

# Role of Theology Regarding the Positive Use of Coercion

by Donald Stoesz

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to show how various theologies have something to offer regarding the use of coercion. Gordon Kaufman's theology, the Catholic Catechism's affirmation of a beatific vision, its reflection on original righteousness, its placement of the Ten Commandments within Life in Christ, Pierre Allard's vision of reconciliation, and the teleological priorities of the Mission Statement of Correctional Service Canada are outlined in the first half of the paper.

The second half of the paper considers three examples of the positive use of coercion. The paper outlines how the above theological principles provide a rationale within and beyond the use of force.

## Gordon Kaufman's Theology

Gordon Kaufman's theology represents a strong affirmation of the creative role of God and human beings. The freedom and creativity of God work within history by providing the necessary conditions for human believers to respond to God. These divine occasions and opportunities are known as prevenient grace.<sup>1</sup>

Prevenient grace is similar to what parents do in raising their children. They provide the framework of care so their children can exercise freedom while responding to the love shown to them. Parents adapt to the unique characteristics of their children. Their children's freedom is kept intact even as the parents provide the necessary love and care.

This personal analogy demonstrates how the freedom and love of God work within history. Kaufman outlines *four perfections of divine freedom*: unity, power, holiness, and glory.<sup>2</sup> Parents have a great deal of say in their children's lives as they grow up.

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon Kaufman, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1968), 215.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-165.

They bring a unity of purpose in raising their children. They provide boundaries of care that keep their children from running onto the street. Parents provide positive examples and reinforcements of how their children are to act.

Children grow up within this encadrement of care by exercising their freedom. They make their own decisions vis-à-vis the influence of their parents and peers. They become adults as they make responsible decisions about their lives. The parents keep their children's freedom intact even as they anguish and despair over decisions that have negative consequences for their children. The power and control that parents have over their children slowly dissipate in the face of their children's independence and creativity. The parents pray that their children will make the right choices even as they feel helpless in not making their children's decisions for them.

This creative and redemptive dynamic between parents and children can be compared to Kaufman's *four perfections of divine love*: relativity, grace, mercy, and non-resistance of God.<sup>3</sup> God through Christ responds to the unique challenges of human life by being in solidarity with them. God through Christ shows grace and mercy in response to their sinful ways. Christ saves people in spite of themselves through his death on the cross.

Christ shows through his atonement how non-resistant love is an integral part of his salvation message of forgiveness. The assurance of salvific grace frees people from their bonds and empowers them to follow Christ. Christ persuades rather than coerces people to follow him. Non-resistance is an integral way through which persuasive love changes people's hearts.

Kaufman's concept of divine freedom and love is based on a positive view of human nature.<sup>4</sup> Being created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*) means that there is a sense in which human beings create themselves. They establish their own identity through human interactions. They are shaped by their history.

Kaufman's prioritizing of human freedom is the reason that action and persuasion are integral to the salvific purposes of God. Jesus gave himself up willingly to the will of God. Believers do likewise. Harmony is possible because people engage the free will of others to embark on a gospel of peace. Kaufman incorporates an idealistic view of human nature in undergirding the pacifism of God.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 210-221.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 333-335.

Kaufman's concept of free will and prevenient grace can be favourably compared to Catholic theologian Maurice Blondel's immanent view of God. Blondel suggests that God acts as a divine summons within people's lives. God calls human beings to "actualize" themselves through striving after the good. Their decision making processes through the course of growing up opens up possibilities of embracing the divine. This is how Catholic theologian Gregory Baum outlines Blondel's point of view:<sup>5</sup>

Every man, by the logic of his action, is led to discover the impossibility of exhausting the deep willing at the core of his being in a finite universe. Man's unending concern leads him to wider and wider action . . . The distance between himself and himself is (still) infinite. A man is summoned to the inevitable option: either, following the drive of his limitless concern, he opens himself to the infinite; or he encloses himself in the finite order and thus violates the thrust of his own action."

Maurice Blondel helped Gregory Baum realise that "it is in the dynamics of the will seeking ever greater self-realization through continued action, that God is present to human beings. It is in their actions that they say Yes to the divine presence."<sup>6</sup>

Gregory Baum safeguards the freedom of human beings while underlining the importance of God as a divine summons. Believers are called to live the best that they are called to be while understanding that the source of this drive comes from outside of themselves.<sup>7</sup> God as "idealistic presence" relativizes Christians' limited world by serving as an intrinsic beacon by which they live (law written in hearts).

