	0.704-1.130
Offense Type	3	0.001			3	0.006			3	0.106		
Violence (Ref.)												
Drug offense	1	0.008	0.848	0.750-0.950	1	0.002	0.823	0.726-0.932	1	0.059	0.889	0.786-1.005
Property offense	1	0.116	0.901	0.792-1.026	1	0.014	0.850	0.747-0.967	1	0.219	0.923	0.813-1.049
Other offense	1	0.000	0.743	0.633-0.872	1	0.026	0.827	0.699-0.978	1	0.036	0.838	0.710-0.988
No. of Prior Incarcerations	4	0.010			4	0.021			4	0.502		
No prior incarceration (Ref.)												
1	1	0.038	0.862	0.750-0.992	1	0.014	0.841	0.732-0.965	1	0.247	0.922	0.804-1.058
2	1	0.005	0.815	0.707-0.941	1	0.118	0.893	0.774-1.029	1	0.586	0.962	0.835-1.108
3-5	1	0.007	0.837	0.735-0.954	1	0.056	0.882	0.775-1.003	1	0.182	0.916	0.806-1.042
6 or more	1	0.002	0.790	0.681-0.917	1	0.002	0.786	0.674-0.917	1	0.112	0.885	0.761-1.029
Time Served in Prison, yrs	4	0.000			4	0.000			4	0.738		
Less than 1 (Ref.)												
1.1-3.0	1	0.005	0.833	0.733-0.946	1	0.002	1.230	1.080-1.401	1	0.234	1.079	0.952-1.224
3.1-5.0	1	0.000	0.681	0.587-0.790	1	0.000	1.332	1.146-1.550	1	0.851	1.014	0.874-1.176
5.1-10.0	1	0.000	0.672	0.575-0.786	1	0.000	1.444	1.234-1.689	1	0.812	1.019	0.873-1.189
More than 10	1	0.000	0.609	0.499-0.742	1	0.000	1.697	1.393-2.607	1	0.505	1.069	0.879-1.300

df – degrees of freedom; OR – Odds Ratio; CI – 95% Confidence Interval

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This study was conducted at both State and Federal types of prisons. People who violate the federal laws will be incarcerated in Federal prisons, others are sent to State or county prisons and jails. The percentage of females (about 30%) is less when compared to the percentage of male (about 70%) in both State and Federal Prisons, which implies females are less delinquent than males. The results of this study indicated that up to 60% of the inmates participated in some kind of religious activity a week before the day of interview. It may a religious meeting, personal prayer, Bible or religious study group etc.

In both types of prisons, percentage of females who participated in religious activities was higher than the males. There is not much information available in the literature pertaining to gender influences in religious participation. American Religious Identification Survey (Kosnim, Mayer, & Keysar, 2001) conducted by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in 2001 identifies the percent of people who have a religion in the United States. The survey also identified, 37% of the population to be religious and another 38% to be somewhat religious. The survey identified 42% of women reported being religious that is more than the 31% of men being religious. The reasons for women being more religious cannot be attributed to gender socialization or social power (Schwarz, 2002) because many studies have showed working women are as religious as women at home. Stark attributes physiology (Wingfield, 2000) as the cause for women being more religious. He also says that increase in testosterone levels compel men to commit more riskier behaviors. He says women are less likely to take risks. He points to many studies that showed that men are more likely to commit violent crimes than women. Stark concludes that not being religious is risky and women generally do not like to be risky. Hence, they are more religious and more likely to commit non-violent crimes than men who are more

likely to commit violent crimes. However, this physiological implication for gender influence in religiosity is not widely accepted.

The study also found that the age of an inmate was a predictor of participation in religious activities in the State prisons. As age increases, people's reasoning power also increases which might drive them to be more religious. Also, older people are more likely to believe in religion as a tool to reshape their lives and develop faith in religion to compensate for their losses in life.

This study determined that whites are less likely to participate in religious activities than African Americans and other races (Baier & Wright, 2001). Several surveys and studies have also indicated that African Americans are more religious than Whites. The reason could be most of the blacks live in the South, which is considered a very religious community. More than social factors, beliefs specific to the race contribute to African Americans faith in religion. Ethnicity was not a significant predictor of religious involvement in this sample.

Geographical region was not a good predictor of religiosity at the Federal level. In the State prisons inmates from South were significantly more likely to be religious than inmates from other regions. However, it is very important to note that the percentage of inmates from the South is much higher than the percentage of inmates from other geographical regions, which implies that higher percentages of people from South (which is considered to be a more religious community) were involved in criminal acts than from other areas.

