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# Criminal Rehabilitation: The Impact of Religious Programming

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In spite of their prevalence in correctional institutions, religious programs have been the subject of limited independent assessment. The purpose of the current study was to examine the outcomes of the Kairos Short Course, a Christian religious course offered to prison inmates that aims to engage participants in examination and meditation on their experiences, as well as the fostering of skills such as forgiveness and empathic responsiveness. A sample of 38 inmates (20 assigned to attend the Kairos Short Course and 18 serving as a waiting-list comparison) at a medium security prison participated in the evaluation and were assessed prior to and following completion of the Course on measures of criminal thinking, empathy, self reflection, treatment readiness, and forgiveness of self and others. No clear evidence of change on any of these measures was found. These results are of interest in the context of the growing need for service providers to demonstrate that their programs are evidence-based and contribute to the community safety goals of most correctional agencies. It is concluded that such results should temper some of the more enthusiastic claims of some providers of religious programs to prisoners that such programs are successful in rehabilitating large numbers of offenders.

Many members of the community hold strong views about what should happen to those who break the law, act in ways that hurt or harm others, or are antisocial in other respects. Often our views on what should be considered as an appropriate response to antisocial behaviour derive from the values that we hold, and our beliefs about basic issues relating to personal responsibility. It has been suggested that such values and beliefs also exert a profound influence on public policy relating to initiatives designed to re-integrate serious offenders back into the community, and on the ways in which offender rehabilitation programs are actually delivered by psychologists and social workers (see Day & Ward, 2010). At the same time, however, programs are commonly offered to prisoners by volunteers who are motivated to work with offenders by their religious convictions,

belief in the values of compassion and forgiveness, and desire to make a difference to the communities in which they live.

Religious programs are often regarded with suspicion by correctional authorities, and proponents may experience difficulties in setting up programs and gaining access to prisoners. Religious programs for offenders, while framed in the language of offender rehabilitation, remain largely unevaluated and thus unlikely to conform to the evidence based standards required for their accreditation by correctional administrations. In this paper, we describe an attempt to evaluate one such program, the Kairos Short Course (Kairos Prison Ministry Australia, 2002). Whilst the data reported here are largely inconclusive and unpersuasive, the attempt to evaluate is important, and should be of interest to those with views (both positive and negative) about the potential value of religious programs in the correctional environment.

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The Kairos Short Course is a three-and-a-half day intervention offered to male and female offenders in correctional institutions by Kairos Prison Ministry Australia, an interdenominational Christian ministry operating within Australian prisons. Potential participants are identified by prison chaplains and staff, with a focus on recruiting those inmates who are seen as being leaders (inmates "who have the greatest impact" on other prisoners, positive or negative; Kairos Prison Ministry Australia, 2002, p. 20) in within the institution. The course is run by a team of volunteers who undergo a minimum of two

months of training. A director leads the course, and a number of team members sit with a group of offenders (in a "Table Group"), engaging them in the group work component of the course. The course is highly structured with the content and processes set out in the manual (Kairos Prison Ministry Australia, 2002), allowing for uniform delivery. The Course is designed to be an introduction to the principles of the Kairos Ministry, and "consists of the presentation of a Short Course in Christianity for the selected residents" (p. 5). More specifically, the purpose of the Course is to introduce/re-introduce participants to a Christian way of live, with the Course a precursor for further development. The aims of the Course are to engage participants in self-reflection, meditation, and sharing of experience within a formed community consisting of other offenders and Kairos team members. Scripture provides a means for reflection, discussion, and group work based on forming a relationship with God, contemplation of past and current ways of thinking and feeling, as well as particular behaviours such as forgiveness of self and others and empathic responsiveness. On completion, participants are invited to form prayer groups which meet weekly within the institution, attend reunions and retreats, as well as take part in a more intensive program, the Kairos Journey Program. The organization claims that this "fosters perseverance and continuing Christian growth through community [within the prison] involvement" (p. 7).

### **The Current Evidence Base**

Johnson, Larson, and Pitts (1997) have suggested that "religious programs for inmates are not only among the oldest but also among the most common forms of rehabilitative programs found in correctional facilities today" (p. 146), and yet in spite of their prevalence have rarely been the subject of evaluation. While a more general literature has developed on the relationship between religion and crime (e.g., see meta-analysis by Baier & Wright, 2001), and more recent research has examined incarcerated individuals, their offences and religious/spiritual orientation (e.g., Fernander, Wilson, Staton, & Leukefeld, 2005), there is a paucity of systematic research on the relationship between prison religious practice and key outcomes important to a rehabilitative or correctional framework. This is in spite of the claims of Johnson et al. and others, as well as research indicating the widespread use of such

programs. For example, O'Connor and Perryclear (2002) reported that in 1996, 49% of inmates at the Leiber Correctional Institution had attended a religious-based program or service (e.g., bible study, worship, substance use programs), with at least 23 different religious programs being run at that institution during that year.

