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News and Views

Spring 1988

CSC Chaplaincy



Correctional Service
Canada

Service correctionnel
Canada

Canada



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NEWS

MINISTRE
GÉNÉRAL

OCT 17 1983

BELGIUM/ROYAUME
MINISTRE DU SOLICITEUR
GÉNÉRAL DU CANADA
OTTAWA, ONTARIO
CANADA K1A 0P8

N. H. Q.

Personnel

DCOPPD Gord Pinder has resigned and Jim Phelps has succeeded him. Mr. Phelps was formerly Deputy Commissioner in both Prairie and Ontario Regions. He knows CSC well, and in particular is known to and knows many of the chaplains. Chaplaincy welcomes Mr. Phelps in his new functions and offers him their co-operation and support.

Our secretary - administrative assistant is once again Monique Sabourin. Lynn Balice has moved to act in another position here at NHQ, We welcome Monique back with her cheerful welcome to chaplains who call or drop in!

Orientation Phase I

22 of our newest chaplains are presently being accompanied by a more experienced chaplain trained for that purpose on a regular basis. In some cases this is weekly, but in most it is every two weeks. This process should allow our chaplains to raise questions of ministry in the penitentiary on a regular and disciplined way to the benefit of the inmates, staff, and not least themselves. In general this process will go on until June, although by mutual consent it may go on longer.

Orientation Phase II

Most of the newest chaplains in the service met in Montréal 14 - 18 March 1988. Leadership was provided by the Associate Director, and the Regional Chaplains of Québec and Ontario, Gabriel Savignac and Norm Barton respectively. The chaplaincy team at Warkworth presented a session on the challenge of teamwork in the chaplaincy team; Patrick Wood of the Québec region made a presentation on the criminal personality; CX Armand Mesnard, case management officer Anne Goudreau, and Norm Barton formed a panel to discuss the relationship of chaplaincy to the rest of the staff of the institution; the Service parajudiciaire des autochtones prepared a presentation on native spirituality, from which a more general discussion was launched on the duties of chaplaincies to all minority religious groups. Fr. Jean Patry of the Interfaith Committee and chaplain at Montreal's Bordeaux Jail made a presentation on the spiritual basis of correctional ministry; and the Director of Chaplaincy, Rev. Dr. Pierre Allard spent an afternoon with the chaplains to hear of their concerns, to share his extensive interest about the history of chaplaincy, and to give a vision of its future. A sense of fellowship and a service wide identity was developed. Chaplains should be better placed to offer each other support after this event.

Personal (NHQ)

Former Director of Chaplaincy, the Rev. Murray Tardiff, has maintained his interest in the importance of ministry to those in prison. The local newspaper for Renfrew, Ontario for 10 Feb. 1988, reports that Murray was the guest speaker at the monthly meeting of the Renfrew and District University Women's Club at their meeting of January 18th. He gave "a thought provoking and informative talk about prison ministry."

Archdeacon Bolton, former parish priest in the Anglican Church of Canada and member of Parliament with the NDP, founding member of the St Leonard's Society of Canada, received an honorary degree at St. John's College Winnipeg. He wrote the book "Halfway Home, The Story of the St. Leonard's Society of Canada."

BOOK REVIEW

George A. Harris and David Watkins, Counselling the Involuntary and Resistant Client, American Correctional Association: College Park, MD, 1987, pp.112.

This short book addresses issues in counselling when the client is both involuntary and resistant. Resistance is a normal and key component in counselling. It relates to the aim of counselling and is a measure of the amount of change needed. Resistance, is however, compounded when people are required to go for counselling, for example as a precondition of receiving early release. In this case their presence in counselling is involuntary. The authors present a helpful analysis of meetings with the involuntary client, including ethical issues, inhibitors and facilitators of conversation, different typologies and techniques and limits of expectations.

The book would seem to be helpful to chaplains because of the significant amount of counselling many chaplains do, and because of their commitment to the dignity of the people they are dealing with. Making contact with the suspicious and sceptical inmate in the closed world of incarceration is never easy. This book opens paths that respect the inmate's autonomy. "If the Son sets you free, then you shall be free indeed."

