

EVALUATING THE POTENTIAL OF FAITH-BASED CORRECTIONAL MODELS: A CASE STUDY OF FLORIDA'S FAITH-BASED AND CHARACTER-BASED INSTITUTIONS

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As the popularity of faith-based programs has grown across the country, the criminal justice field has witnessed the development of numerous faith-based initiatives aimed at rehabilitating and supporting incarcerated people and those returning from prison and jail. The corrections system in the United States has increasingly welcomed partnerships with faith-based and community-based organizations, and churches and other religious institutions have formalized their longstanding role as a major source of community support for returning prisoners (Bright & Graham, 2007; Henriques & Lehren, 2006; Hercik et al., 2005; O'Connor, 2004, 2005). Embracing this trend, in 2003, Florida became the first state in the country to dedicate an entire publicly run correctional facility to a faith-based model. Currently, Florida operates three Faith- and Character-Based Institutions (FCBIs): Lawtey, a medium- and minimum-security male facility that houses 815 inmates; Hillsborough, a facility that houses 271 female inmates of all security classifications; and Wakulla, a maximum-security facility housing 1,741 male inmates (Florida Department of Corrections [FDOC], 2008b).

This paper presents the findings from a process and outcome evaluation of the FCBI initiative at the Lawtey and Hillsborough correctional facilities.¹ Using both quantitative and qualitative data, the study explores three primary research questions: (1) What is the FCBI mission and program model? (2) How is this model being implemented? and (3) What are the outcomes of the FCBI program, particularly with respect to reincarceration? An earlier report focused on the program model and implementation issues (La Vigne, Brazzell, & Small, 2007). The present study uses newly available quantitative data to examine program outcomes, incorporating the previous qualitative findings to provide context regarding the FCBI program and its operations. The study's findings are based on an analysis of FDOC inmate data; interviews with FCBI management, staff, and volunteers; focus groups with inmates participating in the FCBIs; and firsthand program observation.²

Given the current interest in faith-based corrections programs and the limited amount of research that exists on the impact such programs have on participants' postrelease outcomes, this study offers valuable findings for researchers, policy makers, and corrections practitioners interested in faith-based models. To frame the discussion, the paper begins by exploring the existing research

on faith-based corrections programs, and then describes the FCBI initiative, its mission, and the program model. The paper presents quantitative findings on FCBI participant characteristics and recidivism outcomes, and concludes with a synthesis of the findings and a discussion of the implications for the criminal justice field.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Religion and religious institutions have historically played an important role in the American penal system, beginning with the Protestant Christian influences on the development of the country's first prisons (O'Connor, 2004). Even as prisons secularized in the latter half of the nineteenth century, churches and other religious institutions continued to send representatives into correctional institutions and to serve as a nexus of community support for those exiting prison. The past decade has witnessed a renewed emphasis on the role of religion in offender rehabilitation and increased visibility and funding for formal faith-based programs serving currently and formerly incarcerated people (Hercik et al. 2005; Mears et al. 2006; O'Connor, Duncan, & Quillard, 2006; White House, 2008). This trend is part of a broader growth in the popularity of faith-based models for addressing a range of social ills, an approach championed by President George W. Bush through the creation of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) (McDaniel, Davis, & Neff, 2005; White House, 2008).

An important part of the expansion of faith-based responses to criminal justice problems has been the establishment of a number of comprehensive, faith-based prison programs (Bright & Graham 2007; Henriques & Lehren 2006). A 2005 review found that 21 state correctional systems and the federal prison system were operating faith-based residential programs or were in the process of developing them (National Institute of Corrections Information Center [NICIC], 2005).³ Despite the popularity of such programs, very little research exists on the effectiveness of faith-based programs (residential or nonresidential) that serve adult inmates (O'Connor, 2005; Mears et al., 2006; Sumter, 2006). To date, many of the studies of faith-based corrections programs have produced inconclusive or tentative findings and have been characterized by major methodological limitations (Mears et al., 2006; O'Connor, 2005).

Only two studies have evaluated comprehensive, residential faith-based prison programs in the United States, and neither found lower recidivism rates among program participants when compared with similar inmates from the general population. Johnson and Larson (2003) found no difference in rearrest and reincarceration rates between participants in the InnerChange Freedom Initiative in Texas and a matched comparison group. The subset of participants who officially graduated from the program did fare better than the comparison inmates, but graduation required

holding a job and belonging to a church after release, criteria that likely had a significant impact on recidivism outcomes independent of program participation. Hercik's 2004 study of the Kairos Horizon program in Florida's Tomoka Correctional Institution did not find a lower rearrest rate among program participants when compared with a matched comparison group, although the study's sample sizes were small and the methodology was not described in enough detail to gauge its validity.

Although research evaluating faith-based corrections programs is scarce, a fairly strong theoretical foundation exists for efforts that aim to rehabilitate offenders and reduce recidivism through religious engagement. A significant body of literature links individual faith and participation in organized religion to reduced involvement in criminal activity among the general population (Hercik et al., 2005; Sumter, 2000). Studies of prisoners have found that spirituality is related to better in-prison behavior and greater levels of adjustment to prison (Clear & Sumter, 2002; Kerley, Matthews, & Blanchard, 2005). Other research has shown a connection between religious involvement and positive outcomes for health and well-being, such as lower rates of substance abuse and depression, which might improve reentry success and curb recidivism among people leaving prison (Johnson, Tompkins, & Webb, 2002). These findings suggest that programs that aim to cultivate and support religious involvement among inmates, such as the FCBI initiative, could reduce future criminal behavior and lead to other positive outcomes for participants.