Increasing theoretical attention has been devoted to the use of such programs in a correctional institution (e.g., O'Connor, 2004, 2004-2005; Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006). Empirical research does exist, and has tended to examine the effects of religious programs in a prison setting on outcomes such as institutional behaviour (e.g., Kerley, Matthews & Blanchard, 2005) and recidivism (e.g., Johnson, 2004). Generally effects have been found to be modest (see O'Connor, 2004-2005, O'Connor & Perryclear, 2002).

In a review by O'Connor and Perryclear (2002) of studies which examined the outcomes (in-prison infractions, recidivism, adjustment) of prison religious involvement, the researchers concluded that:

The few studies that have looked directly at the influence of religion on adult offender rehabilitation tend to follow the same pattern as the wider body of literature—some evidence of a significant relationship between religious involvement and rehabilitation, accompanied by methodological weaknesses that leave unanswered questions and inconclusive findings. (p. 13)

Of six studies reviewed, the researchers classified three studies as supportive of the hypothesis of a relationship between religious involvement and desirable correctional outcomes, two as not providing support, and one demonstrated mixed support. Programs reviewed were run by various groups such as Prison Fellowship Ministries (PFM), and issues such as selection of participants, correctional setting, level of program intensity, and offender characteristics (e.g., gender and risk) were highlighted as important to consider when examining results. Since this review, research has continued. For example, Johnson (2004; Johnson et al., 1997, which was addressed in the review), for example, examined religious program attendance at four New York State correctional institutions and found that participants who attended a Prison Fellowship program with some level of intensity (e.g., 5-10 attendances)

evidenced differences on prison infractions and recidivism at one year (Johnson et al., 1997), although the effects of this seemed to diminish after 2-3 years post release (Johnson, 2004).

### Evaluation Focus

This evaluation takes somewhat of a different focus to those previous evaluations investigating in-prison behaviour and recidivism. Instead, the evaluation attempted to assess whether changes on measures of constructs suggested to be important to criminal offending occurred for those who completed the Course. While the Kairos Short Course is not theoretically based on models of offending and treatment-related principles, and delivered by a group who are not trained in the provision of psychological treatment programs to offenders, the course is consistent with some of the dominant intervention principles from which rehabilitation programs are derived. This is particularly apparent in the design and delivery of the program being highly structured (Day & Howells, 2002; Hollin, 1995), and with a strong focus on the relationship between program deliverers and participants (Ward & Brown, 2004). Similarly, the Course attempts to challenge criminal attitudes and build empathy (both of which are considered criminogenic need factors; Andrews & Bonta, 2006), and its approach in other areas such as forgiveness and the self-reflective nature of the program could be of potential value and lead to increases in engagement and readiness for subsequent treatment and intervention (Day, Bryan, Davey & Casey, 2006; Day, Gerace, Wilson, & Howells, 2008; Ward, Day, Howells & Birgden, 2004).

The focus of this evaluation, then, given the purpose of the course and important aspects of offender treatment highlighted in the literature were: (1) criminal thoughts and thinking styles related to offending; (2) empathy; (3) self-reflection (4) increases in readiness for treatment; and (5) forgiveness. It was hypothesised that course participants would report greater decreases on reported criminal thinking styles, while increasing on self-reported empathy, readiness for participation in treatment programs, and forgiveness of both self and others than those who did not take part in the program. In addition, it was hypothesised that course participants would increase in levels of self-reflection.

Although there have been some previous published evaluations of courses run by the Kairos Prison Ministry (see Caliber Associates, 2004a,

2004b, 2004c), none of these have employed a quasi-experimental design, or met the methodological rigor for evaluation design required by correctional services.

### Method

#### Participants

A sample of 38 male inmates at a medium security prison in regional South Australia took part in the evaluation. Participants were randomly assigned to attend the Kairos Short Course ( $n = 20$ ) or to a waiting-list for a later Short Course (serving as the waiting-list control group for purposes of this evaluation;  $n = 18$ ). The mean age of the Kairos Short Course participants was 34.93 years ( $SD = 10.59$ ;  $Range = 20-53$ ), and for the Control Group 37.38 years ( $SD = 11.41$ ;  $Range = 19-59$ ). Participants in both groups were predominantly Caucasian Australian (six participants in the Kairos Short Course group and four in the Control Group were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent).

