



The Well

A gathering place for the CCJC community...

Fall 2007

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Editorial

*When our President, Jane Griffiths, chose the theme for CCJC’s Annual General Meeting this year, I did not think it would so accurately reflect the climate of 2007 for organizations working in criminal justice. “For a time such as this...” was appropriate in May and, as we enter December, trying to move as fast as possible to follow the overwhelming news, it is still what describes the atmosphere. This issue of **The Well** is dedicated to a time when Canada gets “tougher” without really understanding why.*

In this extra long edition, you will find excellent contributions from long-time supporters. Many thanks to all of them for making this issue such an interesting read. You will be able to learn more about what CCJC is doing to follow-up on last May’s Victims’ Symposium in an article written by [James Loewen](#). Also, [Emile Therien](#) kindly allowed us to publish an article she wrote for the Hill Times discussing the elimination of conditional sentence for cases of impaired driving causing death or bodily harm. [Wayne Northey](#) shared his views on “Stricken By God” and Meredith Egan recommended the very timely “The Death of Innocents”. In addition, articles contributed by our staff include topics such as recent [legislative changes](#), [crime prevention through social development](#), the [death penalty](#), and a new project to tour the [Justice Storytelling Quilt](#) across art galleries in Ontario.

I would like to thank those who provided feedback on the previous issue and encourage everyone to comment on this one as well. We hope you will enjoy the read!

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Soul Food

*Human beings suffer,
They torture one another,
They get hurt and get hard.
No poem or play or song
Can fully right a wrong
Inflicted and endured.*

*The innocent in gaols,
Beat on their bars together.
A hunger striker's father
Stands in the graveyard dumb.
The police widow in veils
Faints at the funeral home.*

*History says, Don't hope
On this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.*

*So hope for a great sea-change
On the far side of revenge.
Believe that a further shore
Is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles
And cures and healing wells.*

From: The Chorus in The Cure at Troy
By Seamus Heaney

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Policy update – A “tough” Canada

CCJC's views on the most recent developments...

By Maristela Carrara

In October of this year, Canada's government introduced its [Tackling Violent Crime Act](#) – Bill C-2 – into the House of Commons. This Bill includes changes to increase mandatory minimum sentences and harsher penalties for gun crimes. Because it was declared a confidence motion, and there is no openness to discuss possible amendments, opposition parties are required to choose between passing it as is or facing a new election campaign.

These steps were taken after several attempts to toughen the Canadian Criminal Code. Bill C-10, for instance, which increased mandatory minimum sentences, was amended last fall due to public pressure. It was reintroduced in April as if those amendments had never happened, and did not have a chance to pass before parliament was prorogued. As Lorraine Berzins indicated in the previous issue of this newsletter, “the original proposals of these government bills were amended by the Parliamentary Committee for very good reasons: research evidence, flaws in technical design, and the values of Canadians”. Now, with the introduction of [Bill C-2](#), these Bills might pass as if there were no flaws in its design.

Organizations such as CCJC were given a chance to submit their views to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-2. The Committee also heard witnesses appointed by each political party during the week of November 13. CCJC's Brief to the Committee is available through this [link](#). In sum, we recommended the following actions:

1. That Bill C-2 be assessed as to its potential effectiveness and impact by a specialist panel including areas of knowledge related to crime prevention, victimology, criminology, corrections, policing, judiciary, offender re-integration, and community safety for assessment and review. To make such a comprehensive review standard procedure for any new Bill relating to amendments to the criminal code;
2. To include a section in Bill C-2 which requires that adequately funded re-integration programs be available to all offenders who are released, regardless of the timing of that release in the range of their sentencing, this would include those released at the completion of their sentence;
3. To amend sections relating to mandatory sentencing to insure that the changes made are presumptive, not absolute.

In addition to Bill C-2, Canada's government also introduced legislation to amend the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA). The goal is to include deterrence and denunciation as sentencing principles, in other words, allowing judges to detain young offenders before trial should they be considered to pose a risk to public safety. CCJC participated in a Consultation prior to introduction of this new legislation. Maureen Murphy, CCJC's part president and current member of our Board of Directors, represented CCJC in a meeting with Justice Canada to consult on the pre-trial detention of youth under the YCJA. Her Brief can be accessed through this [link](#). CCJC also submitted its views on the proposed amendments to Justice Canada, follow this [link](#) to read our submissions. We now observe that many of the recommendations from the consultation are not reflected in the current proposed legislation.

