

**ABSTRACT**

UDC: 376:37.01:282

DOI: 10.26697/ijes.2020.2.21

**The Impact of Religious Education on Prisoners**Professor **Vasylenko O. V.**<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>*National Academy of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, Ukraine***Background:**

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. So, religious training may be of great importance to rehabilitate and reform the offender. 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. So, it is essential to analyze the role and impact of the religious education on the convicted.

**Methods:**

For conducting the research there has been analyzed scientific literature, legal documents and practice of chaplains' work in prisons, social and educational impact of religion on inmates in correctional institutions.

**Results:**

Religious education can certainly be considered as one method of bringing about reform and rehabilitation of increasing prison population. A very important reason why inmates become involved with religion is the many psychological and emotional benefits. 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 and can improve their own self-concept if they practice religion while incarcerated. In addition to that, inmates also can use religion to help change their behavior. Because serious religious involvement promotes self-discipline, self-introspection, and concern for others, many feel that inmates can acquire a number of positive characteristics from the practice of religion in prison. The positive characteristics include psychological peace of mind, positive self-concept, and improvements in self-control and intellectual abilities. According to the national law, 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.

Most of the direct influence of religion in corrections has been accomplished through the work of correctional Chaplains. 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. 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. Young prisoners 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. 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.

**Conclusions:**

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.

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