Education of inmates was a significant predictor of religious involvement at both State and Federal prisons. Education can be credited to increase in reasoning and socialization as schools and colleges are the places where a bonding with the society is developed as per the social control theory. These places are responsible for culminating moral values in their students. A majority of inmates had some form of high school or high school graduation. A plethora of research exists in crime and delinquency where the effects on each other are studied in terms of the marital status of participants. Married people are more likely to be involved in religious

activities than others. Social factors like influence of wife and family can be potential causes for their religious participation.

More than 40% of inmates in State prisons were arrested for some kind of violent offense, whereas in Federal prisons drug offenses were higher than violent offenses. Offense type was not a significant predictor in determining inmate's religious participation in Federal prisons. In State Prisons, violent offenders were more religious than non-violent offenders who were involved in drug, property, and other offenses. Previous studies had proved that religiosity and criminality has a positive relationship in case of victimless crimes (Elifson et al., 1983; Ellis, 1985; Fernquist, 1995). Most of the studies were conducted among public and school going adolescents before they had committed a crime. After committing a crime, violent offenders may feel more guilt regarding the situation and might get involved in religious activities more than non-violent offenders.

Overall, type of offense did not explain much about religious involvement of inmates in Federal prisons. However, offense type explained two of the three religious variables for inmates in the State prisons. Of those variables that were dependent on offense type, violent offenders tend to participate more in religious activities than non-violent offenses such as drug and other offenses. Property offense was not significant in predicting religious behavior. The reason could be property offenders might not feel guilty about the crime they have committed or the findings could be due to chance. Religious participation was dependent on other factors like age, gender, educational status, and race. Duration of stay in the prison does not affect much in Federal prisons, whereas in State prisons time served in the prison for the current offense shows significant results in predicting their participation in religious activity in the past week and in Bible and other study groups. The reason could be either the inmates being really religious or it could be just social reasons.

Limitations of the study include, the cross-sectional nature of the study. Studying inmates at one point of time, without considering if they were religious before incarceration is a major drawback in the study. Also, we do not have any measure of how often the inmates participate in religious activities. All the religious variables used in the study gives us only the information pertaining to their participation in religious activities since their admission to the facility. An inmate might have just participated in one religious activity for the whole time spent in the prison and still be considered religious for this study.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it is good to note that up to 60% of inmates were involved in religious activities in the past week before interview. Their participation in religious activities (irrespective of the type of activity) might be considered be a good indicator of inmates trying to develop moral characters. Inmates from both State and Federal Prisons showed equal percentage of involvement in religious activities. This gives us sufficient information to target inmates in prisons with specific religious programs to inculcate moral values within them. Building inmates with a strong moral character might prevent recidivism of criminal activities. However, unless specifically measured, it is difficult to claim that the inmates' main goal of attending religious activities is to prevent recidivism. It could be for lot of other social reasons. Even though up to 60% of inmates participate in religious activities we cannot claim that they have some kind of religious belief. As mentioned before, religious participation could be for social reasons like getting together with friends, for want of material things, etc. Religious belief cannot be determined by participation in religious activities. Specific questionnaire targeted to measure their belief should be used in determining inmates' religious beliefs.

It is also worthy to note that religious participation was dependent on the type of offense committed by the inmates in a few instances. Violent offenders are found to participate more in religious programs than all other offenders. Because offense type was not consistent in predicting inmates' participation in religious activity, these results could possibly be due to chance alone. Gender, race, and marital status were consistently significant in predicting inmates' religious participation in Federal prisons. In State prison, gender, age, race, educational status, marital status, and geographic region were consistent in predicting inmates' religious activities. Religious participation is dependent on these factors like, age, gender, race, and educational

status of inmates (Cochran et al., 1994) and not purely determined by the offense type of the inmates. There is a difference in religious participation of inmates by age, gender, race, educational status, ethnicity, occupational status, and geographical region of the inmates.

At the conclusion we can say, all religions promote love and discourage harming others and any attempt to involve inmates in religious activities would result in sculpting them with good moral characters. The relationship between religion and crime is always a debatable because the term religiosity means different things to different people. Religiosity, being very subjective, is hard to determine with mere involvement in religious activities.