THE FCBI INITIATIVE

The Florida Department of Corrections officially launched the FCBI initiative on December 24, 2003, when it converted Lawtey Correctional Institution to an FCBI serving medium- and minimum-security male inmates. The following April, the FDOC opened an FCBI for female inmates of all security classifications at Hillsborough Correctional Institution.⁴ The purpose of the FCBI initiative, according to the FDOC, is to offer a wide range of religious- and character-focused programming to inmates interested in "personal growth and character development" (FDOC, 2004). In the four years since their inception, Lawtey FCBI has served 3,616 inmates and Hillsborough FCBI has served 1,291 inmates (FDOC, 2008b).

Lawtey currently houses 815 inmates from 30 different faiths and Hillsborough houses 271 inmates belonging to 22 faiths (FDOC, 2008b).⁵ Using private funding, faith-based and character-based programming is provided by community volunteers from a range of religious and secular backgrounds. The role of the FDOC prison staff is to facilitate the provision of programming and maintain each FCBI as a "forum" in which community volunteers can offer

programs (FDOC, 2004). The immediate aims of the FCBI initiative are to provide a wider range of both secular and religious programming for inmates and to improve inmate behavior and institutional security. In the long term, the initiative aims to rehabilitate participants, promote their successful reintegration into the community after release, and ultimately reduce recidivism (FDOC, 2004, 2008c).

Programming

At the center of the FCBI model are the faith-based and character-based programs designed, funded, and implemented by community volunteers with the support and guidance of each FCBI's chaplaincy staff. Although similar faith-based and character-based programs exist at other Florida correctional facilities, the number, range, and depth of the programming at the FCBI's are far greater. The programs available at Lawtey and Hillsborough range from explicitly religious activities, such as worship services and scriptural study, to personal relationship building through mentoring and small group activities, to character development programs covering topics such as parenting and anger management. Some programs are explicitly religious, whereas others present program topics from a secular perspective, addressing religion only if it is raised by inmates. More information on the specific programs available at Lawtey and Hillsborough can be found in Appendix B.

Several faith-based and character-based programs are offered each day and evening and many inmates attend multiple programs a week. Programs are typically scheduled for the same time each week; some, such as religious services and mentoring, are ongoing, while others, particularly the life-skills and character-development classes, follow a curriculum that lasts for a set number of weeks. In addition, there are occasional holiday celebrations, weekend retreats, and special worship events. As in other Florida prisons, Lawtey and Hillsborough also offer educational opportunities, vocational training, wellness programs, and reentry programs funded and staffed by the FDOC.

An analysis of one month of data on participation in the faith-based and character-based activities found that program involvement varies from inmate to inmate in terms of both the quantity and types of programs in which an inmate participates.⁶ The set of available programs also varies across the FCBI facilities and over time, primarily because of the reliance on volunteers to provide programming. Because of this variation in program activity at the facility and individual levels, participation in an FCBI cannot be treated as a fixed experience that is identical for all inmates. The lack of standardized programming should be kept in mind when

considering measurements of program effectiveness and opportunities for replicating the FCBI model elsewhere.

Volunteers and Chaplains

The FCBIs offer an extensive range of religious and character development opportunities by leveraging private resources from the community, particularly human capital, at little cost to the state. At Lawtey, 46 community groups provide programming to 815 inmates and 57 community groups currently serve Hillsborough's 271 inmates (FDOC, 2008b). Although volunteers from secular groups and several religious traditions are active in both facilities, the vast majority of volunteers are Christian and participate through their churches. As at other FDOC facilities, FCBI volunteers receive four hours of standardized training that focus on guidelines for working safely and effectively in a prison setting. Some volunteers receive additional training from their sponsoring organizations.

Volunteers are supported and guided in their work by the FCBI prison chaplains, who serve as de facto program coordinators. All Florida prisons have chaplains who work to ensure that the religious needs of inmates are met, but the chaplaincy position at the FCBIs involves a greatly expanded set of responsibilities. FCBI chaplains recruit, train, and support community volunteers; assist with program development; manage the program schedule and work to fill program gaps; and act as the liaison between volunteers and prison administrators. According to one FCBI chaplain, management skills are as important to the position as religious training.

Environment and Staff

The theory behind the FCBI initiative is not only to offer inmates more extensive faith-based and character-based programming, but to concentrate these programs in select facilities and to cultivate an atmosphere within these facilities that supports rehabilitation. The FCBIs attract inmates interested in positive change and house them together in an environment infused with programming and community volunteers. By saturating the facility with opportunities for rehabilitation, the FCBI model aims to develop a supportive environment within which programming can have a greater impact.

Many correctional staff view contributing to this positive facility environment as part of their job responsibilities and therefore they approach their jobs in a manner conducive to inmate rehabilitation. In practice, this rehabilitative correctional philosophy includes relating to inmates in a friendly and respectful manner; serving as a positive behavioral example for inmates; and, when appropriate, resolving problems with inmates informally through discussion and mediation rather than punitive responses. Many of the volunteers, chaplains, management, and staff

interviewed for this study emphasized the importance to the FCBI initiative of this shift in correctional culture, although not all FCBI staff have adopted a rehabilitative philosophy (for more on this point, see La Vigne et al., 2007).

Inmate Participants

Inmates volunteer for FCBI placement and may be of any religious faith or none at all.⁷ The findings from interviews with FCBI staff, chaplains, and inmates suggest that the majority of inmates who volunteer do so because they have a genuine interest in the FCBI program, although a number are driven by other interests, such as wanting to be closer to family or to be housed in a less harsh prison environment. Those inmates who express interest in being housed in an FCBI are placed on a waiting list, which currently comprises a few thousand inmates. On reaching the top of the list, inmates are screened for eligibility.