The majority of participants recorded a violent index offence (three participants in each group recorded a non-violent index offence). The most common violent index offences were assault and robbery. Six participants in the Kairos Course group and one in the Control Group had been convicted of homicide. Of the non-violent index offences recorded, the most common were larceny/theft offences, and those related to criminal trespass. Length of sentence for Kairos Short Course participants ranged from 6-283 months ( $M = 69.05$ ;  $SD = 70.17$ ) and for Control Group participants 11-242 months ( $M = 64.18$ ;  $SD = 62.66$ ) based on Conditional Release Date (CRD). At the time of the evaluation, Kairos Short Course participants had served a mean of 39.20 months of their sentence ( $SD = 40.60$ ;  $Range = 4-139$ ) and Control Group participants had served a mean of 29.61 months ( $SD = 34.49$ ;  $Range = 5-116$ ). Three Kairos Course participants and one Control Group participant were serving their first custodial sentence. There were no significant differences (at  $p < .05$ ) between groups on age, length of sentence, and sentence served, and both groups appeared to be generally comparable in terms of their index offence.

#### Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaire at both pre- (one week before the Course commenced) and post-test (one week after completion) individually, in a small group setting.

During these sessions, facilitators were available to assist participants with any problems in questionnaire completion. Allocation to either the program or the waiting list (control) groups was random (during the pre-test session, participants chose a slip of paper from a box).

### Materials

All measures were administered at pre-test and post-test, with the exception of measures of treatment engagement and past experience reflection which were administered only to Kairos participants at post-test. Measures are described (below) in their order of presentation to participants.

**Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles** (Version 4.0) (PICTS; Walters, 2001). The PICTS is an 80-item measure of thinking suggested to be supportive of a criminal lifestyle. The two general content scales (the Current Criminal Thinking and Historical Criminal Thinking scales) were utilized in the current investigation. The Current Criminal Thinking scale measures identification with a criminal belief system, and is suggested by Walters (2001) to be the best predictor in the measure of future criminal involvement. Participants are asked to indicate their agreement with items using a 0-4 Likert-type response scale. Scores can range between 13-52 (Current Criminal Thinking) and 12-48 (Historical Criminal Thinking). Walters (2001) reported internal consistency reliabilities for the scales with a group of 450 minimum, medium, and maximum security male prisoners above .80.

**Interpersonal Reactivity Index** (IRI; Davis, 1980). The IRI is a 28-item measure consisting of four subscales which assess an individual's disposition to experience various components of empathy. For the present investigation, only the Perspective-Taking scale and Empathic Concern scales were used. The Perspective-Taking scale measures ability in adopting alternative viewpoints or the perspectives of others, while the Empathic Concern scale measures propensity to experience other-oriented feelings such as warmth and compassion. Participants utilized a 1-5 Likert-type response scale, with possible scores ranging between 7-35 (higher scores indicative of empathic disposition and responsiveness). Davis (1980) reported internal consistency reliabilities of above .70 in his final male validation sample.

**Self-Reflection and Insight Scale** (SRIS; Grant, Franklin & Langford, 2002). The SRIS is a

20-item measure of private self-consciousness, particularly self-reflection and insight. The Self-Reflection scale (SRIS-SR; 12 items) measures the individual's propensity to engage in reflection on their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, as well as the extent to which the individual feels that they need to engage in this process. The Insight scale (SRIS-IN; eight items) measures an individual's understanding of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Scores on the SRIS-SR can range from 12 to 60, with scores on the SRIS-IN scale ranging from 8 to 40 (both scales require some items to be reverse coded). In initial validation work, Grant et al. (2002) reported internal consistency reliabilities ranging from .71 to .91 for the scales, and found that the two scales were either non-significantly correlated (in one validation), or significantly negatively correlated (in another validation).

**Rumination-Reflection Questionnaire** (RRQ; Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). The RRQ is a 24-item measure of two types of self-consciousness: neurotic or anxious self-focus (rumination) and more epistemic or curious self-reflection (reflection). For the purposes of the present investigation, only the 12-item Rumination scale was utilized. Participants utilize a 1 to 5 Likert-type response scale, and scores can range from 12-60. Validation of the Rumination scale demonstrated internal consistency reliability of .90 (Trapnell & Campbell, 1999).