The above description of the role of the divine can lead to the conclusion that God serves as an ideal summons rather than grounding source. Gordon Kaufman has had to answer questions about his concept of God as a "reification" of human striving. I have suggested in an article on the subject that Kaufman does not regard God as simply a projection of human beings' creative imaginations.<sup>8</sup> God is a real force in our lives that represents the accumulation of historically salvific events. Creative

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<sup>5</sup> Gregory Baum, *Man Becoming* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 15-17. Theologian John Cobb provides a similar perspective when he asserts God as the One Who Calls: "the Creator-Lord of history is not the all-determinate cause of the course of natural and historical events, but a lover of the world who calls it ever beyond what it has attained by affirming life, novelty, consciousness, and freedom again and again," *God and the World* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 75-76.

<sup>6</sup> Gregory Baum, *The Oil Has Not Yet Run Dry* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2017), 54-56.

<sup>7</sup> Gregory Baum, *Man Becoming*, 63-65.

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of Gordon Kaufman's realistic view of God, see Donald Stoesz, "Gordon Kaufman's Thought: A Monument to Modernity," *Mennonite Theology in the Face of Modernity*, edited by Gordon Kaufman and Alain Epp Weaver (Kansas: Bethel College, 1996), 42-43, 45. Cf. Gordon Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 57.

and redemptive actions of God modify and sustain the ideals of harmony and peace by which Christians live.

### Limitations of Idealistic Affirmations of Human Freedom, Pacifism, and God

Kaufman's and Blondel's positive view of human nature and immanent view of God do not speak directly to the issue of coercion. Coercion is sometimes necessary to bring order and meaning to people's lives. Human beings are not always convinced on the basis of the atonement or persuasion to do good. The Ten Commandments were created to provide a minimalistic moral code by which to live. The order of society is established through the enforcement of taboos against killing, stealing, coveting, wearing false witness, and disrespecting others. These taboos represent the minimum requirements for society to proceed in an orderly manner.

The children referred to above sometimes make decisions that break society's laws. They use their freedom to act out or flaunt the law. Upon conviction, the children are punished in a variety of ways for what they have done. These sentences could include jail time.

A minimalistic purpose of the law is to let people know that their unlawful behaviour is unacceptable. They have hurt or harmed other people as a result of their actions. They are more interested in their own ends than in the freedom and rights of other people. The state comes into play through its enforcement of the law.

Punishment alone is not enough to convince people to change. Enforcement of the law sometimes feels like an arbitrary force that comes down hard on people. Coercion is nevertheless necessary to show people that their actions are unacceptable. The law points out to a higher good known as peaceful coexistence, harmony, unity, and righteousness. The purpose of the law is to point to the underlying good that it represents. Persuasion and nonresistant responses to aggression and violence represent the underlying purpose of human interaction. Parents along with the state show their (surrogate) children the good of human relationships on which society is based.

### A Beatific Vision

Kaufman's idealistic view of human freedom, grace, and love is based on the free and loving perfections of God. His theology can be compared to a beatific vision that informs and modifies the manner in which coercion and persuasion work in the world. The Catholic Catechism includes a beatific vision as a part of its understanding of God. Images of God as light, life, peace, intimacy, bridegroom,

and wedding represent ecstatic experiences which provide a means through which the actions of God can be contemplated.<sup>9</sup> These overarching images represent profound mystical experiences that help explain the human dynamics of coercion and persuasion.

Allow me to give a personal example of what I mean. I worked for thirty years as a chaplain in the prison system. There were times when I became depressed and despaired over my role and identity. These negative experiences had the curious effect of a powerful ecstatic experience. The intimacy of God became real precisely because of the sheer lack of it on a human level. Divine intimacy informed the manner in which I was able to carry out my duties as a prison chaplain.

This divine experience of intimacy shaped my understanding of human intimacy. I helped inmates experience the love of God. This love extended outward to fellow believers. The chapel became a fellowship in which mutual respect, love, and care were real. God was affirmed as a profound saviour and friend. Friendship represented the most immediate access point through which intimacy, divine and human, could be expressed.

This profound experience was surreal on a number of levels. Prison represents a confined atmosphere in which direct orders are given and force is readily available. The inmates along with myself lived with the knowledge that coercion kept the place intact while love and friendship made it bearable. These two realities are not in contradiction of each other. The coercive framework provides the means through which grace and respect can be learned and experienced.

