

# criminal justice

## - Bibliography -

### **Covenant Resolution**

At the 2009 Annual Meeting, the Christian Action Commission (CAC) presented a Resolution on Criminal Justice to the delegates. This year the CAC also proposed a new format for reviewing/adopting resolutions; a resolution will be presented in draft format for the church to review, and adopted in its final format at the following year's Annual Meeting. The year-long review process for resolutions is intended to help create time and space for greater awareness, reflection and education throughout the wider church on the topic addressed in a resolution, as well as keep the draft open for churches and individuals to submit comments or edits.

The CAC encourages churches to spend some time reflecting on the resolution and learning about the topic addressed. A one-page resource sheet and discussion guide have been provided by the CAC for church, small group, or individual use to help begin exploration of the topic.

To learn more about the CAC and view past resolutions, please visit [www.covchurch.org/cac](http://www.covchurch.org/cac). To learn more about the Department of Compassion, Mercy and Justice and their related work on the issue of Criminal Justice, please visit [www.covchurch.org/cmj](http://www.covchurch.org/cmj).



### **Books**

*Cain's Redemption*, Dennis Shere (Northfield Publishing, 2005) ISBN 1881273245

Formerly known as America's bloodiest prison, the 18,000 acres that comprise Louisiana's Angola State Penitentiary are now home to 5,000 inmates, a full range of seasonal crops, a 9-hole golf course, yearly rodeos, a Bible seminary, a museum, and much more. All of this came into being at the behest of Warden Burl Cain, who is now the longest-standing warden in the history of Angola prison. Under his leadership, the inmate population of 5,000 has gone from regular knife fights to Bible studies. Cain is a strong believer in the ability of the gospel to turn the most incorrigible of sinners into productive, moral citizens. Because eight out of ten prisoners are serving life sentences without parole at Angola, Cain has taken upon himself the task of making the lives of these prisoners productive and educational. Through a partnership with New Orleans Baptist Seminary, prisoners have the opportunity to get a bible degree and even be transferred to other prisons as a missionary. The author combines his background in journalism and law to bring readers this account of redemption and life change in the most unlikely of places: a maximum security prison.

*Criminal Justice Ministry: A Congregational Handbook for Jail and Prison Ministry* (Augsburg Fortress, 2003 – Code #6-0001-6905-1) – Order from August Fortress, 1-800-328-4648

A joint project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, this handbook is an excellent resource for those who are interested in developing a jail or prison ministry as well as those who are experienced in jail or prison ministry. Contains valuable information regarding preparing the congregation and training volunteers and has an extensive resource list.

*Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, by Michael Foucault (Vintage, 1995) ISBN 0679752552

The author suggests that such vaunted reforms as the abolition of torture and the emergence of the modern penitentiary have merely shifted the focus of punishment from the prisoner's body to his soul.

*The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, by Howard Zehr (CRC Publications/Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2002) ISBN 978-1-56148-376-1

The Western legal system has profoundly shaped our thinking about justice. Yet many justice professionals feel the process of justice deepens societal wounds and conflicts rather than contributing to healing or peace. Restorative justice is an attempt to address some of these needs and limitations. In many places today, restorative justice is considered a sign of hope and the direction of the future.

*Picking Cotton*, by Jennifer Thompson-Cannino, Ronald Cotton, and Erin Torneo (St. Martin's Press, 2009) ISBN 0312376537

This is a compelling story of redemption, restoration, forgiveness and grace. A must read for anyone interested in restorative justice.

*Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out*, by Lennie Spitale (Broadman & Holman, 2002) ISBN 0805424830

This book covers areas such as the emotional challenges of prisoners and those who minister to them, the environment of fear, the culture of deprivation, friendships between prisoners, guidelines and principles, dos and don'ts, and many other relevant and essential topics for equipping any individual or church for effective prison ministry.

*When Prisoners Return*, by Pat Nolan and Chuck Colson (Xulon Press, 2004) ISBN 1594676097

Identifies the need for individuals and churches to be involved as prisoners return to society; this book also equips individuals and churches with the information they need to effectively assist former prisoners.

## Media

*Girls on the Wall* - directed and produced by Heather Ross & Sincerely Films in association with Independent Television Service and PB& J Television.

62 minutes – for further information, go to: <http://www.girlsonthewallmovie.com/>

A group of incarcerated teenage girls get a shot at redemption in a most unlikely form: a musical based on their lives. As they write and stage their play, the girls must re-live their crimes, reclaim their humanity, and take a first step toward breaking free of the prison system. This is their chance to seize their stories and tell them to the world. The film will surprise you with their candor, intimacy, and unexpected sense of humor. Together, they illustrate the power of storytelling to make sense of even the darkest pasts.

*The Farm: Life Inside Angola Prison* (A & E Home Video, 1998) ASIN 6305295867; view online at: [http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/episode/a-decade-behind-bars-return-to-the-farm-4329/Overview42#tab-Videos/06700\\_00](http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/episode/a-decade-behind-bars-return-to-the-farm-4329/Overview42#tab-Videos/06700_00)

The fates of six inmates at a Louisiana maximum-security prison are chronicled in this absorbing 1998 Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner.

*A Decade Behind Bars: Return to The Farm*

<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/episode/a-decade-behind-bars-return-to-the-farm-4329/Overview>

The last ten years have been a time of great change and frustration for the four surviving men featured in the decade-old prison documentary, *The Farm: Life Inside Angola*. The victims of the crime for which he was charged have grown and moved on. Louisiana State Penitentiary, led by Warden Burl Cain, has seen many changes over the past decade, including a new Bible college, a prisoner-run television station, and record-low incidents of inmate-on-inmate violence.