To be eligible for the FCBI, inmates must fit the inmate profile of the given FCBI facility (e.g., in terms of security level, offense type, time to release), must be in general population housing status and not on work release, and cannot have received a disciplinary report resulting in confinement in the previous 90 days. At Lawtey and Hillsborough, the first criterion generally excludes inmates who are sex offenders or have more than five years remaining on their sentence. If determined to be eligible for placement, inmates are transferred to the appropriate FCBI facility. Inmates must meet minimum behavioral standards and participate in at least one program session a week to remain at the FCBI.⁸ A wide range of secular and religious options can satisfy the weekly program participation requirement, including faith-based and character-based programs, educational classes, and vocational training.⁹ Unless an inmate requests to leave or is transferred out for failing to meet the behavioral and program participation standards, he or she will typically remain in the FCBI until release. In addition, an inmate can choose to be transferred out at any time by submitting a request to his or her classification officer.

FCBI OUTCOMES

To better understand the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of FCBI participants, FDOC administrative data on FCBI inmates and inmates in Florida's general prison population were analyzed. The dataset provided information on all individuals incarcerated in the Florida prison system on September 30, 2004, including demographic characteristics, criminal history, in-prison behavior, FCBI stays, and releases and returns to prison through February 8, 2008. The following section presents findings from analyses of these data, supplemented with qualitative perspectives on program outcomes. Because of differences between Lawtey and Hillsborough identified in other parts of the study, all analyses were conducted separately for males and females.¹⁰

Characteristics of FCBI Inmates

The characteristics of inmates housed in the Lawtey and Hillsborough FCBIs on September 30, 2004 (n=696 males, 261 females) were analyzed and compared with the individuals incarcerated in all other Florida prisons on that date (n=74,006 males, 4,802 females). Tables showing the full results of the chi-square tests and independent sample t-tests are included in Appendix C. Given that inmates self-select into the FCBIs and that they must meet specific eligibility criteria to enter and remain in the facilities, it is not surprising that some significant differences existed between the FCBI participants and the general Florida prison population.

While male FCBI inmates were demographically similar to the male general prison population in terms of age and race, they had significantly different criminal backgrounds. Only 29% of Lawtey inmates were incarcerated for a violent offense compared with 54% of the male general population. There were no sex offenders at Lawtey and a much smaller number of murder/manslaughter offenders than in the general population; the lower numbers of these types of offenders were balanced by a greater number of drug offenders. On average, Lawtey inmates had shorter sentences, had spent less time in prison during their current incarceration, and had less time remaining until release than general population male inmates. These differences in criminal history can be explained primarily by the fact that only minimum- and medium-security inmates with less than five years to release are eligible to be housed in Lawtey, but differences may also result from other program eligibility criteria (e.g., in-prison behavior) or inmate self-selection into the program. Interestingly, however, Lawtey inmates had more prior incarcerations than the typical male inmate housed in the general population.

In contrast to the males, the criminal histories of female FCBI inmates were not significantly different from those of the female general prison population on most measures, probably because, unlike Lawtey, Hillsborough houses inmates of all security classifications. FCBI and general population female inmates were comparable in terms of the proportion serving time for violent offenses and drug offenses, the number of prior incarcerations, the length of time served, and the expected sentence length. However, no female FCBI inmates were sex offenders, fewer were incarcerated for murder/manslaughter offenses than in the female general population, and the FCBI inmates had a shorter time remaining until release than the average female offender. The demographic characteristics of female FCBI inmates were slightly different from the general female prison population in that the FCBI inmates tended to be older and were more likely to be White.

The differences between the FCBI inmates and the general prison population outlined above must be taken into account when considering the applicability of any findings on program effectiveness for the general prison population. For example, because sex offenders are not eligible to be housed at Lawtey and Hillsborough, there is no way of knowing how FCBI participation might impact sex offenders. In addition, there may be other differences between the FCBI inmates and the general prison population that were not possible to measure using the available data for this study. The dataset did not capture information on the inmates' attitudes and beliefs, the intensity and nature of their religious involvement, or their motivation for rehabilitation and reentry success.

The FCBI Experience

Examining the program experiences of the FCBI inmates in the sample (n=696 males, 261 females) showed that most inmates spent no more than a year and a half to two years in the FCBI. Among male FCBI inmates, 94% spent at least six months at Lawtey and 71% spent at least a year there.¹¹ Among female FCBI inmates, 81% spent at least six months at Hillsborough and 50% spent at least a year there. Yet less than one out of five inmates (18% at Lawtey, 16% at Hillsborough) who were in an FCBI on September 30, 2004, were still housed there on May 31, 2006, 20 months later. Of those who left the FCBIs, 62% from Lawtey and 67% from Hillsborough had been released; the remainder had been transferred to other facilities.¹²

Other than the length of time spent in the FCBI, there is no specific information on the program participation of inmates in the sample during their time in the facilities, such as the number and types of programs in which they participated and their involvement in secular versus faith-based programming.¹³ This study, therefore, is limited to an exploration of the overall impact of being housed in an FCBI, a valuable question given that the model's effects are intended to stem from both program participation and the overall environment in the FCBI facilities. Such an approach is appropriate for understanding the FCBI model as it is currently implemented, without a standardized curriculum or a requirement that inmates participate in specific programs. If more detailed individual-level program participation data were available, a subsequent evaluation could examine how different levels and types of program involvement influence outcomes.