Rev . Chris Carr

THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Memorandum of Understanding was officially signed during a very moving ceremony held in Kingston on 3 February 1988 which members of the Interfaith Committee, the regional chaplains, representatives of staff and inmates and volunteers were able to be present. Fr. Bernard Pinet, omi, president of the Interfaith Committee signed for the churches, Mr. Rhéal LeBlanc, Commissioner, signed for CSC, and the Solicitor General, the Hon. James Kelleher, signed on behalf of the ministry. Mr. Kelleher had other commitments that particular evening and signed the document later.

The new Memorandum clearly sets out principles on which chaplaincy in CSC is based and of common concerns held by both churches and faith communities in Canada and the CSC about the implementation of religious services and programmes. Indeterminate chaplains are brought within the concerns of this new Memorandum (in the old they had been ignored as a disappearing species), and therefore of the Interfaith Committee and the CSC. There is a possibility, exceptional in nature, that a chaplaincy position be filled in an indeterminate fashion, upon recommendation by IFC to CSC management.

Copies of the Memorandum have been sent to all members of the IFC, to the chaplains, and to Institutional Wardens. Further copies may be obtained from NHQ chaplaincy.

INSTALLATION OF THE NEW DIRECTOR OF CHAPLAINCY

The Rev. Dr. Pierre Allard was officially installed as Director of Chaplaincy following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on 3 February 1988. The service was held in the First Baptist Church, Kingston Ontario. Dr. Allard was presented by Mr. Tom Townsend representing the DGOP Dan Kane and by Fr. Bernard Pinet representing the faith communities of Canada to Dr. Richard Coffin of the Baptist Federation who in turn officially did the installation. The regional chaplains led the intercessory prayers, Dr. Charles Taylor of Acadia University preached an excellent sermon on walking by faith, Mr. Ernie LeBlanc read a lesson, the Associate Director Chris Carr presented a Bible to Pierre on behalf of all chaplains. The choir of First Baptist sang an anthem especially composed for the occasion, and the church congregation prepared a warm reception in which people could mingle.

CHAPLAINCY VOLUNTEERS

Encouraged by then DCOPPD Gord Pinder, Rev. Pierre Allard recently undertook a first step in building a national forum for chaplaincy volunteers. On Dec. 8 and 9, 1987, a representative group of volunteers were invited to attend a conversation at NHQ on the potential benefits and possible forms such a networking might take. It was impossible to invite everyone from among all chaplaincy volunteers, but those who could come represented the cursillo movement, individual chaplain volunteers, the P2 programme in BC, CONREC in the Atlantic region, Prison Fellowship, and staff. Everyone felt the meeting was useful, and the initiative was left with NHQ chaplaincy to plan for a next step. Since then NHQ has been in touch with the editors of the justice review Accord and plans are in the air to use this magazine as a way of spreading news about chaplaincy volunteers. For French language volunteers a separate newsletter with similar information would be prepared.



"Am I compatible?"

Women Chaplains

NHQ hosted the women chaplains for two days in Ottawa 10-11 March 1988. The purpose of the event was to recognize five years of experience with this new image of chaplaincy and to listen to the experience of those who had lived it. There were strengths that needed to be developed and expanded, there were weaknesses that needed strengthening, there were errors that needed correcting. The last day was spent developing strategies so that the momentum of these discussions would not be lost. Sr. Loraine Caza, Dean of Theology at the Collège des Dominicains here in Ottawa, joined the group for the first day, and made a presentation on the role of women in ministry in the Bible and in modern society.

Faith Education

One person from each region is in regular touch with the Associate Director to promote the priority of faith education as a part of chaplaincy ministry.

Chaplain Arne Jensen at Kent and Mountain attended an event at Vancouver School of Theology entitled "Education for Transformation". The process and certainly the goals were relevant to correctional ministry. The process the conference introduced had the following components: group building, naming the moment, popular education, transformation, educating for transformation in our context of ministry, a case study, where to go next. The educational process promoted reflection which led into action. Within the correctional setting some "moments" which need naming would be family, community - poverty, hurts, victims, the penitentiary setting. The faith education component asks how to bring about change, metanoia, in this setting.

More information can be obtained from Arne. He might even be interested in leading a workshop on it.!

A T L A N T I C R E G I O N

Personnel

The Rev. Herb Burton, part time Protestant Chaplain at Westmoreland Institution resigned in February for reasons of health. Thanks Herb for your devoted service over so many years! An appropriate farewell was held for Hurb by the chaplains.

Rev. Bernie Archer of Edmonton has accepted a six-month contract to serve as Protestant Chaplain at Westmoreland beginning mid March.