Many commentators wrote on this move towards a “tougher” agenda, which has been happening at an incredibly fast pace and involves radical changes to the way Canada does criminal justice. See below for some interesting articles:

[Tories unveil crackdown on violent young criminals](#) – National Post
[Government warns opposition not to hold up anti-crime bill](#) – The Star
[Justice bill 'a game'](#) – Halifax News
[Backroom deal rushes omnibus legislation](#) – Law Times

What makes these news surprising and debatable is the fact that Canada is getting “tougher” on crime at a time when the available data points to a decrease in the rate of crime in the country. According to [a recent report released by Statistics Canada](#), “the national homicide rate dropped 10% in 2006” and more, “the homicide rate has been on a general decline since it peaked in the mid-1970s”. Another source of data, the surveys that

Dr. Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge has been conducting on Social trends in Canada, reveals that **“the percentage of Canadians who think crime is an extremely serious problem has actually dropped significantly over the past thirty years.”** In addition, **“far fewer Canadians today see violence and juvenile offences as severe problems than was the case in the mid-1970s”**. To access the whole report on this study, click [here](#).

Given the disparity between what Canada needs and what Canada is getting, CCJC cannot help but ask – should we, as citizens, endorse these decisions? We encourage you to write to your own MPs to share your thoughts on these recent developments.

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Crime prevention through social development

A critique of current approaches

By Lorraine Berzins

As a follow-up to our May 7th gathering with Ross Hastings and a number of partners, we distributed an article in the summer edition of **The Well** as a first step in sharing the Soul-searching about crime prevention CCJC undertook at that session of our AGM. This article gave initial voice to the challenge we had received to question the overall way the work of ‘crime prevention through social development’ has been organized to date: the fundamental problems are social/structural, but the solutions that have been most popular have tended to be ‘programs’ that fit conveniently into existing turfs and services more than they address those structural issues; and they have been more accessible to communities who are not at the highest risk. The poorest are the most victimized by crime, but our prevailing crime prevention ‘industry’ penalizes them further because they have no money to buy the security systems; nor the insurance whose rates favour those who do; and no voice to get the grants or demand the changes that could help their children and themselves to be safer. The article also reported that CCJC heard compelling appeals, during that session, for churches to provide more **moral** and **spiritual** leadership in a public debate about this.

Some readers of **The Well** have since responded that these concerns resonate with their own experiences and soul-searching. The purpose of the present summary is to now reflect further on some additional learnings from the May 7th session, in order to consider what CCJC could do to engage its constituency in responding to that call for more moral and spiritual leadership on this issue.

The crux of the present problem seems to be that the approach called ‘Crime Prevention through Social Development’ has remained far more influenced by the crime-word than by any of its other components. The prevailing public mindset that we have about **‘the crime-thing’** (jailing individuals/tinkering with sentences/rehab interventions tied to coercion) serves to keep it all associated with **‘the stigmatizing-thing’**. The reflex and mindset, according to Hastings’ research, have been to put even CPSD money into that same old stigmatizing-thing, in a narrow way. Most common crime prevention strategies have emphasized **reducing opportunity and reacting to occurrence**, usually within the cops/ courts/ cages paradigm. There has now been growing support for **‘developmental work’** focusing on the very small group identified as highest risk for committing a huge proportion of crimes. But while this is important, it is not enough: the social inequality level and the community relationship level also has to be addressed for the people live in those communities; victims and offenders go back to those communities. This makes it essential to also emphasize how to repair, restore, and prevent in a more holistic way, and not to put resources only into activities tainted by that criminalizing/stigmatizing syndrome: we need more comprehensive initiatives from which to learn and teach, and begin to drive the process in a different direction. **This is the key debate we should be having in our country.**

*However, this key debate is being missed while public focus remains mired in controversies about sentencing details - how much is too little. And this, despite the fact that all the evidence points to the massive failure of that criminalizing approach, documenting not only its failure to prevent, but also the **adverse effects that are actually added by having contact with the criminal justice system** :*

'There is a growing body of longitudinal research showing that being arrested as a juvenile dramatically increases your chances of later dropping out of high school (Bernburg and Krohn 2003; De Li 1999; Sweeten 2006) and that dropping out of school increases your probability of unemployment (Bernburg and Krohn 2003) and future involvement in criminality (Thornberry, Moore and Christenson 1985).'