#### Implications for Further Research

This study would be more meaningful if information regarding inmates' previous religious participation was available. Also, a follow up of these inmates after their incarceration period would be a good indicator to determine if religious participation in the prisons has helped them refrain from criminal behavior. Further research involving the study of religious activities of inmates in the past and also in the future would be helpful in arriving at a stronger conclusion regarding the influence of religion on crime.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### PUBLISHED ARTICLES BASED ON THE SURVEY

1. Greenfeld, A.L., & Henneberg, A. M., Victim and offender self-reports of alcohol involvement in crime. *Alcohol research and health*. 2001, 25, (1), 20 – 31.
2. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999). *American Indians and crime*. (Publication No. NCJ 173386).
3. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1997). *Correctional populations in the United States, 1996*. (Publication No. NCJ 170013; NCJ 1716).
4. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000). *Correctional populations in the United States, 1997*. (Publication No. NCJ 177613; NCJ 1776).
5. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000). *Defense counsel in criminal cases, Special report*. (Publication No. NCJ 179023).
6. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999). *DWI offenders under correctional supervision, special report*. (Publication No. NCJ 172212).
7. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003). *Education and correctional populations*. (Publication No. NCJ 195670).
8. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001). *Firearm use by offenders*. (Publication No. 189369).
9. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003). *HIV in prisons, 1997*. (Publication No. NCJ 178284).
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11. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000). *Incarcerated parents and their children*. (Publication No. NCJ 182335).
12. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999). *Mental health treatment of inmates and probationers*. (Publication No. NCJ 174463).
13. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999). *Prior abuse reported by inmates and probationers*. (Publication No. NCJ 172879).
14. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000). *Profile of State prisoners under Age 18, 1985-97, Special Report*. (Publication No. NCJ 176989).
15. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000). *Veterans in prison or jail, Special report*. (Publication No. NCJ 178888).

## APPENDIX B

### VARIABLES USED FOR THE STUDY FROM THE SURVEY OF INMATES IN STATE AND FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES – 1997

1. v2053: Allocated Sex – Male 1, Female 2
2. v2054: Imputed Age – 015-089 Imputed Age
3. v2055: Imputed Race – White 01, Black or African American 02, Asian or Pacific Islander 03, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Aleut 04, and Other 05
4. r23: Number of prior sentences to incarceration – No prior sentences 0, One prior sentence 1, Two prior sentences 2, Three to five prior sentences 3, Six to ten prior sentences 4, Eleven or more prior sentences 5, Missing 9
5. r27: Time served to date of interview in months – 0.03 to 1179.8 Time of interview in months, 99998.00 Missing, 99999.00 Missing
6. r235: Current offense collapsed – Violent offense 1, Property offense 2, Drug offense 3, Public order offense 4, Other offense 5, Missing 8
7. v2052: Geographical region – Northeast 1, Midwest 2, South 3, West 4
8. v1311: Before your admission on (Insert Rec\_Admin\_Date), what was the highest grade of school that you had attended? Never attended or attended kindergarten only 0, Elementary 1 (First), 2 (Second), 3 (Third), 4 (Fourth), 5 (Fifth), 6 (Sixth), 7 (Seventh), & 8 (Eighth), High School 9 (Ninth), 10 (Tenth), 11 (Eleventh), & 12 (Twelfth), College 13 (Freshman), 14 (Sophomore), 15 (Junior), & 16 (Senior), Graduate School 17 (One year), & 18 (Two or more years)
9. v1328: Was this full-time, part-time, or occasional work? Full-time 01, Part-time 02, Occasional 03, Don't know –1, Refused –2, Blank 99
10. v15: Are you Spanish, Latino, or Hispanic origin? Yes 1, No 2

11. v27: Are you now married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married? Married 1, Widowed 2, Divorced 3, Separated 4 (Not because of incarceration), Never Married 5, Don't know -1, Refused -2, Blank 99
12. v1828: In the past week have you engaged in any religious activities, such as religious services, private prayer, or meditation, or Bible reading or studying? Yes 1, No 2
13. v1890: Since your admission to prison in (Insert Rec\_Admin\_Date), have you joined or participated in A bible club or other religious study group (including Muslims)? Yes 01, No 02, Don't know -1, Refused -2, Blank 99
14. v1891: Since your admission to prison in (Insert Rec\_Admin\_Date), have you joined or participated in Other religious activities? Yes 01, No 02, Don't know -1, Refused -2, Blank 99

## VITA

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