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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF INMATES IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

**Abstract.** *The article is devoted to the problem of religious education that may be of great importance to rehabilitate and reform the offender or prisoner. As the problem of crime is one of growing importance, every means available should be used to reform and train the prisoner so that when he leaves the penitentiary he will go out and become a useful member of society. The various reasons for inmate religious involvement are investigated, such as many psychological and emotional benefits, improving their own self-concept, use religion to help change their behavior or to gain physical protection, to meet other inmates or volunteers of the opposite sex. It is proved that inmates can acquire a number of positive characteristics from the practice of religion in prison, because serious religious involvement promotes self-discipline, self-introspection, and concern for others, psychological peace of mind, positive self-concept and improvements in self-control and intellectual abilities. According to the law of many countries, correctional institutions must provide inmates with legal rights concerning the practice of religion and attending religious services, but considering security of the institution.*

*The programs aimed at the successful reintegration of inmates into the community need the assistance of religious personnel to find employment and promote positive family relationships. There has been considered that the prison chaplain has greater potential opportunities in helping to rehabilitate the prisoner, he has shown the most interest in criminals and has been motivated by a religious spirit or a welfare mission. The article analyzes characteristics that the modern prison chaplain must use; he should be extreme tactful, frank, honest, and truthful, careful to keep his promises, sympathetic, must know something about the social sciences and should be a man of strong and attractive personality. The chaplain's duties and obligations are analyzed. One of the aims of a chaplain is to analyze the inmates' religious and social background, diagnose their deficiencies, and plan for their future. It is noted that whatever the changes in corrections and larger society, because of the historical and legal foundation of religion in corrections it will continue to be an active part of prison life and inmates' rehabilitation.*

**Key words:** *religious education; correctional institutions; inmates; prisoners' rehabilitation; a correctional chaplain.*

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## РЕЛІГІЙНА ОСВІТА УВ'ЯЗНЕНИХ У ВИПРАВНИХ ЗАКЛАДАХ

**Анотація.** Оглядова стаття присвячена питанням релігійної освіти ув'язнених у виправних закладах, що має велике значення для їх реабілітації. Оскільки проблема злочинності дедалі зростає, слід використовувати всі можливі засоби для трансформації ув'язненого, щоб, виходячи з місць позбавлення волі, він став корисним членом суспільства. У статті досліджуються причини залучення до релігії ув'язнених, такі як психологічні та емоційні переваги, вдосконалення власної Я-концепції, можливість змінити свою поведінку або отримати фізичний захист з допомогою релігії, познайомитися з іншими ув'язненими або волонтерами тощо. Доведено, що ув'язнені можуть набути позитивних характеристик, долучаючись до релігійної практики у в'язниці, оскільки релігійні вірування сприяють самодисципліні, самоаналізу та турботі про інших, психологічному спокою, позитивній само-концепції, вдосконаленню самоконтролю та інтелектуальних здібностей. Наголошується що відповідно до законодавств всіх розвинених країн, виправні установи повинні забезпечувати ув'язнених законними правами щодо сповідання релігії та можливість відвідувати різні конфесійні служби, але з урахуванням правил безпеки установи.

Програми, спрямовані на успішну реінтеграцію ув'язнених у суспільство, потребують допомоги з боку релігійного персоналу. Вважається, що тюремний капелан має найбільші потенційні можливості для реабілітації ув'язнених, виявляє найбільший інтерес до в'язнів і мотивований релігійним духом або місією доброчинності. У статті проаналізовано характеристики, якими має володіти сучасний тюремний капелан: бути тактовним, відвертим, чесним і правдивим, обережним в обіцянках і їх виконанні, співчутливим, володіти знанням соціальних наук, і бути сильною та привабливою особистістю. Аналізуються обов'язки і завдання релігійної практики тюремного капелана, зокрема аналіз релігійної та соціальної історії ув'язнених, діагностика їх недоліків та планування їх майбутньої реабілітації. Зазначається, що при будь-яких змінах у виправних закладах і всьому суспільстві, у зв'язку з історичною та правовою основою релігії, вона залишиться активною частиною життя в'язниць та реабілітації ув'язнених.

**Ключові слова:** релігійна освіта; виправні установи; ув'язнені; реабілітація ув'язнених; тюремний капелан.

**Introduction.** The problem of crime is one of growing importance, and every means available should be used to reform and train the prisoner so that when he leaves the penitentiary he will go out and become a useful member of society. Certainly it must be possible to do much to help these people to readjust themselves to the social order.