'For adults, the concern is less about arrest and more about the adverse effects of incarceration. Each year, more than 600,000 adult offenders in the U.S. are released from prison without adequate housing assistance, social services, drug treatment, or employment services (Travis, Solomon and Waul 2001). The correctional system and society's reaction to convicted felons virtually guarantees that these individuals are less healthy and less employable each time they pass through its doors, so we should not be surprised that most will return to a life of crime within two years.'

(Quoted in Rosenbaum, Police Innovation Post 1980: Assessing Effectiveness and Equity Concerns in the Information Technology Era, in IPC Review, v.1, March 2007, Learning from the Past – Planning for the Future, ed. Ross Hastings, Melanie Bania, p.29.)

This no way to do business, it defies all rational investment logic. But there is no political constituency to say so. *Support nevertheless, for escalating this approach, is driven by the fear-of-crime-thing; and it is important to note that crime can be the label people attach to a more diffuse sense of insecurity that they are trying to make sense of. The costly criminalizing/stigmatizing solutions proposed cannot reduce this, let alone crime itself. But there is currently no political constituency to demand more accountability for the LACK OF RESULTS from this way of spending our money.*

The challenge for the future *is to hold up a new investment logic for the justice components of well-being, based not on fear-of-'crime' and the mistaken belief that 'if we punish they will change' - but on a moral vision and the constructive logic of peacemaking.*

'People won't be rallied unless an idea is beautiful and speaks to their life instinct'. (Pier Giorgio di Cicco, Toronto's Poet Laureate)

'Justice was one of the most gorgeous words in holy Scripture, a word we held our heads up high to, a healing, restoring, beautiful word, a force that can transform people. But justice has been redefined in recent years'. (Bo Lozoff, Human Kindness Foundation, North Carolina).

We know from many other sectors that people are willing to pay a 'price' in the present, for benefits medium- to long-term, when they recognize them as worth the investment, for themselves, their family, the community, the planet (eg. insurance, retirement plans, the health care system, shifting lifestyle habits for the environment.) Taking a lesson from those sectors,

- *can we express the potential impacts of a new investment logic for safety and well-being with **common-sense images** for their justice components that will make sense to people for everyday life (eg. so my community becomes the kind where I can take a night course, where I am not afraid to open my door to my neighbour, where there can be wellness in my family, where my children can feel safe, go to school without fear...)?*

- can we identify **incremental steps for investment** in that direction that can make sense to people as worth investing in, so that links are more visible between long-term quality of life and everyday choices that can be made?
- Can we call for **‘response-to-occurrence’ options that are consistent with this new investment logic**?
- Can we hold up with more dispassionate language the **links between the justice components and investments in other sectors: poverty, education, health, employment, immigration, housing, culture**?
- Can we highlight **indicators of medium-term changes** that impact on risk factors (eg. interrupted pathways)?
- Can we **profile significant social experiments** from which we can learn and teach, to help inject this new investment logic into the public conversation about social development?

Why? *It is a vision of aspiring to becoming a community with a culture of equity that emerged from our May 7th discussions. This vision is fuelled by a rights-based approach, not the ‘charity model’. This perspective opens up options for strategies that are larger than Canada alone: there are international instruments with compliance reviews, and cross-sectoral alliances. It also opens up new ways of examining the issues related to CPSD, moving beyond ‘criminal justice’, calling for transformational change, shifting from reactive to more focus on the sustainable: what would it mean to protect all our citizens from ...? what would the role of police be in that vision? It is also a vision that evokes a spiritual understanding of community and interconnectedness, within a wellness and healing framework.*

CCJC was encouraged to play an active role in providing moral leadership in this new public conversation. Consistent with the role CCJC has played in the past:

- ask the hard questions;
- make the connections;
- call the churches to social conscience;
- and urge the churches not to be afraid of becoming active advocates of spiritual development.