N E W S

The chaplains of the region met in early March for a couple of days to study and to improve their leadership in worship. Canon Tom James, Chaplaincy consultant, and former acting Associate Director, led the workshop.

Personal

The Rev. John Tonks was officially inducted as Protestant Chaplain at Springhill on 15 March 1988.

Sr. Teresa Currie of Springhill attended the annual CAPE convention in Vancouver. She is offering a basic unit of CPE from 25 April till 8 July 1988.

N E W S

The Interfaith Executive Committee met with the chaplains of the region at the end of their workshop on worship. Fr. Bernie Pinet, president, and Canon Tom James, secretary-treasurer were present.

The community chaplaincy programme at Fredericton, which is an initiative of the Christian Council for Reconciliation, and which has received some seed money from CSC, is getting off the ground. They hope to hire a chaplain this spring.

A T L A N T I C R E G I O N

Atlantic Staff Special Weekend

The 7th Special Weekend for staff and families sponsored by Atlantic Chaplaincy and the Christian Council for Reconciliation was held in a motel on the outskirts of Moncton 22-24 January 1988. 180 adults, both staff and spouses, and 150 children participated. Donald Posterski, Associate Director for Project Teen Canada spoke of the challenges facing the contemporary teenager. Dave Chitty, staff, and Prof. Charles Taylor of Acadia University also contributed input and leadership. Pierre Allard, Director of Chaplaincy, moderated the overall proceedings. The weekend ended with voluntary worship and nearly 100% of the participants were there! Alf Bell, Regional Chaplain says feelings rather than words summed up the impact of the event. However, he did offer these words: "It was a great time of family celebration for family and staff with great singing!"

Prayer circular

Rev. Alf Bell, Regional Chaplain, has initiated a small circular newsletter for prayer intentions. Each month one chaplain is featured. It is designed for restricted use, by chaplains and their close collaborators and volunteers.

Q U E B E C R E G I O N

Personnel

The Rev. Gérald Primeau has announced his retirement effective this spring. Father Primeau has been Catholic Chaplain at Leclerc Institution since its opening 27 years ago. He has lived its whole history, and history is made with this retirement. Thank-you to Fr. Primeau for such a long and distinguished ministry, and every good wish to him in his retirement.

The Rev. Paul Delage has resigned from St. Anne des Plaines Institution. Best wishes to you Fr. Paul, in the next step.

The Rev. Ted Reinhardt, part-time Protestant Chaplain at Drummond Institution, has accepted a parish (Anglican) in New Brunswick and has resigned from Drummond.

The Rev. Glenn Coates, part-time Protestant Chaplain at Cowansville, has accepted an appointment in another parish outside his present Diocese, and has resigned from Cowansville.

The Rev. Roland Bergeron, Protestant Chaplain at Laval Institution and CFF has announced his intention to retire this spring after more than 10 years in prison chaplaincy. Thanks to Roland for his pioneering work, and may the Lord grant you many blessings in your retirement.



QUEBEC REGION

Training Session

The chaplains of the region met for a training session of 4 days from 8 - 11 February 1988 in Chateauguay. Fr. Michel Dupont, episcopal vicar for judicial matters addressed the chaplains on prison marriages and canon law. The Rev. Richard Bergeron, professor at the University of Montreal and Director of a Center for the Study of the phenomenon of sects in Québec also addressed the group on minority religions. There were workshops on faith development, the role of laity as chaplains, and other subjects. Mgr. Fernand Lacroix led a day of recollection on the theme of sanctification by one's works, in this case the work of chaplaincy in the prison.