**Corrections Victoria Treatment Readiness Questionnaire** (CVTRQ; Casey, Day, Howells & Ward, 2007). The CVTRQ is a 20-item measure which assesses readiness to engage in a treatment program and characteristics of the individual which are likely to enhance change. The measure assesses four components of readiness: Attitudes and Motivation, Emotional Reactions, Offending Beliefs, and Efficacy. Respondents utilize a 1 to 5 Likert-type response scale and a total score can range from 20-100 (total score). In validation work on the measure, internal consistency reliability of .83 was reported (Casey et al., 2007).

**Forgiveness of Self and Forgiveness of Others** (Mauger, 1991). The Forgiveness of Self (FS) and Forgiveness of Others (FO) scales (15 items each) measure an individual's propensity to experience emotions and cognitions, and to enact behaviours, related to forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others, respectively. The scales were developed as part of a wider inventory of personality, the Behavior Assessment System I (Mauger,



1991). Participants utilized a 1-5 Likert-type response scale, and scores could range from 15-75 (higher scores indicate lesser forgiveness). Mauger et al. (1992) reported internal consistency reliabilities of .82 (Forgiveness of Self) and .79 (Forgiveness of Others).

**Paulhus Deception Scales: The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding** (PDS; Paulhus, 1998). The PDS is a 40-item measure which assesses the tendency to respond in a socially-desirable manner to self-report instruments. In order to examine self-enhancement on a test battery, the Impression Management (IM; 20 items) scale is typically used. The IM scale measures the tendency to give inflated self-descriptions in situationally-demanding contexts. A 1-5 Likert-type response scale is utilized, and a total score on the scale can range from 0-20. Paulhus (1998) reported internal consistency reliabilities above .70 with a number of populations for the individual subscales, as well as for the scale as a whole.

**Treatment Engagement** (Casey et al., 2007; post-test measure only). The Treatment Engagement measure (17 items) examines participant engagement in a treatment program and perceptions of the treatment process. The measure was amended to reflect the nature of the Kairos Course (the measure was originally devised to measure engagement in a cognitive skills program), with wording and keying of some items changed. The measure consists of three subscales assessing: the formation of a therapeutic alliance (Alliance, 8 items, with scores ranging from 8 to 40), the efficacy of group processes (Group Process; 4 items, with scores ranging from 4 to 20), and confidence in changing one's offending behaviour (Confidence; 5 items, with scores ranging from 5 to 25) (with relevant items reverse coded). Participants utilize a 1-5 Likert-type response scale, and a total score (all subscales summed) can range from 17 to 85. Internal consistency reliabilities reported for the subscales ranged from .83 to .89, with .90 reported for the total scale (Casey et al., 2007). This scale was only administered to the Kairos Short Course participants at post-test.

**Past Experience Measure** (post-test measure only). Given the strong focus on reflection on past experiences and ways of thinking and feeling within the Course, a seven-item Past Experience Measure (utilizing a 1-5 Likert-type response scale, and scores could range from 7-35) was devised and administered at post-test.

The scale was used to assess the extent to which participants in the course reflected on their past experiences and aspects of relevance of these experiences to the Kairos Short Course.

## Results

While 38 participants (20 Kairos Short Course, 18 Control Group) completed the questionnaire at pre-test, only 30 (16 Kairos Short Course and 14 Control participants) completed the questionnaire at post-test. Data screening (for missing values across variables, univariate and multivariate outliers and using the Paulhus (1998) IM cut-off of > 12 to gauge socially-desirable responding) led to a final sample of 24 participants for the present analysis. A mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance was conducted to investigate whether changes were evident in the Kairos Short Course Group relative to the Control Group (interaction effects) on the measures of interest.

There were no statistically significant univariate interaction effects revealed in scores from pre-test to post-test for Kairos Course participants in comparison to Control participants. Contrary to predictions, empathy (perspective taking and empathic concern) did not increase significantly for the Kairos participants relative to the Control participants, and the mean scores demonstrate a slight linear decrease for the Kairos participants relative to the Control participants for whom scores slightly increased (for perspective taking and empathic concern  $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .05$ ), and insight also slightly decreased for the Kairos Course participants relative to the Control participants who remained fairly stable ( $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .04$ ). Rumination increased slightly for the Kairos Course Participants as did scores on the measure of treatment readiness, and forgiveness. The effect sizes for current criminal thinking, historical criminal thinking, and self-forgiveness were small.