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Death Penalty Matters in Canada

By Lorraine Berzins

Canada has been in the news recently about death penalty matters elsewhere in the world. There have been two key developments that signal our government’s shift away from its long-standing position on death penalty foreign policy matters, -- and that matters! To many Canadians!

There has been a growing chorus of criticism, nationally and internationally, over the federal government’s abrupt reversal in early November of a long-standing Canadian foreign policy to seek clemency for any Canadian citizen on death row around the world. Under a new directive, Canada will no longer fight for the lives of Canadians facing execution in “democratic countries, like the United States, where there has been a fair trial.” This begs the question, of course, about what criteria will be used to assess that state of affairs in various jurisdictions. A double standard has now been created that could undermine efforts to protect Canadians in non-democratic countries: there are currently two other Canadians facing possible execution, in China and Ethiopia, for example.

Further to this first policy reversal, the federal government also announced soon thereafter that Canada would not co-sponsor the recent United Nations resolution against state executions, abandoning a decade-long leadership role on the issue.

CCJC has a long track record of work and witness in “choosing life” in our responses to crime, including our opposition to the death penalty. In addition to playing a strong leadership role in the 1987 campaign against the return of the death penalty in our own country, CCJC has spoken out against execution in specific cases, for example Stanley Faulder in Texas in 1999. Our faith message of love and transformation continues to be that we must find truly healing ways of dealing with the pain of murder – ways which seek to reknit community and rebuild lives instead of destroying them. We believe that the ethos which informs support for executions is exactly the one that informs offenders who mete out their hostility indiscriminately; we can either follow their example or resist. CCJC continues to work to stand with all those suffering from the tragedies of murder, and, as a civilized society, to find a better way. Because violence done in the name of justice is not truly justice. Because killing people who kill people in order to teach them that killing people is wrong, makes no sense at all.

We continue to do this work in solidarity with other organizations in Canada and in other countries. Follow the links to find out about several initiatives currently underway to mobilize people to express their view on the important matters before us at this time. We encourage you to read the following [message from Amnesty International](#) and inform yourself and others of opportunities offered to lend your voice to the chorus.

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Victims’ Pastoral Care

Following up on our Victims’ Symposium

By James Loewen

According to [Juristat](#) and [Statistics Canada](#), around 11,000,000 crimes are committed each year. Of these, only a small percentage (approximately 3%) of victims receives any kind of response from the formal justice institutions. This is as a result of a number of factors, including low levels of police notification, limited policing resources, limited victim’s services resources, and a systemic bias away from responding to victim’s needs in ways that victim’s experience as helpful. Where institutions fail to respond, or simply don’t know they need to, faith communities often step in. As ready built communities of care, Churches already access significant human, systemic, and financial resources, faith communities and are a much needed link in Canada’s response to victims of crime.

Already faith communities have responded to domestic violence, poverty, addictions, mental illness and other risk factors associated with victimization and crime, in their own church and geographic communities. This vital beginning has laid important groundwork for the broader equipping of churches and other faith groups to begin to respond to a broad range of criminal victimization.

The simple shift of focus and resource to responding to victim’s needs is a significant innovation for many faith communities. Some faith communities have been doing work in this area, but in isolation, and without adequate resources and interaction with others doing similar work. Up until now, however, there has been no nationally guided and resourced effort made to equip, inform and encourage the pastoral care of victims of crime.

The impetus to develop a pastoral care for those affected by crime initiative came out of a board meeting discussion relating to a community symposium on Victims and the Church in Ottawa in May of 2007. One of the many outcomes of this symposium was to begin working towards equipping churches to take a more active and helpful role in responding to crime victims and others affected by crime in their communities.

The Church Council, in collaboration with the Mennonite central Committee Canada, is playing an active role in developing resources and providing training as part of a pilot project, which, we expect will disseminate to Churches across Canada. For more information on this project, please [contact CCJC](#).

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Conditional sentence for serious impaired driving offences

By Emile Therien - Past-president, Canada Safety Council

In general, controversy surrounds the use of conditional sentences for serious crimes. Some feel conditional sentences are too lenient and want them eliminated. Conditional sentences in serious impaired driving cases have been called a “travesty of justice.” Others believe a carefully tailored conditional sentence can in the long term protect the public more effectively than a prison sentence.