Faith and Sharing

This movement, which had its beginnings with Jean Vanier, is active in one Quebec penitentiary, Leclerc Institution, where Sr. Jacqueline Richard acts as co-ordinator and occasionally as animator for their work. The movement began at Leclerc in September 1984 under the leadership of Mme. Pierrette Maheux Despins. At each meeting some members of the movement from outside come in to share their faith and hope. The spirituality of Faith and Sharing follows that of Jean Vanier with his deep commitment to meet the divine in those who are marginalized: the poor, the handicapped, the prisoner. Recently the volunteer visitors have always included people in wheel-chairs. One inmate, Roger, said that he was at last able to accept his sentence when he came to appreciate the joy and hope of Yvon who was doing life without parole in a wheel chair. There are two retreats each year, one in Advent and one in Lent, during which a homily is given, there is time for meditation, and the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated. Inmate Paulo underwent a deep conversion during one of these celebrations of forgiveness. Jean Vanier visited the Leclerc programme in 1985 and plans to do so again this July. Inmate Michel, a lawyer, was moved to tears when he heard Jean Vanier say quite casually, "In each of us there is violence which can be transformed into a source of tenderness." The big event of the year is the "Festival of Life", next scheduled for April, when all the volunteers come in and there is a lot of fun and sharing. The Sherbrooke branch donated all the Jean Vanier cassettes, both audio and video to the Leclerc group. The inmates make extensive use of the audio cassettes in their cells. About 20 inmates participate regularly.

ONTARIO REGION

Personnel

The Rev. Al Meloche, Catholic Chaplain at Kingston Penitentiary, has accepted a one year term position to head up the Ontario region Employee Assistance Plan. Congratulations, Al. It is an honour to chaplaincy as a whole.

The Rev. Roger deBilly, formerly chaplain at Matsqui and RPC in the Pacific Region will move to Kingston Penitentiary to become acting Catholic Chaplain for one year as of 1 April 1988.

Sr. Sue Malette, of Joyceville, where she has been Catholic Chaplain, has announced her resignation effective Easter 1988. Sr. Sue has been acting as full time chaplain since her days in the residency programme with Rev. Don Misener, five years ago. She plans to take some rest before planning future ventures in ministry. Thanks to you Sr. Sue for the hard and effective work over the past years .

Fr. Raymond Marie Tardif is planning to retire in the near future. We will write at greater length about this when things are finalized.

personal

Rev. Al Tilford of Joyceville Institution attended the annual CAPE convention in Vancouver, 1988.

Sr. Sue Malette, Rev. Bernie MacDonald, Rev. Al Meloche, Rev. Al Tilford, and Rev. John Downs all attended the event "Practical Psychology for Pastors: Coping With Addiction" co-sponsored by the Addiction Research Foundation and the Toronto School of Theology, 15-16 February 1988. It was held at Trinity College of the University of Toronto.

The Revs. Al Meloche, John Hunt, and Al Tilford participated in the drug and alcohol conference sponsored by the Ontario Region of CSC and the Addiction Research Foundation In March 1988.

The Rev. John Hunt attended a 2-day conference on preaching by the famous Baptist preacher of Calvary Baptist Church in New York. This conference was held in Toronto. It is not clear if the Leader Dr. Stephen Olford became an Oblate or John moved a little in his own affiliation! Anyway, he found it great.

Norm Barton, Regional Chaplain, attended a workshop at Atlantic School of Theology on volunteers in the Church. The leader was the well-known specialist on volunteers, Marlene Wilson.

ONTARIO REGION

NEWS

The chaplains of the region held a three-day retreat 1 - 3 March 1988. The leader was Fr. Bernie Kellogg, penitentiary chaplain at a state Institution in New York. Fr. Bernie is a recovering alcoholic, an old-fashioned story teller, and he knew how to get everyone to open up and share. The chaplains took time out to sponsor a wine and cheese party in thanksgiving for the ministry of Sr. Sue Malette who will leave correctional chaplaincy at the end of March.



**Love
Casts
Out
Fear**

1 John 4:18

P R A I R I E R E G I O N

Personnel

A competition is open for the position of Rockwood chaplaincy. This is to be filled on a full time basis by chaplaincy provided someone can be found who will be able to develop programmes to combat drug and alcohol dependency in addition to strictly chapel programmes.

Sr. Anita Gobeil, m.o., has become a part-time chaplain in the Winnipeg area to provide bilingual ministry. She has had a long commitment to juveniles in conflict with the law. Welcome, Anita!

Personal

The Rev. Orville Andres of Sask. Pen made an extensive and fascinating pilgrimage to the Holy Land in January 1988. He speaks movingly about living in different communities while on the trip: in a kibbutz of German origin trying to work out the meaning of reconciliation after the holocaust; in a Palestinian kibbutz where people are committed to non-violence; about a family in the West Bank who had most of their land seized by Israeli forces and would not resort to violent reprisals. He remembers standing on top of a high wall with a large view of the countryside and thinking that perhaps Jesus felt as dizzy as he did! He remembers feelings of revulsion at the more commercial aspects of religious tourism, particularly as manifested at the Church of the Sepulcher. He came back with many slides, a new vision of restorative Christian community, and lots of speaking engagements.