Read more: <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/episode/a-decade-behind-bars-return-to-the-farm-4329/Overview>

*American Violet* (Samuel Goldwyn Films, 2009) 1 hour, 43 min.

Based on the true story of Dee Roberts, a 24 year-old African American single mother of four living in a small Texas town when she is dragged away from work one day in handcuffs, and then dumped in the women's county prison. The local district attorney leads an extensive drug bust, sweeping her housing project with military precision. Dee soon discovers that she has been charged as a drug dealer. Even though she has no prior drug record and no drugs were found on her in the raid, she is offered a hellish choice: plead guilty and go home as a convicted felon or remain in prison, jeopardizing her custody and risking a long prison sentence. She chooses to fight the unyielding criminal justice system, risking everything in a battle that forever changes her life and the Texas justice system.

### **Prison Ministries and Resources**

Bridges of Canada (formerly Cons for Christ)  
Box 3414 – Station B  
Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada E3A-5H2  
506/443-9960  
Provides oversight to Canadian prison ministries.

Chaplain Ray Books  
Acclaimed Books  
P.O. Box 180399  
Dallas, TX 75218-0399  
800/527-1212

Christian Prison Ministries  
P.O. Box 1587  
2100 Brengle Avenue  
Orlando, FL 32801  
407/291-1500  
CPM is a national prison ministry.

Christian Aftercare Ministries  
50 Lowell Street  
Manchester, NH 03101  
603/669-5090

Aftercare Ministry for New Hampshire.  
Coalition of Prison Evangelists  
2400 Ludelle Street, #10  
Fort Worth, TX 76105  
888/256-2673  
[www.copeministries.org](http://www.copeministries.org)  
International prison ministry networking hundreds of grass-roots ministries.

The Innocence Project  
100 Fifth Avenue, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10011  
info@innocenceproject.org  
212.364.5340  
[www.innocenceproject.org/](http://www.innocenceproject.org/)  
The Innocence Project was founded in 1992 to assist prisoners who could be proven innocent through DNA testing.

Institute for Prison Ministries  
Wheaton College  
Wheaton, IL 60187  
630/752-5727  
[www.wheaton.edu/bgc/prisonministries](http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/prisonministries)

Kairos Prison Ministry  
140 N. Orlando Avenue, Suite 180  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
800/298-2730  
[www.kairosprisonministry.org](http://www.kairosprisonministry.org)

LifeWay Christian Resources  
1 LifeWay Plaza  
Nashville, TN 37234  
800/458-2772  
[www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com)

Malachi Dads  
Awana  
1 East Bode Road  
Streamwood, IL 60107-6658  
(630) 213-2000  
[www.awana.org/lifeline/default1.aspx?id=1098](http://www.awana.org/lifeline/default1.aspx?id=1098)

Millions of children nationwide are growing up without fathers because their dads are in prison. Malachi Dads is tackling this epidemic by teaching Christian inmates how to grow into godly parents, equipping them to spiritually train their kids from behind bars to help break the cycle of crime in their families. The program develops their skills in five key areas: fathering, spiritual, educational, moral and vocational.

New England Aftercare Ministries  
P.O. Box 136  
Framingham, MA 01746  
508/872-6194  
Residential aftercare ministry for the New England area.

Prison Fellowship  
P.O. Box 17500  
Washington, DC 20041-0500  
800/645-5298  
[www.pfm.org](http://www.pfm.org)

A ministry of Chuck Colson's "Breakpoint Ministries," this is a great site to start learning about the issues. This website contains a wealth of information about one of the strongest Christian voices that speaks for engagement and reform of the criminal justice system. The organization's vision is self-described as aiming for radical transformation, remaining "in it" for the long haul, and relying on partnerships with others to transform the justice system and our communities.

Restorative Justice Online  
<http://www.restorativejustice.org/>

It introduces the biblical and judicial concepts of restorative justice as a way to promote healing and restoration between perpetrators and victims/communities/families. Their list of links on the page titled "Restorative Justice Orgs" is a very comprehensive and helpful one - visit those organizations' websites to learn more about how churches and states are reforming and advocating around these issues across the country.

The Sentencing Project  
514 Tenth Street, NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20004  
202.628.0871  
202.628.1091 (fax)

[staff@sentencingproject.org](mailto:staff@sentencingproject.org)

<http://www.sentencingproject.org/template/index.cfm>

The Sentencing Project is a national organization working for a fair and effective criminal justice system by promoting reforms in sentencing law and practice, and alternatives to incarceration. They do this through research, publications and advocacy and are dedicated to changing the way Americans think about crime and punishment.

Transitioning Offenders Program (TOP) (Washington State)

T. O. P.

PO Box 159

Graham, WA 98338

<http://transitioningoffendersprogram.org/home/>

Transitioning Offenders Program is a non-profit organization with a database of over 8,100 public and private organizations that assist felons and their Families in Washington State.

This bibliography was prepared by the staff of the Covenant Resource Center. While not specifically endorsed by the Evangelical Covenant Church, the above resources may be helpful as you plan for ministry. For additional assistance or suggestions, contact the Covenant Resource Center at 1-800-338-IDEA(4332) or [resource.center@covchurch.org](mailto:resource.center@covchurch.org).