From a traffic safety perspective, does it make sense to eliminate conditional sentence for cases of impaired driving causing death or bodily harm?

To examine the link between sentencing and safety, the Canada Safety Council commissioned a study. Sentencing in Cases of Impaired Driving Causing Bodily Harm or Impaired Driving Causing Death, With a Particular Emphasis on Conditional Sentencing was prepared by two University of Ottawa researchers, Julian Roberts of the Department of Criminology and David Paciocco of the Faculty of Law. Their report, released in 2005, examines the case law and are conditional sentences are, when they are being used, and how they could affect safety. The following is a summary of their findings.

What are conditional sentences?

The conditional sentence of imprisonment (or CSI) was introduced in 1996 as an alternate form of incarceration subject to specific criteria. It is not, as some assume, the same as probation. In 2000, the Supreme Court clarified its use and differentiated it from probation. When the sentence is a term of imprisonment of less than two years, an offender deemed not to pose a danger to society is allowed to remain in the community, but with a more stringent set of conditions than offenders on parole. The offender must abide by a number of typically punitive conditions, such as house arrest and a strict curfew. If a condition is broken without a lawful excuse, the offender may well serve out the rest of the sentence in prison.

Since 2000, conditional sentences have become longer and conditions stricter. Indeed, conditional sentences can be more punitive than prison sentences. A recent study found that offenders preferred house arrest but found it no easier than custody.

A conditional sentence holds more potential for rehabilitation and restorative justice than a prison sentence. While incarceration protects the public from the offender during the time served, a conditional sentence may be more likely to prevent the offender from continuing to endanger the public after serving the sentence.

House arrest conditions can be designed to address factors which led to the offence in the first place. Moreover, some conditional sentences force the offender to make reparations to the victim and the community while living under tight controls.

How are CSIs used?

When an impaired driver has caused serious injury or death, the public perception is that a sentence that does not include prison time is inappropriate. In practice, the courts have generally accepted this position. The

Canada Safety Council study found that these offences usually result in prison sentences, not custody at home. The courts have been very careful about imposing conditional sentences for serious impaired driving offences.

In 2003-2004, over two-thirds of offenders convicted of impaired driving causing death and almost half of those convicted of impaired driving causing bodily harm received prison sentences. Only nine conditional sentences were handed out for impaired driving causing death (17 percent of a total 53 cases), and 84 for impaired driving causing bodily harm (25 percent of a total 339 cases).

The study suggested that conditional sentences are not used more often because prison sentences are perceived as harsher punishment.

Those who look only at the offence and the penalty may not understand the factors considered at sentencing. Professors Roberts and Paciocco found no indication that the courts are mismanaging conditional sentences for these offences.

Their thorough case review showed that conditional sentences were issued very selectively. They were ordered when there were no aggravating factors such as a poor driving record or high blood alcohol level, and typically to individuals who, given their character or circumstances, were good candidates for restorative justice. Many of the offenders had suffered personal tragedy as a result of their actions. They had injured or lost friends, partners or their own children, and often had the support of the victims' families.

Is prison a deterrent?

Advocates of eliminating conditional sentences for serious impaired driving offences argue that the supposedly more punitive sanction of time in prison acts as a deterrent. Yet, while many criminologists recognize the general deterrent effect of criminal law, most have long believed that harsher penalties do not lead to fewer offences.

Numerous studies confirm there is little correlation between severity of sentences and number of offences. In 1998 the Australian state of New South Wales doubled the maximum penalties for most drink-driving offences. An analysis of the impact of these harsher penalties was released in June 2004. It found that after the tougher penalties went into effect, there was a slight reduction in recidivism rates for drinking drivers. However, the changes were not substantial and no reductions were realized in Sydney, the largest urban area in the state. Other studies reveal similar results.

How best to protect the public

In the absence of evidence for eliminating the conditional sentence as an option in aggravated impaired driving cases, the study concluded that the only rationale for removing this option would be that it is simply not harsh enough to address the seriousness of the offence. This is a highly subjective perception. As such legislators must weight in against the objective evidence.