Throughout the long history of corrections, religious persons and religious institutions have greatly influenced the treatment of offenders. For centuries, churches were the first institutions that provided asylum for accused criminals. The establishment of prisons and penitentiaries was a religious idea for the offender to obtain penance for crimes, make amends, and convert during isolation from others.

But probably the most significant influence was the establishment of a regular chaplaincy. Correctional chaplains were among the earliest paid non-custodial staff and were the first to provide education and counseling for inmates. No person has greater potential opportunities in helping to rehabilitate the prisoner than the prison chaplain who have shown the most interest in criminals and have been motivated by a religious spirit or a welfare mission. Currently, many correctional inmates practice their religion on an individual basis or within the structure of an organized religious program. Religious programs are commonplace in jails and prisons and research indicates that one in three inmates participates in some religious program during their incarceration (Murphy, 1956).

**Analysis of the recent publications.** Nowadays the problems of great importance of religious education to rehabilitate and reform the offenders or prisoners are actively developed by foreign and Ukrainian researchers. Significant contribution to the development of theoretical and practical foundations of religious education and study of the role of correctional chaplains in prisons was made by Clear T. R., Stout B. D., Dammer H. R., Kelly L., Hardyman P. L., Shapiro C., Johnson B., Keuther F. C., Murphy G. L., Shaw R. D., Sundt J. L., and others. Unfortunately, much less works of the Ukrainian scholars are devoted to various aspects of inmates' religious education and correction.

**The aim of the publication.** So, it is essential to analyze the role and impact of the religious education on the convicted. Thus, the aim of this publication is to highlight and analyze contemporary trends and development of the religious education in the world and in Ukraine, the role of correctional chaplains' activity as the most significant representatives of religious institutions greatly influencing the treatment of inmates.

**Research findings.** Speaking about *historical background* of religion in corrections, H. Dammer considers that the influence and practice of religion in the correctional setting is as old as the history of prisons. Initial entry of religion into prison was probably carried out by religious men who themselves were imprisoned. The early Christian Church granted asylum to criminals who would otherwise have been mutilated or killed (Dammer, 2012). Imprisonment under church jurisdiction became a substitute for corporal or capital

punishment. In medieval times, the Roman Catholic Church developed penal techniques later used by secular states such as the monastic cell that served as a punishment place for criminal offenders. The Protestants and Catholics built correctional facilities for women and men, and for younger offenders with separation, silence, work, and prayer emphasized. Early settlers of North America brought with them the customs and common laws of England including the pillory, the stocks and the whipping post.

During the 18th century isolating offenders from fellow prisoners became the accepted correctional practice. It was thought that long-term isolation, combined with in-depth discussions with clergy, would lead inmates to repent or become «penitent» – sorry for their sins. Thus the term «penitentiary» was derived. Even during the 19th century when daytime work was initiated. Belief in education as a tool for reducing criminal activity also assisted in the growth of religion in prison. Because of the limited budgets of correctional institutions, chaplains were often called upon to be the sole educator in many American prisons (Dammer, 2012).

Volunteers also have a long history in corrections that can be traced back to the beginning of prisons. In the last 200 years many religious groups have entered correctional facilities to provide religious services to inmates. Today, volunteers are vital to religious programs and without them inmate participation would surely be limited.

The various *reasons for inmate religious involvement* are investigated by the researchers of the problem (Keuther, 1951; Hoyles, 1955). This difficulty is caused by the fact that religious belief and practice is a very individual matter and exacerbated by the psychological complexities of living in prison. However, in research conducted in the correctional setting it has been found that inmates practice religion while in prison for various personal and practical reasons as following:

- *many psychological and emotional benefits.* Inmates are practicing their faith by worshipping God or a higher power. Inmates either grew up practicing a religion or joined a religion later in life. In many cases, inmates gain direction and meaning for their life from the practice of religion while in prison. They feel that God, or Yahweh, or Allah will provide a direction to go in life, one that is better than their present psychological or physical condition. Religion also provides hope for the inmates – hope to reform from a life of crime, and from a life of imprisonment. Some inmates feel that practicing religion gives them a «peace of mind», which helps inmates improve their well-being especially those serving long sentences.