### Engagement with the Kairos Course

Engagement with the Kairos Course was measured in two ways: through the Treatment Engagement Measure (Casey et al., 2007), and the Past Experience Measure. Across the three domains, participants in the Course ( $n = 15$ ) rated highly the relationship which they had formed with the Kairos team members (Alliance;  $M = 34.79$ ,  $SD = 4.06$ ;  $Range = 28-40$ ), the functioning of their individual table groups (Group Process;  $M = 17.87$ ,  $SD = 1.88$ ;  $Range =$

**Table 1**  
*Within-subject, interaction, and between-subject effects for KAIROS Course and Control participants are pre-test and post-test.*

	Time	Group	Mean (SD)	Within		Interaction		Between				
				$R(df_1, df_2)$	p <	$\eta^2$	$R(df_1, df_2)$	p <	$\eta^2$	$R(df_1, df_2)$	p <	$\eta^2$
Current Criminal Thinking	Pre-test	Kairos	26.45 (6.70)	1.23(1,22)	.28	.05	.40(1,22)	.53	.02	.38(1,22)	.54	.02
	Post-test	Control	27.48 (7.21)									
Historical Criminal Thinking	Pre-test	Kairos	24.71 (5.89)	3.76(1,22)	.06	.15	.11(1,22)	.75	.01	.03(1,22)	.87	<.01
	Post-test	Control	27.00 (7.93)									
Perspective Taking	Pre-test	Kairos	25.57 (10.29)	.01(1,22)	.91	<.01	1.06(1,22)	.32	.05	3.22(1,22)	.09	.13
	Post-test	Control	23.17 (7.89)									
Empathic Concern	Pre-test	Kairos	26.18 (4.29)	.03(1,22)	.86	<.01	1.08(1,22)	.31	.05	2.53(1,22)	.13	.10
	Post-test	Control	21.92 (5.38)									
Self-reflection	Pre-test	Kairos	22.67 (5.41)	7.99(1,22)	.01*	.27	.78(1,22)	.39	.03	2.30(1,22)	.14	.10
	Post-test	Control	27.39 (3.15)									
Insight	Pre-test	Kairos	23.92 (3.77)	1.01(1,22)	.33	.04	.88(1,22)	.36	.04	4.79(1,22)	.04*	.18
	Post-test	Control	26.31 (4.04)									
Rumination	Pre-test	Kairos	24.68 (6.10)	.33(1,22)	.57	.02	2.19	.15	.09	.38(1,22)	.55	.02
	Post-test	Control	25.46 (5.55)									
Treatment Readiness	Pre-test	Kairos	28.91 (5.47)	.03(1,22)	.87	<.01	2.28(1,22)	.15	.09	1.03(1,22)	.32	.05
	Post-test	Control	25.40 (4.30)									
Self-forgiveness	Pre-test	Kairos	37.52 (11.24)	2.89(1,22)	.10	.12	.05(1,22)	.84	<.01	2.67(1,22)	.12	.11
	Post-test	Control	42.62 (11.92)									
Other-forgiveness	Pre-test	Kairos	39.06 (8.99)	.27(1,22)	.61	.01	1.06(1,22)	.31	.05	.33(1,22)	.57	.02
	Post-test	Control	39.13 (11.64)									
	Pre-test	Kairos	73.58 (10.79)									
	Post-test	Control	80.40 (8.31)									
	Pre-test	Kairos	77.18 (9.90)									
	Post-test	Control	77.52 (11.15)									
	Pre-test	Kairos	45.82 (9.41)									
	Post-test	Control	50.99 (6.56)									
	Pre-test	Kairos	49.18 (9.68)									
	Post-test	Control	53.62 (7.83)									
	Pre-test	Kairos	43.73 (15.21)									
	Post-test	Control	48.50 (9.62)									
	Pre-test	Kairos	44.73 (13.14)									
	Post-test	Control	45.49 (12.47)									

Note: \*  $p < .05$

14-20), as well as reporting high confidence in being better able to deal with problems related to their offending (Confidence;  $M = 21.87$ ,  $SD = 2.75$ ;  $Range = 15-25$ ). Overall, a high level of treatment engagement was reported ( $M = 74.52$ ,  $SD = 7.23$ ;  $Range = 64-85$ ). Similarly, participants rated (using the Past Experience Measure) high the extent to which they reflected on their past experiences, behaviours, thoughts and feelings during the course ( $M = 29.80$ ;  $SD = 3.70$ ,  $Range = 24-35$ ).