Protecting the public requires that sentencing should aim to prevent offenders from continuing to drink and drive after their sentence has been completed. To achieve this, risk factors which led to the offence in the first place must be addressed. These often include alcohol dependence, relationships and attitude.

For crimes related to impaired driving, removing sentencing options could compromise public safety.

This article was originally published by the Hill Times.

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Touring the Justice Storytelling Quilt – Reaching out to broader audiences...

How can \$25 help us spreading the voices of victims and offenders?

At this time in Canada, most media and political voices are calling for changes to legislation which advance a “Tough on Crime” agenda, calling for longer sentences, increased use of incarceration and legal changes that will likely be harder on the poor and the homeless. This takes place at a time when crime rates continue to fall in Canada; property crime is lower in Canada than at any time in the last 30 years, while childhood poverty is rising... Despite the bulk of research that shows the inefficacy of these measures in tackling crime and avoiding recidivism, it seems that the Canadian public is oblivious to the consequences they might bring. It is the role of organizations such as CCJC to shed some light into the public discussion around crime prevention. But how to do that when even the most rational approach, provided by numerous researchers in the field, is not doing the job?

It is with this question in mind that we started searching for innovative ways to talk about justice – and using art to spread the message. The Justice Storytelling Quilt, sponsored by CCJC and created by artist Meagan O’Shea, is one example. Each patch is a symbolic descriptive image created by victims and offenders from across Canada. A touch on any patch will activate a 2 minute audio testimony by its designer, describing the sorrowful event that took place in his/her life. Listening to the voices of victims and offenders gives the public a chance to discuss the implications of changes that will continue not to address the deeper needs of individuals and communities when harmed by crime. The quilt has been to communities and prisons in Saskatchewan, Quebec, B.C. and Ontario. It has been to churches, to conferences, to banquets and City Halls. Follow this link to see the Quilt’s agenda.

We are fortunate to count on members and supporters to spread the thoughtful message that this Quilt reveals (see the [agenda](#) for the next displays of the Quilt in Saskatchewan). But current developments in Canadian correctional policy shows the need to spread the voices of victims and offences to a different audience - one that does not commonly pay attention to the issues of crime and justice that need serious consideration by the Canadian public at this challenging time.

*To contribute to our efforts, Meagan O’Shea, co-creator of the Quilt, is working on a project to **bring the Quilt to art galleries throughout Ontario**. Meagan will be touring the Quilt with the accompanying choreography she created, and will also facilitate discussions that will follow each presentation. **It is a major opportunity to reach out to the arts community and general public, providing information on the current status of our criminal justice system and spawning discussions about the role of community in crime prevention**. Meagan is seeking funding to do the necessary work in order to apply for funding for this tour. Unfortunately, CCJC is not in a position to sponsor this innovative initiative on its own. **This is where YOU can help!***

*To put all grant proposals together, which involves contacting art galleries and making all arrangements in advance, Meagan only needs \$2,500. As an artist, Meagan also is not in a position to volunteer all her time. **If 100 readers contribute just \$25 each**, Meagan will be in a position to obtain funding for this tour. **We are asking that YOU donate \$25 so that more people in Canada have the chance to know more, think more, question more.***

*To make a donation online using a credit card, you may use CanadaHelps.org. Look for the Church Council on Justice and Corrections and **make sure to indicate your donation is made towards the “Quilt tour”**. If you prefer to send us a cheque, make it payable to the Church Council on Justice and Corrections and mail it to 507 Bank Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 1Z5. **All moneys collected will be used to pay Meagan O’Shea so that she may work on getting the Quilt on the road in 2008.***

CCJC will issue a charitable receipt, which is tax deductible, to those who contribute.

Thank you for your support!

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Book Review

Stricken By God?: Non-Violent Identification & The Victory of Christ, Editors, Brad Jersak and Michael Hardin, Abbotsford: Fresh Wind Press, 2007, 527pp, \$29.95

By Wayne Northey

This book has created quite a stir in the ecumenical theological world, first, because it is ecumenical, and second, because it reads the atonement (why Christ died) in an opposite way to the dominant Western theories, usually referred to as "satisfaction" and "penal substitution". More on those below. Writers such as Anglicans Rowan Williams (Archbishop of Canterbury) and N.T. Wright (foremost New Testament theologian writing in English today), Catholics Richard Rohr and James Alison, Mennonites J. Denny Weaver and Michael Hardin, Orthodox Andrew P. Klager and Kharalambos Anstall and others all present the atonement as nonviolent and peacemaking.