- *improving their own self-concept.* Lack of a positive self-concept is a common problem with correctional inmates who may suffer from guilt related to failures in life, remorse from criminal acts, or, from the pain of a dysfunctional family background. Because the core of many religious beliefs includes acceptance and love from a higher being, and from members of the faith group, inmates often feel better about themselves if they practice religion while incarcerated.

- *use religion to help change their behavior.* Following the principles and discipline that is required in the serious practice of religion can teach inmates self-control. Having self-control helps inmates avoid confrontations with other inmates and staff, and it helps them comply with prison rules and regulations.

- *to gain physical protection:* To be safe, many inmates believe that they need to be part of a group which can provide physical protection from other inmates. Without this protection, inmates believe they may be subject to blackmail, sexual exploitation, or physical confrontation. They assume that the religious group will provide the protection necessary to avoid such difficulties. Religious services are considered a «safe haven» because few physical attacks usually occur in a place of worship.

- *to meet other inmates.* Religious services are an important meeting place for inmates because the opportunity to attend is usually available to all inmates in the general prison population. Inmates value the opportunity to meet other inmates for many reasons. First, like those in the free world, inmates enjoy regular social interaction with friends and groups of individuals with similar interests. Second, some inmates meet at religious services for the purpose of passing contraband: food, written messages, cigarettes, drugs, or even weapons.

- *to meet volunteers of the opposite sex.* Civilians often volunteer to visit correctional facilities to help with religious services and programs. In many cases these volunteers are women. The male inmates look forward to coming to religious services to meet the women, and the female inmates look forward to meeting the male volunteers as well.

Although some inmates, correctional officers and staff think negatively of the intentions of religious inmates, many believe that inmates can acquire a number of positive characteristics from the practice of religion in prison. It is because serious religious involvement promotes self-discipline, self-introspection, and concern for others. The positive characteristics include psychological peace of mind, positive self-concept, and improvements in self-control and intellectual abilities.

In recent years there has been an increased interest on the topic of religion in corrections and in finding out whether the practice of religion in corrections has had any positive impact on inmates. Some research evidence supports the view that the practice of religion helps to control inmate behavior during incarceration (Skotnicki, 1991; Sundt, 1997). Other studies have found that inmates who are very active in religious programs are less likely to be re-arrested after release from prison, and that their likelihood of success can be enhanced by post-release religious involvement (Shaw, 1995).

According to the national laws of many developed countries and Ukraine as well, correctional institutions must provide inmates with legal rights concerning the practice of religion such as the opportunities to assemble for religious services, attend different denominational services, correspond with religious leaders, observe dietary laws, pursue name changes, and obtain, wear and use religious paraphernalia. All of these rights, however, must not

supersede the security considerations of the institution. It is common for prisons to provide only a main Sunday services and one or two weeknight Bible study groups. Some correctional facilities allow special seminars conducted by various faith groups to motivate inmates to turn to religion, which will hopefully lead them to a better, crime-free life (United States Department of Justice (1993).

The ability to practice ones religion even for those who are incarcerated, is supported by many states and laws, however, this right must not interfere with the security of the institution. Religious practice is no longer only in the form of the Judeo-Christian experience in American and European prisons. A variety of faith groups are now present in many institutions, each with their own form of religious practice. Today the specific kinds of religious groups vary from prison-to-prison. Nearly all correctional institutions provide support for at least some of the four traditional faith groups – Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish. The religious programs and practices conducted by the different faith groups differ according to the beliefs of the group, inmate interest, amount of time and space available in the prison, competence of the religious staff, and the support of the correctional authorities. It is not uncommon for a large prison to have numerous religious services on a daily basis. For example, a typical day could include a Bible study class, Catholic Mass, Islamic Ta'Leem, Jewish Faith Meeting, Another institution that contains a less diverse group of inmates, might provide only a main Sunday services and one or two weeknight Bible study groups. In addition to regular religious programs some correctional facilities allow special seminars. These seminars are conducted by various faith groups, held several times a year and conducted by volunteers who visit the institution for two or three days. The purpose of the seminars is to motivate inmates to turn to religion, which will hopefully lead them to a better, crime-free life (Murphy, 1956).

Thus, religious persons and religious institutions have long been associated with correctional practice. This influence began prior to the invention of the prison, continued with the development of a correctional philosophy aimed at repentance, and more recently serves to assist inmates who try to practice their faith while incarcerated.