Fr. Mike McDonald continues his extended unit of CPE with Rev. Don Misener at the Provincial Institution in Saskatoon, and his study of French as a second language.

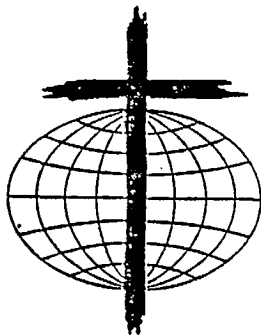
The accompaniment process is going full tilt in Alberta, with four of the newest chaplains meeting regularly with two companions in Red Deer. It is becoming a sort of Alberta caucus of the region. In Winnipeg Fr. Andrews works weekly as he accompanies Rev. Len Corbett, substitute chaplain at Rockwood.

Rev. David Hilderman of Sask Pen and Sr. Maryalice Boyce of Bowden both attended the annual CAPE convention, this year held in Vancouver.

P R A I R I E R E G I O N

N E W S

Ministry to families was the theme for the spring in-service training event for chaplains of the Prairie Region held in Winnipeg 8 - 10 February 1988 at the Ville Marie Retreat Centre. Mr. Craig Power, MSW, RSW, presented original research into family issues as they relate to corrections. He made the chaplains aware of other groups functioning in this field, in particular of the First National Conference on the Family and Corrections to be held in California April 24 -27, 1988. Mr. Power reviewed the history and literature of family studies, discussed the various forms and roles of marriage, focussed on the notion of a healthy marriage relationship, showed some video-cassettes, introduced the genogram as a format for looking at a family, and involved the chaplains in some exercises in relationships that they could use to stimulate consciousness of family dynamics.



PACIFIC REGION

Personnel

The Rev. Tom Speed, Regional Chaplain, has announced his retirement, expected to take effect at the end of May 1988. Tom served 13 years in parish ministry, 6 of them in ethnic minority parishes, before becoming chaplain at the old B.C. penitentiary in 1966. By 1976 he was serving as acting regional chaplain, and soon assumed responsibility for chaplaincy at Kent Institution as well. He was confirmed as Regional Chaplain in 1982. Latterly he has been combining his regional responsibilities with those of chaplain at R.P.C. Tom is a priest of the Anglican Church of Canada, the senior priest in the Diocese of New Westminster, an avid musician, an Ecclesiastical Commander of the Order of St. Lazarus, and chaplain to the Grand Prior in the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. He is an active leader in the North West Region of the American Correctional Chaplains' Association. He and his wife Maureen have raised two sons and a daughter. The chaplains of the region are planning an appropriate celebration of thanksgiving for Tom's ministry. "God's Speed!"

The Rev. Roger de Billy has resigned as Catholic Chaplain at Matsqui and RPC to accept the position of acting Catholic chaplain for one year at Kingston Penitentiary, beginning 1 April 1988.

Personal

Rev. Larry Gessner, substitute chaplain at RPC is getting honed up on CPE. He is taking two successive units under the supervision of Lloyd Dahl at Riverview Hospital, and he attended the annual CAPE convention, this year held in Vancouver.

Rev. Arne Jensen of Kent and Mountain attended the event "Education for Transformation" held in January at Vancouver School of Theology. This event is reported elsewhere in this journal.

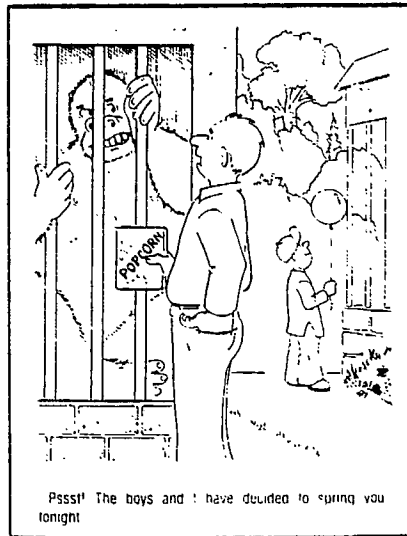
PACIFIC REGION

NEWS

Mr. Ken Stokes, Ph.D., Executive Director of Adult Faith Resources in Minneapolis led a workshop for the chaplains of the region on stages in the development of faith in adults. The workshop was held 17 - 19 February 1988 at Rosemary Heights Retreat Centre in Surrey BC. Eleven of the twelve chaplains in the region were able to attend.