### Discussion

This article reports data from an evaluation of a religious program delivered to medium secure male prisoners. The evaluation was designed in such a way as to provide data about the likely effects of the program on risk of re-offending, and thus satisfy the correctional requirements to accredit such programs to be delivered in prison facilities. Measures were selected that while not directly related to program content were well-validated for use with this population and assessed domains which were likely to be relevant both to the Kairos program and to the likelihood of re-offending. In addition, a quasi-experimental design was employed and appropriate methods employed to manage missing data and socially desirable responding.

The results of the evaluation, however, were far from conclusive. Few statistically significant changes were observed from pre-test to post-test between those who completed the Kairos Short Course and the Control participants, and the pattern of results provided no clear evidence that the program should be regarded as a successful rehabilitative initiative. Indeed, the results suggested either that the program does not 'work' or that more data is required to achieve sufficient levels of statistical power to confirm or refute the hypotheses. Of course a major limitation of the evaluation is the relatively small sample sizes and consequent low statistical power. It may be that a clearer pattern of results might have been obtained if a larger sample had been recruited. However, in practical terms this is difficult. This evaluation was conducted on behalf of the correctional agency to inform their decision making in relation to whether future faith based programs should be given access to prisoner population. Permission was only granted to collect data on one program cohort, and the sample size was not unusual for in house correctional

program evaluations, the majority of which do not utilise no-treatment comparison groups.

In terms of the wider area of examination of prison faith-based programs, the present study would have benefited from more in-depth reports of participant perceptions of the program. The present study collected information on program engagement, but a qualitative methodology could provide particularly useful additional data. At the end of the Course participants discuss their experiences with other members, prison staff, and guests invited into the prison (e.g., family, friends) at a final gathering. The participants from the present Course reported at this event many positive experiences, and such anecdotal perceptions could be fruitfully investigated using a more structured methodology. In addition, changes (if any) over a greater period of time are important to consider. Kerley and Copes (2009) found that maintenance of changes in attitudes, outlook and religious practice following religious conversion in prison is complex and often involves seeking social support and contact from other religious inmates and those involved in program provision or outside of the prison (e.g., family), as well sharing religious faith with others.

O'Connor and Perryclear (2002) posit that involvement in religious programs facilitates the building of social attachment and prosocial learning through interaction with volunteer communities who serve as models of prosocial attachment and behaviour. However, in a longitudinal study of religiosity and desistance from crime from adolescence to adulthood, Giordano, Longmore, Schroeder, and Seffrin (2008) found that spirituality (in this study, perceived closeness to God) and religious service attendance at church services did not predict desistance from crime, and marital (relationship) happiness was relatively weak in predicting desistance, although criminal behaviour of the participant's partner and/or friends negatively predicted desistance. The researchers suggested that it is important to address factors such as integration into a church community (not just attendance), as well as how private religious beliefs interact with social aspects (e.g., support, challenge to beliefs) and affect attitudes and behavioural change. Future work could examine the ways in which social processes of change, group influence and related social psychological and clinical principles (e.g., assimilation and accommodation of problematic experiences; see



Stiles et al., 1990) interact in the prison religious environment.

Finally, measures of religiosity or spirituality were not collected (Hill & Hood, 1999). While those with such an orientation may have been particularly motivated to attend the course, the Kairos Short Course does not attempt to recruit solely those with some background in organized or personal religious practice, or any particular background related to this. It is important, however, to consider the selection of participants in the program, where a focus is on obtaining "leaders" who will then go back into the correctional environment with the purpose of effect change may mean that there is initial resistance to change, as well as particular reasons for program involvement (see Dammer, 2002).

In conclusion though, it is helpful to reflect on some of the claims made by the more vocal proponents of Christian ministry program in correctional institutions. In the US for example, the Prison Fellowship (2010) "walks with prisoners through the different stages of their journey. We start with them inside prison, as they learn new values based on the life and teaching of Christ and how to apply them". The mission of Kairos Prison Ministry International (2010) is to "bring Christ's love and forgiveness to all incarcerated individuals, their families and those who work with them, and to assist in the transition of becoming a productive citizen". Implicit in such statements is a belief in the role that prison ministry can play in successfully rehabilitating offenders. This evaluation shows that demonstrating this success in ways that are likely to satisfy the evidence-based requirements of most correctional agencies is far from a straightforward enterprise.

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