Most of the direct influence of religion in corrections has been accomplished through the work of *correctional chaplains*. Prison chaplains have always served as the main conduit through which religion is delivered at correctional facilities. The term «chaplain» is believed to be derived from the Latin term «capella» meaning a cloak (Dammer, 2012). Chaplains and other «faith representatives» are currently employed in all correctional facilities and they serve a variety of functions.

In Ukraine chaplains are traditionally called priests in the army, police, prisons or hospitals. On our lands, priests accompanied the army for many centuries, until they were replaced by Soviet political officers. As for the Ukrainian prisons, the priests got access to them, of course, only with the collapse of the USSR. There is data that about 3 thousand priests and

volunteers of various churches and religious organizations regularly visit Ukrainian penitentiary institutions. In colonies and prisons, there are temples, chapels and prayer rooms (Ukrainian prison chaplains, 2018).

The chaplain of today is typically an educated and multi-skilled individual who is generally accepted as helpful by those who live and work in correctional facilities. Chaplains serve a variety of functions. Their main purpose is to administer religious programs and provide pastoral care to inmates and institutional staff. In the past, this meant that the common duties were to provide religious services, counsel troubled inmates, and advise inmates of «bad news» from home or from correctional authorities. More recently, the role of chaplain has been expanded to include coordination of physical facilities, organizing volunteers, facilitating religious furlough visits, contracting for outside religious services, and training correctional administrators and staff about the basic tenets, rituals, and artifacts of non-traditional faith groups.

The profound analysis of chaplain's duties and obligations was carried out by Gwin J. L. (Gwin, 1938). The modern prison chaplain must use extreme tact and judgment and must be thoroughly trained for his work. He must be frank, honest, and truthful, for it is often the personality of the chaplain and the strength of his own faith that controls the success of his efforts. He must be very careful to keep his promises, be sympathetic, and be a keen judge of human nature. The chaplain of today must know something about the social sciences and should be a man of strong and attractive personality.

He should analyze the inmates' religious and social background, diagnose their deficiencies, and plan for their future. It is necessary to get all the information possible about the inmates' past religious status. He must help in setting up the training program for each inmate. Among his other duties, he must visit the inmates in the hospital and in their cells. As the spiritual sponsor of the prisoner, he must show his intense personal interest in each individual and speak a word of encouragement or help at every opportunity. He must meet the prisoner on his own ground, but must be careful not to become too familiar with the inmate and thus lower himself to the inmate's level. Reformation must come from within because it is essentially a change of mental processes, a realization and strengthening of the intangible faculties of mind and soul. The chaplain of today must know something about the social sciences and should be a man of strong and attractive personality.

We must not think, however, that the chaplain can reach and regenerate all those who come within his sphere of influence. He must devote most of his time to those he can reach and not waste too much time on the others. Young prisoners who have committed their first offense are in dire need of a friend and adviser, to whom they can turn when they have a problem which they cannot solve because of their lack of experience and intelligence. And it is with them the prison chaplain have the greatest opportunity. Religion is not a panacea for all our inmates' problems, for it cannot reach all of the prisoners; but a painstaking, persevering, intelligent, and well-trained chaplain can do much to reform and rehabilitate his charges, the chaplain's job is an extremely important

job in any institution (Gwin, 1938).

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** As the prison population grows, more inmates are also eventually released back into society. Thus, programs aimed at the successful reintegration of inmates back into the community will need the assistance of religious personnel to find employment and promote positive family relationships. Whatever the changes in corrections and larger society, because of the historical and legal foundation of religion in corrections it will continue to be an active part of prison life and programming of their rehabilitation. the practice of religion Since many research evidence supports the view that the practice of religion in corrections has had any positive impact on inmates, and helps to control inmate behavior during incarceration, correctional institutions must provide inmates with their legal rights concerning the practice of religion and attending religious services.

There has been realized recently that the chaplain's job is an extremely important job in any correctional institution. Chaplains should be concerned primarily with the religious problems of the prisoners, they in addition to their religious services and regular seminary training, should have special training in the work which they are to perform. The prisons should put more emphasis on their programs of religious education and provide adequate chapel facilities and equipment in every prison in order to fully realize the possibilities of such religious educational programs in the rehabilitation of prisoners.

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