### Restoration to Original Righteousness

Another way of explaining the dynamic relationship between idealistic visions and realistic actions is to consider the role of original righteousness. The Catholic Catechism affirms the fact that Adam and Eve were in an original state of “holiness and justice“ before they sinned.<sup>10</sup> This state of original righteousness can be compared to the innocence, trust, kindness, honesty, and respect that children have before they become adolescents. Children exude a level of openness that is refreshing to those of us who have lived a few more years. Children’s vivaciousness renews hope in parents whose lived experiences have made them jaded and more sceptical of people’s motives and actions.

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<sup>9</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, second edition (Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2019), 268.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

The Bible uses sexual awareness to illustrate the difference between original innocence and feelings of shame and guilt, along with knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve sowed fig leaves for clothing because they felt naked, literally and figuratively, before a judging God (Genesis 3:7).

Loss of innocence means that adolescents learn to act responsibly with regard to sexuality, power, control, faith, authority, and morality. Young people learn to channel ideals of trust and openness with which they grew up into realistic goals and fulfilling relationships. Their childhood experiences of honesty and respect are translated into healthy social, emotional, and spiritual expressions.

A second naivete<sup>11</sup> is especially important for inmates who have faced the full extent of the law as a result of their criminal offences. Many of them see only the negative consequences of their behaviours. They live in an existential reality of dread, shame, guilt, and self-loathing. Reconsideration of what love, faith, and hope meant in the past helps inmates access deep emotions and beliefs that reorient their lives toward the good. Re-evaluations of what was good about their lives starts the healing process of acceptance and repentance of wrongs committed.

Salvific acts of God reinforce affirmations of their Imago Dei. Through Jesus' death on the cross, God recreates the original righteousness that Adam and Eve possessed before they fell away from God. Repentance of wrong done along with forgiveness through grace and absolution represent powerful ecstatic moments that restore inmates to a sense of wellbeing and faith. Offenders are empowered to become responsible adults again. This new reality obviates the original sin with which they grew up and real offences that they committed.

### Teleological Role of the Ten Commandments

Another way of resolving the dilemma of idealism and coercion is to include the Ten Commandments within a covenantal theology. The Acts of God are at the heart of why the Decalogue was instituted in the first place. Exodus 20:1 starts with God's declaration that God liberated the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The people of Israel's experience of liberation represents the basis of the Decalogue. The Ten Commandments were necessary because people had no idea how to live in the desert. They had to live on "bread and water" for forty years in order to know how to

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Ricoeur elaborates on what this second naivete entails in *Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 352.

become a nation.<sup>12</sup> The decalogue provided the framework within which freedom could be exercised responsibly.

The Roman Catholic Catechism has carried this covenantal theology forward in a progressive way. It places the Decalogue in relation to the two greatest commands of Jesus: to love God and one's neighbour.<sup>13</sup> The upholding of the law is possible as a result of the natural and supernatural grace that God has enacted.

The first two sections of the Catechism have to do with the Apostles Creed and the Sacraments. It is necessary for believers to have the right faith and join the church in order to know how to live a Christian life.

The Catechism starts the third section with a strong affirmation of human dignity and freedom.<sup>14</sup> Human beings are free to choose God because they have been created in the image of God. There is no compunction in this regard. By their free will, human beings are capable of "directing themselves to the true good." They find perfection in "seeking and loving what is true and good."

This freedom is linked to the most important passion called love. "Aroused by the attraction of the good, love causes a desire for the absent good and the hope of attaining it. This movement finds completion in the pleasure and joy of the good possessed."<sup>15</sup>

The Catechism's affirmation of human freedom and love echoes Gordon Kaufman's Enlightenment driven philosophy. Both of them believe in natural grace and natural law. Both of them regard the reason and will of human beings as reflective of God's creation and nature.

The Catechism places the Ten Commandments within this third section on believers' life in Christ.<sup>16</sup> The teleological good of not killing is to protect the sanctity of life. The teleological goal of not stealing is to protect private property. The teleological

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<sup>12</sup> See Donald Stoesz, *Glimpses of Grace* (Victoria: Friesen Press, 2010), 26.