Ken introduced the group to the various theories of development in human life: physical, psycho-social, value, and most recently its application to faith development. The principal model for the stages of faith development is that of James Fowler. In this model there are six stages that people can progress through. Ken felt that while Fowler's model certainly dominated the field, it was only a model and others could be reasonably expected to be devised. The importance of the approach is that it enables chaplains (and others) to relate effectively to people at their own level, and thus to help them grow. He told the story of the young pastor who having learned of this analysis, began systematically to illustrate his sermons with an example from each of the stages. He was delighted when people, "all of a sudden," began to congratulate him on the quality of the sermons!

The evaluation by the chaplains of the event was overwhelmingly positive.



VIEWS

PRISON CHAPLAINCY AND THE VICTIM

When I was doing prison chaplaincy directly I was advised that the reason for separating the criminal from the victim through the elaborate intermediary of the criminal justice system was to protect the victim from the threats of reprisal and to protect the offender from the extremes of a vigilante vengeful justice. Both reasons corresponded to my experience. I knew many offenders who felt angry towards those who had been witnesses or who had pressed charges and threats fell very easily from their lips. I knew the other side as well: a family which I had been close to in parish life had lost a daughter to heroin overdose. The person who had introduced her to heroin became an active participant in the chaplaincy programme. It was almost impossible for me to overcome my anger, in sympathy with the family, as I attempted to offer ministry to the offender. Separation of victims and offenders seemed to be almost essential if the prison chaplain was to develop free and effective relationships with the offenders.

However, there were cracks in this armour keeping the chaplain safe from the influence of victims! Some staff, whose professional competence and commitment were high, identified so strongly with the victims, or at least with "society" as representative of the victims, that they could only relate to the offenders with detached coolness. The closeness of significant human relationships, so necessary for all personal growth, could not come from these people, no matter how competent professionally.

I also began to become aware of my own potential status as victim and a certain desire to protect myself from such a happening. I felt the beginnings of professional schizophrenia: "help me to love the offender in a professional way"!

It also began to become clear that a key factor in helping offenders was enabling them to look clearly at their offense and to repent. Some way of discussing the victim, his/her needs and hurts, was needed. In some cases this could be done through intermediaries such as videos about victims, but flesh and blood would have been better.

The recovery of the importance of the victim in the criminal justice process is fairly recent, and far from being firmly structured in the system. There are many experiments in progress which bring offenders and victims into relationship.

In some cases this relationship is at arms length. Community service is an official sentencing option in some jurisdictions. Through community service the offender contributes directly to the society they have victimized. In some chaplaincy programmes, in England and in Manitoba, groups of offenders meet with groups of victims. In Kitchener Ontario, self-help groups exist for different parties involved in sexual offences: rapists, rape-victims, child victims of incest, their abusing fathers, and the mothers who were secondary victims. On one occasion

the group of rape-victims asked to meet the rapist group. Healing occurred. The Community Board Programme in Toronto uses a panel of five mediators representing the ethnic communities of the neighbourhood to settle disputes before they evolve into criminal acts.

Sometimes the contact between the offender and the victim is first hand. In Genessee, New York, a police officer and a member of a victims self-help group visit victims of violence to provide support and encouragement. After conviction and before sentencing the victim is given the opportunity to meet the offender and in 90% of the cases they do so. Careful presentation and the meeting itself have had a healing effect for victim and offender. The Victim Offender Reconciliation Programme (VORP) began in Kitchener in 1974. David Worth who was instrumental in founding this approach reviewed the programme recently commenting that the objective as he saw it was reconciliation and not just restitution, although restitution may be part of it. "Personal contact is what we are about. We help people sit down face to face and work at their problems in a creative way. . . The criminal justice system keeps people apart; we bring them together."

André Thiffault, a member and former chairperson of the Québec Parole Board, feels that the victim-offender relationship is very important in cases of severe offences. In his opinion "neither can recover without meeting," and this is important "for the protection of the community." "Those who have been hurt have a right to be taken care of and to have their vengeance dealt with. This can't be done unless you bring victim and offender together."