Reincarceration Outcomes

To examine the hypothesis that the FCBI model reduces recidivism, the reincarceration rates of FCBI inmates were compared with those of a matched group of general population inmates who did not participate in the FCBI. The treatment group comprised inmates housed in Lawtey or Hillsborough on September 30, 2004, who were released at some point between November 1,

2004, and November 31, 2005, and who spent at least 3 months in the FCBI.¹⁴ On average, the male inmates in the treatment group were housed at Lawtey for 13 months and the female inmates spent 9 months in Hillsborough.¹⁵ These FCBI inmates were matched to similar inmates who were incarcerated in any of Florida's other state prisons on September 30, 2004; were released between November 1, 2004, and November 30, 2005; and were not housed in the FCBI at any point in time.

Using a one-to-one categorical exact matching technique, inmates from the general prison population group were matched to the inmates from the FCBI group on the following factors: gender, age, race, primary offense type, violent or nonviolent offense, number of prior incarcerations, time served, and disciplinary report rate (a measure of in-prison behavior prior to program participation).¹⁶ This method matched each FCBI inmate with one non-FCBI inmate using the factors listed above and produced treatment and comparison groups for males and females that were statistically similar in terms of the factors used to match the groups.¹⁷ Because of the limitations of the dataset, it was not possible to account for other, less tangible factors (e.g., religiosity or personal motivation) that might vary between inmates who did and did not participate in the FCBI program. The differences between the treatment and comparison groups on these factors are unknown, although it would be reasonable to hypothesize that some inmates who volunteer for the FCBI are more religious or more motivated than the average Florida inmate.

The outcome measure used in this analysis is reincarceration in the Florida state prison system within 26 months after release.¹⁸ As with the rest of the analysis, outcomes for males (n=189 treatment and 189 comparison) and females (n=100 treatment and 100 comparison) were analyzed separately. For both males and females, no statistically significant difference was found in the proportion of FCBI and non-FCBI inmates returned to prison within 12, 18, 24, and 26 months of release.¹⁹ Table 1 presents the reincarceration rates for the treatment and comparison groups, and more detailed tables in Appendix C provide chi-square values. There was also no statistically significant difference between the treatment and comparison groups in the proportion of inmates who were reincarcerated for a technical violation (i.e., a parole or probation violation) versus a new crime.²⁰

Table 1. Reincarceration Outcomes of FCBI Inmates and a Matched Comparison Group

Returned to prison within	Males		Females	
	FCBI Inmates (n=189)	Comparison Group (n=189)	FCBI Inmates (n=100)	Comparison Group (n=100)
12 months	8 4.2%	8 4.2%	4 4.0%	7 7.0%
18 months	20 10.6%	19 10.1%	9 9.0%	8 8.0%
24 months	23 12.2%	32 16.9%	14 14.0%	11 11.0%
26 months	27 14.3%	34 18.0%	15 15.0%	12 12.0%

These findings suggest that the FCBI program does not produce a statistically significant reduction in recidivism for either males or females in the first 2 years out of prison. Because the sample sizes are relatively small, however, the possibility of a small or moderate effect on recidivism cannot be ruled out. Yet it should be noted that for females, the effect, while not statistically significant, was in the opposite direction from what was expected: a greater proportion of female FCBI inmates were reincarcerated at 18, 24, and 26 months than the inmates from the comparison group.

The impact of FCBI participation on the quality of life of inmates who were not reincarcerated is unknown, and while the initiative may not be achieving its goal of significantly reducing recidivism, it may be achieving other program goals related to inmate rehabilitation. This analysis does not examine how former participants fared in terms of employment, family relationships, drug abuse, and additional reentry outcomes other than reincarceration, nor does it explore the impact of FCBI participation on in-prison behavior. Initially, a comparison of disciplinary infractions among FCBI inmates and their general population counterparts was to be included. However, interviews with FCBI staff and management suggested that disciplinary reports are employed differently in the FCBIs than in other FDOC facilities.²¹ These findings raised concerns about the reliability of comparing disciplinary infractions across facilities.

Some additional methodological limitations concerning this analysis were mentioned earlier, but they merit repeating. First, while all inmates in the treatment group were in an FCBI for at least 3 months, no other measure of treatment exposure or intensity was available. Future analyses that

take into account the number and types of faith-based and character-based programs in which inmates participate might find different outcomes for FCBI inmates with different levels of program participation. Second, in the current analysis, it is possible that the FCBI inmates differ from the comparison group in certain ways that cannot be measured. FCBI participants may already be more likely to succeed after release, regardless of program participation because they are more motivated, have better attitudes, or are more religious. The finding that the FCBI program has no effect, however, suggests that whatever selection bias is taking place is not significant enough to create measurable differences between the groups in terms of reincarceration outcomes.

Although the quantitative analysis shows no evidence of an effect on recidivism from FCBI participation, anecdotal reports from interviews with correctional staff, facility management, chaplains, and volunteers suggest that the FCBI program is producing positive outcomes during incarceration and possibly after release. These individuals reported observing attitudinal and behavioral improvements among inmate participants, including positive changes in inmates' appearances, behaviors, language, and attitudes; improvements in the way inmates interact with one another and with staff and volunteers; and an increased sense of hope, responsibility, and self-worth among participants. The general opinion of those interviewed was that these positive outcomes are indicative of potential long-term changes that will result in greater success on release from prison. Although the FCBIs do not formally track inmates after release, the chaplains and some correctional staff do keep in contact with certain former inmates. Many suggested that, as a result of FCBI participation, these inmates had a smoother transition back into the community and a stronger foundation for building a successful, crime-free life on the outside. Some FCBI staff, however, believed that the effect was one of self-selection, suggesting that participants who do not recidivate are those who were likely to succeed regardless of FCBI participation.