This is so remarkable a publication given the longstanding dominance of theories of the atonement that have led to and nurtured violent "structures of affect" as one writer calls them that have underwritten the development of highly punitive Western criminal justice systems, and have endorsed violence as legitimate spiritual methodologies of punishment. The twenty writers in this collection say no to an atonement that celebrates a "mysticism of pain which promises redemption to those who pay in blood (God's Just Vengeance, Timothy Gorringer, p. 102)". These essays point in the same direction as Gorringer: they underscore another way in theory and practice, the way of costly forgiveness, which, in the end, is our only hope. (Archbishop Tutu entitled his classic book on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, No Future Without Forgiveness). Gorringer writes at the end of his book, "In holding before us the claims of an imagined community the New Testament, far from providing legitimation for retributivist practice, in fact advanced the claims of an alternative, non-violent, way of life. Forgiveness... lies at the heart of that - not as a benign doctrine, but as a remorselessly difficult praxis (p. 265)".

Two essays in fact directly address this issue in terms of crime and punishment: one by renowned New Testament theologian, C.F.D. Moule, another by myself.

In November, 2007, the Colloquium on Violence and Religion held a session at the prestigious American Academy of Religion, Society of Biblical Literature conference, to discuss this publication. Wm. Be Eerdmans, owner of the largest theological publishing house in North America, asked for permission within two weeks of the book's Canadian publication in July to reissue it, and within ten weeks began distributing it worldwide.

This publication has struck a significant nerve the world over. It points to the central biblical story that says with A. J. Muste: "There is no way to peace: peace is the way." It gives hope that the Western church will cast off its appalling history of violence in favour of actually embracing the Gospel of peace!

*The Death of Innocents: An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions. Vintage: 2006
By Sister Helen Prejean*

From the author of the national bestseller Dead Man Walking comes a brave and fiercely argued new book that tests the moral edge of the debate on capital punishment: What if we're executing innocent men? Two cases in

point are Dobie Gillis Williams, an indigent black man with an IQ of 65, and Joseph Roger O'Dell. Both were convicted of murder on flimsy evidence (O'Dell's principal accuser was a jailhouse informant who later recanted his testimony). Both were executed in spite of numerous appeals. Sister Helen Prejean watched both of them die. As she recounts these men's cases and takes us through their terrible last moments, Prejean brilliantly dismantles the legal and religious arguments that have been used to justify the death penalty. Riveting, moving, and ultimately damning, *The Death of Innocents* is a book we dare not ignore.

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In the news

Criminal Justice Canada

A Vancouver news source brings an article where experts discuss the consequences of higher rates of imprisonment in Canada, and whether or not the government's policies will open the door to prison privatization. See full article [here](#).

On October 25, 2007, the Office of the Correctional Investigator released its annual report 2006-2007. The Report addresses systemic areas of concern in federal penitentiaries and makes 13 recommendations for action. Visit their [website](#) for more information. Also, read [article published by CanWest](#) on the issue.

The Kingston Whig Standard published an article where [experts called "foolish" Tories' plan to scrap the statutory release program](#). "National Parole Board statistics show that the ratio of offenders on statutory release who commit a new violent offence has been declining." "Abandoning statutory release means thousands more prisoners will be freed with no restrictions and no supports in place when their sentences expire, although in the interim, Canada will need thousands more prison cells."

The number of Canadians behind bars went up for the first time in more than a decade in 2005-2006, according to the latest numbers from Statistics Canada. See [article published by CanWest News](#) A summary of this research is provided on the [Statistics Canada](#) website.

Youth

Canada's government introduces new legislation opening the door to tougher sentences and punishment for serious crimes committed by youth. See [article published by the National Post](#) on November 20.

[Real Choices](#), a soon-to-be-released interactive DVD sponsored by the [Conflict Resolution Network Canada](#), will show Canadian kids the strategies and solutions to make 'real choices' when dealing with real-life gangs. See the [press release](#).