Several prison chaplains have had occasion to bring offenders and victims together in effective and creative ways: When the present Director of Chaplaincy, Pierre Allard, was still in the Atlantic Region as Regional Chaplain, the following incident occurred involving an offender and the Christian Council for Reconciliation of which Rev. Allard was president.

A young man was in crisis with drugs, had committed theft, and violent behaviour. His uncle, who was a community chaplain for ex-inmates and a member of the Christian Council for Reconciliation, tried to reach out to him. He followed him to the cottage where he was hiding out. The young man killed him, ruthlessly and in cold blood, because he wanted his money and car to make a getaway. He is serving life-25 in penitentiary.

The victim was a much loved member of the Christian Council for Reconciliation, a group deeply committed to principles of forgiveness and reconciliation. He left a wife and children. Several of the members were to be inevitably thrown in contact with the offender through their ongoing involvements at Orchester Penitentiary.

Reconciliation they have found is serious business. It requires commitment to a lengthy process of honesty and pain, it requires difficult gestures that are very demanding. As they have come in contact

with the inmate, they have been truthful with him about their feelings. They allowed themselves and each other to deeply experience their true emotions to acknowledge their need to learn how to love. Through this process, over time, there have been several manifestations of love that have broken through in a powerful way. People that the offender knows were deeply attached to the victim and repulsed by what he did, have been able to reach out to him and offer forgiveness. The offender has been overwhelmed by these manifestations of love and it has been very difficult for him to accept. At the same time, it has been so strong that he could not help but be deeply touched and moved into beginning to respond.

The process has been particularly difficult for the victim's wife. When she expressed that she was not ready to forgive, her feelings were fully respected and accepted. The group has found that it is crucial that no one deny their own negative reactions and they are supporting each other in faith. There is still a long way to go, the inmate is just beginning a lengthy term of incarceration. But they have a deep sense that something powerfully positive is unfolding.

Clarence Epp, a former chaplain at Stoney Mountain Institution tells the following story. A man was killed by two unknown young men. He and his wife had several children and they had gone out for a family treat of ice cream that evening.

The widow remained traumatized by the event for several years. She went through a lengthy process and finally came to the conclusion, five years later, that she needed to forgive the young men and to express that forgiveness to them in order to finally put the whole incident behind her. She sought help from her minister who put her in touch with the penitentiary chaplain.

Coincidentally, one of the offenders in question had just approached the same chaplain because he was experiencing a need to express his remorse for the killing to the family of the victim. They were allowed to have contact with each other.

Shortly thereafter, one of the children remarked to the woman: "Mummy, you're eating ice-cream again!" Her gesture of forgiveness had indeed released her from the trauma and this was being illustrated dramatically in her sudden recovery of a taste for ice-cream, a food she now recalled she had not eaten since the night of her husband's murder.

Sister Teresa Currie, chaplain at Springhill Institution, recounts how an offender and a victim came together during her ministry. A woman's only son - a 3rd year medical student - was killed by a drunk driver. The offender was sentenced to penitentiary.

The woman was an active member of the Baptist Church. After some time, she experienced a need to talk to the offender. She felt that he needed forgiveness and that she needed to forgive him.

She sought help from her minister who contacted the Chaplain at Springhill Institution. The chaplain spoke to the inmate and the warden, made arrangements for security clearance and a meeting room at the institution and was present at their encounter.

The inmate was very apprehensive and nervous. "Why would she want to do this?" Initially they sat in silence, tense, entering into personal contact with each other. When her offer of forgiveness was verbalized, it moved him deeply. They were both left very much in peace. The offender has since visited the woman in her home and is now out on parole. The woman, however, experienced problems with her relatives, who can't understand why she did it and are critical of the action she took.

Victim - offender contact may not always be feasible; and there are surely times when it shouldn't be done. However, in some cases it may be just the ministry that is needed. It fits well within the mandate of Christian ministers to be agents of reconciliation; it meets a deep need of some offenders on their road to social reintegration. Such contact may be more difficult and perhaps more fragile than the traditional recourse to neutralization in a prison, but victim - offender reconciliation holds the potential for a longer lasting social stability because of the possibility of restoring broken relationships. It is faith development in action.

The Rev. Chris Carr
Associate Director Chaplaincy (Tng.)

(Note: Thanks to the Church Council on Justice and Corrections for the examples provided.)

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The next issue of News and Views will appear about mid June. Articles and news for inclusion should be sent to the Associate Director of Chaplaincy (Training) by 1 May 1988.