In addition to improving outcomes for individual inmates, the FCBI program aims to produce a safer, more positive facility environment. Most management and correctional staff interviewed felt that the working environment in the FCBIs is safer and more pleasant than that of traditional correctional facilities. They reported that inmate conflicts are less frequent, relations between inmates and staff are better, inmates are more respectful toward staff and volunteers, inmates keep the facility cleaner, and incidents of misbehavior are more likely to be isolated occurrences rather than ongoing problems. Volunteers generally found the FCBI environment to be welcoming and felt that a positive tone is fostered by both staff and inmates. The inmates who

participated in the focus groups were also strong proponents of the FCBI environment, finding it safer, less stressful, and more conducive to positive change than traditional prisons.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

The quantitative analysis provides no evidence that the FCBI program is reducing recidivism, as measured by reincarceration, for either males or females in the first 2 years out of prison. The effect on other pre- and postrelease outcomes remains unknown, as these were not examined in the current study. The analysis is not extensive enough to pronounce the model a failure, especially in light of anecdotal evidence of program success. However, the findings should give pause to policy makers considering faith-based solutions to criminal justice problems. Despite that fact that at the moment faith-based correctional models are receiving a great deal of attention and support among policy makers and positive reviews from providers and participants, little evidence exists to support their effectiveness. The current study can help inform the development, refinement, and future evaluation of other faith-based models, for although the FCBI initiative lacks demonstrated success in reducing recidivism, it does hold valuable lessons for other faith-based corrections initiatives.

Developing Evidence-Based Practice

To support more rigorous testing of faith-based corrections models, policy makers and corrections officials implementing faith-based initiatives need to clearly define the intended outcomes of the initiative, create benchmarks for measuring success, and implement systems for tracking and analyzing outcomes data. To facilitate evaluation, program offerings should be standardized to provide a measurable treatment that is consistent over time and across facilities. When developing programming, secular models that have been shown to be effective should be reviewed and possibly adapted to the faith-based environment.

Leveraging Private Resources

One of the greatest benefits of the FCBI model is that it brings extensive program offerings into facilities at a minimal cost. The primary costs of the FCBI initiative are the expenses for a somewhat expanded chaplaincy team and the additional demands on staff time driven by increased volunteer and inmate activity, although these added demands may be balanced with reductions in behavioral problems among FCBI inmates.²² The FCBI's demonstrate that local volunteers, particularly from the faith community, are a tremendous untapped resource for both faith-based and traditional prisons and a potential asset for budget-strapped systems.

Extending Success Beyond Release

Like all corrections programs, faith-based initiatives intended to have a long-term impact need to address the reentry process. In this study, the anecdotal evidence suggests positive outcomes inside the FCBI facilities, but the quantitative analysis does not demonstrate increased success after release. One possible explanation for these findings is that the FCBI initiative is not providing the continuity of support needed to extend program benefits beyond the prison walls. Indeed, one of the findings of the earlier process evaluation was that the reentry components of the FCBI model are underdeveloped. Corrections officials designing faith-based initiatives should incorporate mechanisms for extending the support and guidance provided by the programming through release and reentry. They should also ensure that the faith-based and character-development activities are complemented with vocational training and educational opportunities that develop the concrete skills necessary for reentry success.

Avoiding Religious Discrimination

The FCBI experience has demonstrated that faith-based efforts in public correctional facilities can successfully serve inmates from different faiths and avoid religious discrimination. Many of the most popular faith-based corrections programs, such as the InnerChange Freedom Initiative, are exclusively Christian and explicitly religious, and these types of programs have run into legal challenges because of their bias toward a specific creed or denomination and the blurring of lines between church and state (Henriques & Lehren, 2006). From all indications, the FDOC carefully designed the FCBI program to draw on the perceived benefits of a faith-based approach while avoiding some of the church-state conflicts encountered by other faith-based corrections programs. It did so by having all faith-based programming provided by volunteers using private funds, including a nonreligious character-development component in the model, making participation voluntary, explicitly avoiding any form of religious test for program participation, and recruiting volunteers from both Christian and non-Christian faiths (La Vigne et al., 2007). The FCBI model presents a promising approach to issues of religious diversity that could benefit other faith-based corrections initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Despite the lack of quantitative findings demonstrating any positive effect on recidivism from the FCBI initiative, elements of the model hold value for both faith-based and traditional correctional facilities. The lessons outlined above and others discussed in an earlier report (La Vigne et al., 2007) may prove beneficial to policy makers and corrections officials considering faith-based models. Researchers and decision makers should continue to evaluate faith-based

corrections models, and in particular devote time to clearly defining and tracking outcomes and quantifying program costs. As for the FCBI initiative and others like it, standardized programming that draws in part on proven rehabilitative models could considerably improve program effectiveness while retaining many of the desirable elements of the existing model.