"Lost in Translation: (mis)Understanding Youth Engagement" was released on October 18, 2007 by Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN). It analyzes and expands upon six individual studies commissioned by CPRN since it held a groundbreaking "National Youth Dialogue and Summit" in 2005. To download their report, follow this [link](#).

Statistics Canada released a report on Youth self-reported delinquency in September of this year. The report examines the prevalence of various delinquent behaviours and analyzes acts of violence and acts against property separately. To download the report, use this [link](#).

A group of criminologists interviewed hundreds of inmates at youth detention centers to determine whether punitive measures were pathetic or persuasive weapons in curbing and controlling deviant behaviour. See the [article published by The Province](#) on October 25, 2007.

Restorative Justice

Toronto high school adopts restorative approach to deal with internet threats between schoolmates. See [article published by the Toronto Sun](#) on November 21.

The [Fraser Region Community Justice Initiatives \(CJI\)](#) is offering training sessions in Restorative Justice that are open to the general public. For more information, please refer to their [list of available courses](#).

On September 13, 2007, Wayne Northey hosted a public lecture based on his research project on the application of Restorative Justice principles to international state conflict. The lecture took place at St. Paul University in Ottawa. Wayne kindly shared his [presentation notes](#) with CCJC. Enjoy the reading!

RCMP Const. Shelley Arnfield spoke about restorative justice to the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce membership. Constable Arnfield and coordinator Russell McLaughlin argued that more restorative justice is needed in their community. Follow this [link](#) to read the article that the Westcoaster published on October 11.

The North Island Gazette published an article on October 10, 2007, where Coordinator Brian Thurber talks about the restorative justice program in Port Hardy. Mr. Thurber indicated that, despite the lack of funding, they were able to handle 22 cases in 2006. If more funding were available, this program could address bullying in local schools. See the full article [here](#).

The Prince George Urban Aboriginal Justice Society has received funding from the federal government to expand the restorative justice program to the city's schools. The program is seeking volunteers who will receive training to deal with youth in Prince George. Read the [article by the Prince George Citizen](#), where contact information is provided.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation released funding to Restorative Justice Chatham-Kent. The local agency, which offers first-time non-violent youth offenders an alternative to the criminal justice system, received \$83,500 Tuesday to enhance its youth intervention programs. Read [full article](#) from the Chatham Daily News.

Social Development

The [Canadian Association of Food Banks](#) released its "HungerCount 2007" report on November 8, 2007. The HungerCount is an essential resource for gauging the level of hunger and poverty in Canada. Please follow this [link](#) to access this very insightful report.

The [Canadian Association of Social Workers](#) (CASW) has just released its most recent report on "Financial Security for Women Seniors in Canada". This report specifically examines the income disparity of senior women as a result of Canada's public and private retirement income policies. To access the report's executive summary, please visit their [website](#). Hard copies of the report are available for a small fee through their national office.

Victims

Rod Gillespie, a Nevada County Victim/Witness Assistance Project Coordinator, is trying to change attitudes in a criminal justice system resistant to change. Read more about his challenges and achievements in this [article published by the Nevada County Local News](#).

Book release

Wayne Northey has just released a new book "[Chrysalis Crucible](#)". This fiction tells the story of Andy, a young disciple from Canada, who encounters many of the challenges that face Christianity in a trip to West Berlin during the height of the Vietnam War.

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Upcoming events

December 2nd, 2007 – Ottawa, ON

[Interfaith Restorative Justice Evening](#)

Hosted by the Ottawa Sikh Society & the Ottawa Restorative Justice Interfaith Group

Langar (communal meal) 1:30 p.m. / Program: 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Gurdwara Sahib, 25 Gurdwara Rd., Nepean

Corrections and Criminal Justice Speakers' Series 2007-2008

<http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cor/ss2007-8-en.asp>

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Get in touch with CCJC

Your comments and suggestions are most welcome! Please send news and articles you would like to see shared in this newsletter. To get in touch with CCJC, please contact Maristela Carrara at mcarrara@ccjc.ca or 613-563-1688 x4.

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PS: We are looking for volunteer translators!

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