<sup>13</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 498-611.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 425.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 436.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Luther regarded the Ten Commandments primarily in terms of convicting people of sin, Gordon Jensen, "Shaping Piety through Catechetical Structures," *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, 10.2 (2008), 233-234, cf. Martin Luther, "Small Catechism," *The Book of Concord*, ed. by Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 345-376. People repented of their sinfulness so that they could experience the unmerited grace of Christ. Luther placed the Ten Commandments first in his catechism because of this emphasis. The law was there to lead believers to confession and repentance. Luther's distinction between law and gospel led to an unfortunate separation of the Old Testament and New Testament. The Ten Commandments had more to do with showing believers the impossibility of following the law than undergirding the purpose of the law in the first place.

goal of not coveting is to be happy with the state of one's relationships, farm, and livelihood. Loving God and loving one's neighbour set the tone for how the Ten Commandments are interpreted.<sup>17</sup>

The Atonement of Christ remains at the centre of these virtue ethics. God liberated the people of Israel through Jesus' death on the cross in the same way that God liberated the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Freedom from slavery represents a useful analogy of knowing what it is like to live free from sin. Freedom to be responsible is the basis on which Christians are empowered through Christ to live sanctified lives.

1 Peter 2:21-24 undergirds the integral relationship between ethics and salvation. Liberated from sin through Jesus' atonement, believers live righteous lives. Non-resistance represents an integral part of how Christ saved us and liberated us. Ethics and salvation are dynamically linked.

#### Pierre Allard's Idealistic Vision of Reconciliation

After serving for fifteen years as an institutional and regional federal chaplain (1972-1987), former Catholic, Baptist pastor Rev. Dr. Pierre Allard was installed in 1988 as the National Director of Chaplaincy for Correctional Service Canada.<sup>18</sup> Three years before his installation, Pierre enrolled in a graduate program at the North Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Illinois. He wrote a Doctor of Ministry thesis entitled *The Statement of the Correctional Service of Canada Values and a Biblical Perspective for the Role of Chaplain*.<sup>19</sup> He graduated from the program in May of 1986.

Pierre begins his thesis by commending Correctional Service Canada for placing the offender at the centre of their statement of values.<sup>20</sup> He compares this prioritizing of the individual inmate as subject<sup>21</sup> to the 1960s Vatican II report of the Roman Catholic Church. The Vatican document placed a chapter on the People of God before the "one on hierarchy."<sup>22</sup> Correctional Service Canada's "safe, secure and human control of offenders" is done in the context of "helping them become law-

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<sup>17</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 477-480.

<sup>18</sup> Donald Stoesz with Hank Dixon, *A Prison Chaplaincy Manual* (Victoria: Friesen Press, 2020), 43-45.

<sup>19</sup> *Doctor of Ministry Dissertation* (North Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986), unpublished, 192 pages.

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Allard, *The Statement of the Correctional Service of Canada Values and a Biblical Perspective for the Role of Chaplain*, 20.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Duguid has reflected on the importance of a prisoner being treated as a subject, *Can Prisons Work?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 246-247. A review of his book appears in Donald Stoesz with Hank Dixon, *A Prison Chaplaincy Manual*, 207-210.

<sup>22</sup> For what this shift in thinking meant for the Roman Catholic Church, see Richard McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008).

abiding citizens.”<sup>23</sup> The goal of reintegration is integrally linked to the dynamic and static security of incarceration.

Allard grounds ministry on the basis of inmates being created in the image of God.<sup>24</sup> God has endowed them with dignity and respect in spite of what they have done. Self-love is something offenders learn as they move from self-loathing to self-appreciation.

Allard goes on to show how much antagonism and prejudice are present in prisons. He cites Paul in Ephesians 2:15 regarding a dividing wall of hostility that exists between Jews and Gentiles. This wall can be compared to the differences between inmates and law-abiding citizens.

Paul goes on to declare that God through Christ has broken down this wall through his blood and established a new humanity of peace (Ephesians 2:15-16). Allard suggests that this Christian declaration of unity is possible within a prison context. Staff can empathize with inmates and help them work at reintegration.<sup>25</sup>

Allard adds to this idealistic vision by suggesting that chaplains along with other staff can act as ministers of reconciliation in their work with offenders. Paul speaks about believers becoming ambassadors as a result of God reconciling the world to the Godself (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). Unity and reconciliation are possible because of God’s work in the world.<sup>26</sup> Offenders find healing and hope along their journey from remorse and forgiveness to compassion, reconciliation, and restoration.