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NOTES

1. Wakulla was converted to an FCBI on March 1, 2006. Because Wakulla has been operating as an FCBI for a shorter period than the other two facilities, it is not included in this study.
2. See Appendix A for a detailed discussion of the qualitative data used in this study. The qualitative data were collected during site visits to Lawtey and Hillsborough in summer 2006, when the FCBI programs at each facility had been operating for over two years.
3. The NICIC review only included programs where, as in the FCBIs, participating inmates were housed separately from the general prison population.
4. As discussed in Note 1, Florida's Wakulla Correctional Institution is also an FCBI but was not included as part of this study.
5. Although participating inmates are primarily Christian, 10% are of non-Christian faiths and 11% are not religious or do not identify with a specific religious affiliation (FDOC, 2008b). The breakdown of religious affiliations among FCBI inmates is fairly similar to the breakdown for the overall Florida prison population (FDOC, 2008a, 2008b).
6. Program participation data provided by the chaplains from October 2006 at Lawtey (n=694 inmates) and from June 2006 at Hillsborough (n=348 inmates) were analyzed.
7. FDOC policy explicitly states that "an inmate's religious faith or lack thereof [is] not... considered" in determining program eligibility (FDOC, 2004).
8. Inmates will be transferred out of the FCBI if they receive a disciplinary report resulting in confinement or an excessive number of overall disciplinary reports. Decisions on expulsion are made on a case-by-case basis and take into account both the number and types of disciplinary reports.
9. Certain faith-based activities, such as religious education classes and small group studies, count toward the program requirement, but weekly religious services, holidays, and special events do not.

10. The qualitative portion of this study indicates that the male experience at Lawtey and the female experience at Hillsborough are different enough, in terms of both environment and program offerings, that the two FCBI should be conceptualized as distinct experiences with potentially differing effects. Prior research also indicates that male and female inmates typically have different characteristics and distinct prison experiences (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003).
11. Some inmates were incarcerated in Lawtey before it was converted to an FCBI and chose to remain there after the conversion. The figures cited here only include time spent in Lawtey when it was an FCBI.
12. It is not possible to know from the dataset whether inmates who were transferred from the FCBI to another prison were moved because they requested to leave the FCBI, because they did not meet the eligibility requirements to remain in the program, or for some other reason, such as being granted work release.
13. Although the FCBI chaplains do track inmate participation in four broad categories of faith-based and character-based programming, their records do not clearly distinguish the amounts and specific types of programming. This precluded quantifying the faith-based, character-based, and secular (vocational, educational, etc.) program participation of inmates in the sample.
14. Inmates in the treatment group could have entered the FCBI facility at any point in time before September 30, 2004, from several months prior to one day prior.
15. The figures cited here only include time spent in Lawtey and Hillsborough when they were FCBI.
16. A report by the FDOC on recidivism among Florida inmates identifies several of the factors used in this study to match the samples as important predictors of reincarceration, particularly age and number of prior incarcerations (FDOC, 2003).
17. Tables showing the characteristics of the treatment and comparison groups are included in Appendix C. The only significant distinction between the groups is that female FCBI inmates served slightly longer sentences than the comparison females, a difference that was statistically significant at the 0.10 level.
18. Although only reincarceration in the state of Florida was analyzed, there is no reason to believe that FCBI inmates are more or less likely than non-FCBI inmates to be reincarcerated in another state as compared with Florida.
19. Outcomes up to 26 months after release were analyzed because all inmates were released from prison at least 26 months prior to the last day for which there are reincarceration data. For time periods beyond 26 months, reincarceration data were not available for all inmates in the treatment and comparison groups.
20. Among male FCBI inmates who were reincarcerated, 44.1% were returned for a technical violation, compared with 39.1% of male inmates in the matched comparison group who were reincarcerated. Among female inmates who were reincarcerated, 62.5% in the FCBI group were reincarcerated for a technical violation, compared with 53.3% in the non-FCBI group. Neither of these differences was statistically significant at the 0.10 level.

21. Some respondents indicated that FCBI inmates are held to higher behavioral standards and written up for more minor offenses than at other FDOC facilities, whereas other respondents reported that officers in the FCBIs are more likely to resolve problems through verbal warnings or other approaches that do not result in a formal disciplinary report.
22. No attempt was made to quantify these costs for the current study.

APPENDIX A: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative data for this study were collected in summer 2006 during site visits to the Hillsborough and Lawtey FCBIs. Interviews were conducted with FCBI staff, management, and volunteers as well as focus groups with FCBI inmates. In addition, the facilities were toured and a handful of faith-based and character-based programs at each facility were observed. These research activities were supplemented with documents and data obtained from the FDOC and information from e-mail and telephone communications with FDOC officials.

To obtain the perspectives of FCBI staff, management, and volunteers, semistructured, one-on-one interviews were conducted that lasted 30 minutes to an hour. At Hillsborough, 22 individuals were interviewed: one upper management staff, two correctional officers, one chaplaincy staff member, four civilian support staff (e.g., medical, mental health, classification), and 14 community volunteers. At Lawtey, 14 individuals were interviewed: two upper management staff, four correctional officers, two chaplaincy staff members, one civilian support staff, and five volunteers.

One 90-minute focus group was conducted at each facility with randomly selected inmates. The Hillsborough focus group included seven participants from Protestant and Catholic Christian faiths. Three participants are Black, three are White, and one is Hispanic. The average age of the participants was 40. At Lawtey, the focus group included six inmates from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths. Two participants are black, two are White, one is Hispanic, and one is multiracial. The average age of the participants was 33.

APPENDIX B: FCBI PROGRAMMING

As mentioned earlier, the range of programming available in the FCBIs varies over time, and each inmate participates in a different set of programs during his or her stay. Nonetheless, a review of the types of programs offered can provide a sense of the scope of activities in which FCBI inmates are involved. Tables B-1 and B-2 provide a snapshot of the programs available at Lawtey and Hillsborough, respectively. The tables divide programming into three categories—

life skills, character building and wellness, and religious programs—a rubric developed (by the authors) for the purpose of more clearly categorizing different program offerings.

