

Religion as a social control device in prison essay samples

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



A large number of America's residents are in prison or jail, a situation that burdens the families of the imprisoned, as well as the society. A number of faith-based organizations have been working together with prison authorities in order to reduce the chances of recidivism and find ways to serve the imprisoned better.

For instance, Burl Cain, the warden of Louisiana State Penitentiary has always advocated moral rehabilitation. Cain believes that moral people are not felonious nor criminals, and moral rehabilitation is the only genuine rehabilitation. According to Cain, moral rehabilitation refers to learning how to live productively, peacefully while in the prison community setting. He believes that moral rehabilitation is being achieved through the increasing number of inmates in his prison who have changed for the best. He has proved that the use of religion as well as peer counseling when backed up with keen and sharp discipline helps change individuals and gives them a sense of community even in men consumed by despair and rage.

On the other hand, some scholars argue whether religion has helped reduce recidivism and create peaceful prisons. Others argue that the use of Baptist Christian religion is somewhat unfair to the inmates who are not Baptist Christians such as Jews, Buddhist and Muslims but all in all, faith is what plays a key role in rehabilitation of criminals. Even with the use of religion as a social control device in prisons, recidivism still happens. A large percentage of individuals released come back to prison over repeated crimes. This has made many people question whether the use of religion is effective in changing criminals.

The CSM article directly disputes the facts of recidivism put up by such

groups as men of valor. Men of valor claims that its aftercare and reentry program has proved effective leading to less than 15% of recidivism in men who have completed the program. The programs involved in these groups involve activities such as counseling, mentoring, and assistance in getting shelter, food, and clothing, as well as job placements. The CSM article questions how the groups are encouraging positive changes in the lives of people without necessarily privileging one religion. Both groups have gone ahead to defend themselves by posting positive results in people who have undergone through the programs. They believe that the faith is all that matters when it comes to changing a person for the best.

When released from prison, all a person gets is some few dollars, bus ticket, and a pair of uniform but without a prison number. At this time, many of them might have burnt bridges with their family members and so going back to them is out of the question. Many of them end up living in the streets or seeking shelter from ex-felons. This makes their chances of recidivism very high. Evangelical groups such as men of valor have played a big role in giving ex-felons aftercare and providing re-entry programs that have made them bounce back to being productive people in the society. Such programs have shown to help reduce recidivism by a large percentage. They believe that a physical and emotional support system is mandatory for ex-felons as it helps them integrate back to the society much faster and without any problems.

The roles of the state, evangelism and private corporations is to unite all cultures in state prisons in order to encourage real change and avoid recidivism even after spending much money and time trying to correct the

prisoners through faith-based programs. Cultural differences that hinder harmonious exchange and interactions between individuals of different cultures is a matter that bites hard especially in state prisons. The state, private corporations such as corporation correction association and evangelical institutions such as men of valor, are doing a great job in breaking cultural divisions in prison. The programs life skill and biblical programs introduced in prisons help people of all races and ethnicity to thrive together through teachings and skills imparted on them. Private corporations and evangelical institutions have helped the government cut down on cost used in rehabilitating prisoners. Most of the evangelical institutions are sponsored by individuals and non-governmental institutions which have led to the government reducing its spending.