Rev. Allard used these guiding principles to initiate change and transformation. He assisted in (1) formulation of a CSC Mission Statement, adopted in 1991,<sup>27</sup> (2) creation of a Correctional Service Canada Prayer,<sup>28</sup> (3) establishment of community chaplaincies, (4) building of morale and vision in institutional chaplaincies, (5) integrating volunteers into the work of the Correctional Service,<sup>29</sup> and (6) establishing CSC Awards for exemplary services by staff and volunteers.<sup>30</sup> He

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<sup>23</sup> Pierre Allard, *The Statement of the Correctional Service of Canada Values and a Biblical Perspective for the Role of Chaplain*, 18.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-91.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-102.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-124.

<sup>27</sup> Correctional Service Canada, *Mission of the Correctional Service Canada* (Ottawa, Ministry of Supply, 1991).

<sup>28</sup> J. T. L. James, *A Living Tradition: Penitentiary Chaplaincy* (Correctional Services of Canada. Ontario: Chaplaincy Division, 1990), 151. Allard notes that Canon James composed the CSC prayer in 1984, *The Statement of the Correctional Service of Canada Values and a Biblical Perspective for the Role of Chaplain*, 19.

<sup>29</sup> In August of 2004, the Volunteers of America honoured Pierre Allard by giving him the Maud Booth Correctional Services Award for his work with volunteers and community chaplaincy, Correctional Service Canada, “Pierre Allard Honoured by Volunteers of America,” *Let’s Talk* 29:3 (2004), <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/lt-en/2004/no3/5-eng.shtml> (accessed April 2019).

<sup>30</sup> The *Ron Wiebe Restorative Justice Award* was established by CSC in 1999 to honour the work of Warden Ron Wiebe, see his book, *Reflections of a Canadian Prison Warden*, <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/restorative-justice/003005->

believed that chaplains, the church, and faith communities had unique perspectives on faith and restoration that could be dovetailed with the mission and daily life of the service.

### Mission Statement of Correctional Service Canada

The 1991 Mission Statement of Correctional Service Canada reinforces the creative dynamic between idealistic visions and realistic actions outlined above. The relationship between teleological goals and deontological obligations is especially important.

The Statement begins by linking the reality of incarceration with the goal of rehabilitation.<sup>31</sup> Punishment is meaningful to the extent that it is connected to offenders' feelings of remorse and empathy on the one hand, and to their commitment to become law-abiding citizens on the other. Programs, opportunities, social supports, reduction of harm, and security of society are integrated by a holistic approach that links purpose with motivation and desire for change.

Grief recovery, relationship courses, and alternatives to violence workshops foster a positive view of self, cultivate ownership of wrongdoing, and build a sense of belonging to a greater good and community home. Religious resources of grace, forgiveness, confidence, goodness, creation, and re-creation build on spiritual fruits of faith, love, hope, and forgiveness to help offenders move from paralysis to re-engagement. Religious accommodation of spiritual needs along with faith community resources are linked to goals of purpose, direction, meaning, and restoration.

The Mission Statement is filled with teleological language that speaks about staff and inmates' responsibilities regarding reintegration. The Mission Statement says that "our primary goal is the reintegration of offenders."<sup>32</sup>

Staff are to recognize our responsibility for providing the best possible correctional services . . . We must provide programs and opportunities to meet the unique needs of the various types of offenders with whom we deal, to assist them in changing their criminal behaviour and to enhance their potential for successful reintegration with the community. Once released, offenders

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[3100-eng.shtml](#) (accessed April 2019). This award is given annually to a person who "models restorative justice principles in the service of peace and justice," <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/restorative-justice/003005-3000-eng.shtml> (accessed April 2019). *The Taylor Award* was established by CSC in 2001 to honour the work of Charles Taylor and his wife Charlotte for "their lifetime dedication to faith-based counselling in correctional facilities and the community," <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/volunteers/003008-1000-eng.shtml> (accessed April 2019). It is given annually to a "CSC volunteer who has shown exceptional dedication to the Service."

<sup>31</sup> *Mission of the Correctional Service of Canada* (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1991), 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 15

must continue to be provided with programs, support, and supervision. We must actively encourage offenders to benefit from the opportunities provided as we believe that the long-term protection of society cannot be accomplished by incarceration alone. While our obligation ends at warrant expiry, we must also prepare offenders to take advantage of community programs which may provide support beyond the Service's mandate.

This teleological language sets the deontological obligations of the state into historical perspective. The Correctional Service along with inmates often use rights language to outline their mutual responsibilities. Similar to the Ten Commandments, the state has a minimum obligation in providing offenders with a certain standard of care. Inmates, in turn, cite their rights in obtaining services and accommodations.