Some life skills and wellness programs are funded by the FDOC and taught by FDOC staff or private contractors. Other programs that fall into these categories are provided by community volunteers. Religious programming is offered either by community volunteers or the facility chaplains. Some programs follow established program models or are offered by individuals with expertise in a given field, such as an anger management program led by a volunteer who is a licensed psychologist. Other programs are developed by volunteers, in many cases based on their personal experiences and religious beliefs. The formal qualifications vary among volunteers leading programs. Religious education classes, for example, may be led by a local pastor or other religious leader, a lay member of a religious institution, or even an inmate.

Many of the types of programs listed in Tables B-1 and B-2 are available in other Florida correctional facilities, but the number and range of the religious and character-building programs is much greater in the FCBIs. Certain programs, such as adult basic education, the Modality substance abuse treatment program, and the mandatory reentry transition program, are offered in all FDOC facilities. The availability of most other programming, including offerings such as vocational training, varies from facility to facility.

One notable program offered in both of these FCBI facilities is the mentoring program, in which community members are matched with inmates in an ongoing faith-based mentoring relationship. Mentoring was envisioned as a major component of the FCBI initiative and is explicitly mentioned in the official FDOC policy outlining the FCBI model (FDOC, 2004). During site visits in summer 2006, Hillsborough had 85 mentor-mentee pairings. Lawtey had 150 mentors, but because the demand for mentors exceeded their availability, some Lawtey mentors were working with inmates in small groups rather than one-on-one. Inmates request to participate in the program, and the chaplains pair inmates with mentors who they believe provide a good match. Mentors meet with their mentees weekly, and the relationship may last as long as the individual is incarcerated. Although many mentor–mentee relationships involve a faith element, the vast majority of mentors said their focus was on personal relationship building and individualized support rather than religion.

Table B-1. Programs at Lawtey FCBI

Life Skills	Character Building and Wellness	Religious Programming
Education	Substance abuse treatment	Christian religious services
Adult Basic Education Program	Alcoholics Anonymous	Baptist Church Crusades
Correspondence Courses	Modality Program (official FDOC	Christian Praise/Worship (services
General Education Degree (GED)	substance abuse treatment	offered by 6 ministries)
Program	program)	Hispanic Christian Services
Literacy Program	Narcotics Anonymous	Motorcycle Ministry
Vocational	Overcoming Addictions (faith-	Roman Catholic Mass
Carpentry Class	based)	Other religious services
Computer Class	Wellness programs	Inter-Faith Meditation Group
Drafting Class	Smoking Cessation	Islamic Jumah Prayer
Prison Industries Garment	Wellness Education	Jewish Sabbath Prayer Service
Program	Arts	Native American Sacred Pipe
Reentry	Choir	Service
FDOC Transition Class	Drama	Small group religious study
(mandatory)	Faith-based classes	Catholic Fellowship
Faith-based classes	Anger Management	Christian Bible Study
Financial Peace	Bridge Builders (overcoming	Friendly Faith Sharing (Christian)
GED Tutoring	addictions of all types)	Hebrew-Israelite Bible Study
Preparing for Employment	Laughter From Purity (exiting	Hispanic Christian Bible study
Toastmasters (public speaking)	same-sex relationships)	Islamic Taleem Studies
WorkNet	Manhood Series	Jehovah Witness Bible Study &
Libraries	Parenting Class	Prayer
Institutional Library	Practical Christian Living	Jewish Torah Studies
Law Library	Taking Responsibility	Native American Spirituality Class
	Other	Roman Catholic Catechism
	Seeing-Eye Dog Training Class	Studies
		Scientology Studies
		Libraries
		Audio-Visual Library
		Chapel Library
		Other
		Holy Day Observances (All
		Faiths)
		Faith-based Mentoring Program

Source: This table is based on a program list provided by the Lawtey Chaplain's Office on February 1, 2007, as well as information from the FDOC Web site (FDOC, 2007b).

Table B-2. Programs at Hillsborough FCBI

Life Skills	Character Building and Wellness	Religious Programming
Education Adult Basic Education Program General Education Degree (GED) Program Literacy Program Correspondence Courses	Substance abuse treatment Alcoholics Anonymous Modality Program (official FDOC substance abuse treatment program)	Christian religious services Christian Ministries (services offered by 20 ministries) Frontline Film Fest Ministry Full Gospel Business Men Hispanic Jail Ministry Kairos International Praise in Motion Dancers Roman Catholic Mass
Vocational Carpentry Class Cabinetmaking Class Commercial Foods/Culinary Arts	Wellness programs ESUBA (program for victims of abuse) Wellness & Health Betterment Women’s Health	Other religious services/study
Reentry FDOC Transition Class (mandatory)	Arts Art Choir Creative Writing Voice Training	Buddhist Instruction (as needed) Christian Bible Study (services offered by 3 ministries) Hispanic Bible Study Islamic Jumah Prayer Islamic Taleem Studies Jehovah’s Witness Bible Study/Prayer Purpose Driven Life Roman Catholic Bible Study Wiccan Instruction (as needed)
Faith-based classes Finances Life Skills	Other	
Libraries Institutional Library Law Library	Anger Management Celebrate Recovery Etiquette Grief and Loss Healthy Relationships Parenting Root Issues Second Chances (self transformation) Self Esteem Spiritual Journaling Story Time Moms Tackling Tough Skills	Libraries Audio-Visual Library Chapel Library
Other Junior Achievement Head Start for Success PROP		Other Faith-based Mentoring Program

Source: This table is based on a program list provided by the Hillsborough Chaplain’s Office on June 22, 2006, as well as information from the FDOC Web site (FDOC, 2007a).

**APPENDIX C:
STATISTICAL FINDINGS**

Characteristics of FCBI Inmates

Inmates housed in Lawtey and Hillsborough FCBIs on September 30, 2004 (n=696 males, 261 females) were compared with all other individuals incarcerated in Florida prisons on that date (n=74,006 males, 4,802 females)—except the 2,023 male inmates and 284 female inmates on the FCBI waitlist, who were excluded from the analysis. Tables C-1 and C-2 present the characteristics of the FCBI and general population inmates.

Table C-1. FCBI and General Population Inmate Characteristics

Variable	Proportion of Males			Proportion of Females		
	FCBI Inmates	General Population	Difference	FCBI Inmates	General Population	Difference
Race						
% White	42.0	44.9	2.9	59.4	51.8	7.6 **
% African American	55.0	52.2	2.8	37.9	42.9	5.0
% Hispanic	2.6	2.5	0.1	2.7	4.8	2.1
Primary Offense						
% Violent	28.6	53.6	25.0 **	37.2	34.5	2.7
% Murder/Manslaughter	4.3	13.7	9.4 **	7.3	12.4	5.1 **
% Sex Crime	0	12.2	12.2 **	0	1.6	1.6 **
% Drug Crime	32.0	18.7	13.3 **	27.2	29.4	2.2

Table C-2. FCBI and General Population Inmate Characteristics

Variable	Males – Mean Values			Females – Mean Values		
	FCBI Inmates	General Population	Difference	FCBI Inmates	General Population	Difference
Age (years)	36.5	36.0	0.5	37.6	35.8	1.8 **
Number of prior incarcerations	1.27	1.09	0.19 **	0.72	0.65	0.07
Time in prison (months)	34.1	56.7	22.6 **	25.2	27.0	1.8
Time until expected release (months)	24.4	57.5	33.1 **	22.1	29.6	7.5 **
Sentence (months)	58.5	99.8	41.3 **	47.3	51.1	3.8

Notes: All data reflect inmate characteristics as of September 30, 2004. There are nine primary offense categories: murder/manslaughter, sex crimes, drug crimes, robbery, burglary, property theft/fraud/damage, violent – other, weapons, and other. The four categories included in Table C-1 are those for which the greatest differences between the groups were observed. Sentences were calculated as the difference between the admission date and the expected release date.

* indicates differences that are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.10$.

** indicates differences that are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

Treatment and Comparison Groups

To create a comparison group, FCBI inmates were matched to inmates from the general prison population on the following factors: gender, age, race, primary offense type, violent or nonviolent offense, number of prior incarcerations, time served, and disciplinary report rate. As shown in Tables C-3 and C-4, there was only one statistically significant difference (at the 0.10 level) between the treatment and comparison groups on the factors used to match the groups.

Table C-3. Treatment and Comparison Group Characteristics

Variable	Proportion of Males			Proportion of Females		
	FCBI Inmates	General Population	Difference	FCBI Inmates	General Population	Difference
Race						
% White	38.1	38.1	0	58.0	58.0	0
% African American	59.8	59.8	0	39.0	39.0	0
% Hispanic	2.1	2.1	0	3.0	3.0	0
Primary Offense						
% Violent	28.6	28.6	0	31.0	31.0	0
% Murder/Manslaughter	2.6	2.6	0	3.0	3.0	0
% Sex Crime	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Drug Crime	30.7	30.7	0	24.0	24.0	0

Table C-4. Treatment and Comparison Group Characteristics

Variable	Males – Mean Values			Females – Mean Values		
	FCBI Inmates	General Population	Difference	FCBI Inmates	General Population	Difference
Age (years)	37.5	37.3	0.1	38.3	37.3	1.0
Number of prior incarcerations	1.25	1.23	0.03	0.73	0.70	0.03
Time served (months)	42.8	39.9	2.9	33.6	27.7	5.9 *
In-prison disciplinary rate (reports per month)	0.030	0.022	0.008	0.078	0.069	0.009

Notes. All data reflect inmate characteristics as of September 30, 2004, except time served, which is the actual time served from the beginning of the incarceration through release. See the notes on the previous page for a description of the primary offense categories. The disciplinary rate measures an inmate's in-prison behavior prior to receiving treatment and is calculated as the number of disciplinary reports received per month during the current incarceration prior to entering the FCBI (for FCBI inmates) or prior to the study start date of September 30, 2004 (for non-FCBI inmates).

* indicates differences that are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.10$.

** indicates differences that are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

Recidivism Outcomes

The reincarceration outcomes of the treatment and comparison groups were analyzed at 12, 18, 24, and 26 months after release from prison. Tables C-5 and C-6 present findings from the chi-square tests for males and females, respectively. No statistically significant differences were found between the groups.

Table C-5. Reincarceration Outcomes of Male FCBI Inmates and a Matched Comparison Group

Returned to prison within	FCBI Inmates (n=189)	Comparison Group (n=189)	Chi-square Value	Statistical Significance
12 months	8 4.2%	8 4.2%	0.000	1.000
18 months	20 10.6%	19 10.1%	0.029	0.866
24 months	23 12.2%	32 16.9%	1.724	0.189
26 months	27 14.3%	34 18.0%	0.958	0.328

Table C-6 Reincarceration Outcomes of Female FCBI Inmates and a Matched Comparison Group

Returned to prison within	FCBI Inmates (n=189)	Comparison Group (n=189)	Chi-square Value	Statistical Significance
12 months	4 4.0%	7 7.0%	0.866	0.352
18 months	9 9.0%	8 8.0%	0.064	0.800
24 months	14 14.0%	11 11.0%	0.411	0.521
26 months	15 15.0%	12 12.0%	0.385	0.535

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