Teleological language places rights within obligations of responsibility. Inmates' rights to services are linked to their willingness to become law-abiding citizens. The priority of goal oriented opportunities and commitments places the rights of inmates within a futuristic bubble of hope and achievement.

### Three Examples of the Positive Role of Coercion

The time has come to place these idealistic theologies and teleological visions within a realistic framework of force. How are the pacifistic response of Jesus' atonement, divine summons, beatific vision, original righteousness, teleological placement of the Ten Commandments within an ethic of love, affirmation of God' reconciliation of the world, and goal of rehabilitation related to the use of coercion?

The first example comes from the Correctional Service Canada's shift in policy in the 1980s.<sup>33</sup> Up to the 1960s, employable skills were regarded as the most important trade that inmates could learn while incarcerated. Construction, welding, upholstery, school upgrading, culinary techniques, and food preparation were offered within prison settings.

The problem with this approach was that it did not address factors that brought inmates to prison in the first place. The Correctional Service considered it adequate during those years to punish inmates for what they had done without considering the reasons they had committed their offences. Inmates I spoke to during those early years were in general agreement with this approach. They regarded work as the most important defining aspect of their existence. They knew that they were serving time

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<sup>33</sup> The next three sections are included in Donald Stoesz with Hank Dixon, *A Prison Chaplaincy Manual*, 87-90.

for the offences that they had committed. They did not consider it anyone else's business whether they had addiction issues or marital affairs.

This all changed in the 1980s. The Correctional Service decided that taking programming for the offences a person had committed was part of the punishment that they received.<sup>34</sup> The inmates were withheld pay if they did not take programming for violence, domestic abuse, gang affiliation, or sexual offences. The Correctional Service saw these programs as helping to reduce recidivism and the possibility of future harm.

Inmates reacted strongly against this new policy. There was a period of five years when I as a chaplain could not call any of the Bible studies and relationship courses that I offered a "program." Inmates told their parole officers that the reasons for their offences were none of the staff's business. Offenders would decide if they wanted parole. Inmates would decide if they wanted to take a program. They reacted strongly against being forced to take a program. Everything should be done on a voluntaristic basis, like the AA and NA programs offered in the evening.

One of the surprising outcomes of these new policies was that offenders began to see the merit of these programs after five years. They saw that they could earn a high school diploma if they applied themselves. They realised that looking into the nature and causes of their offences could help them not reoffend in the future.

This example shows how coercion, applied with a clear goal in mind, is effective. The reasons for programming were made clear. Offenders had a responsibility to the state to better understand the reasons for their crimes. They had a responsibility to become law-abiding citizens.

### Integration of Inmate Populations

A second example is taken from events that occurred during the 1990s in Leclerc Institution, a federal prison in Quebec. The relationship between staff and inmates had deteriorated to a point where offenders were taking control of some aspects of the prison. Members of the Hell's Angels' gang were deciding where inmates could reside. They as a group occupied the top two ranges of one wing of the prison while relegating more undesirable inmates to the lower floors.

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<sup>34</sup> Michel Foucault has outlined the historical shift in corrections from corporal forms of punishment and work to enlightenment disciplines of reflection and reform, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1975). Note the discussion in Donald Stoesz with Hank Dixon, *A Prison Chaplaincy Manual*, 180-181.

The Hell's Angels made decisions regarding living arrangements in the face of Correctional Service policy that stated that a prison was to have integrated populations. Integrated populations meant that a variety of different inmates had to learn to live together in units specified by the staff.

The power imbalance between inmates and staff got to a point when a new warden was installed in the prison. The warden met with each of the inmate range representatives. He told them that over the next three months, staff would be deciding which inmate could reside in which unit. The inmates reacted strongly against this new measure. They told the warden that there was going to be assaults against staff. They told the warden that there was going to be violence. They told the warden that there was going to be a riot.

The warden responded to each of these threats. He met again with each of the inmate unit representatives. He told them that none of his correctional staff was going to be harmed. He told the inmates that there was not going to be any violence. He told the offenders that there was not going to be a riot.

The outcome of this strategy and enforcement over three months was generally good. Inmates learned to live with other inmates with whom they felt uncomfortable. Hell's Angels' inmates mixed with other inmates who were not involved with gangs. Black and ethnic inmates were placed on the same range as Caucasians. Inmates with different types of offences learned to live in harmony on a range. The pecking order established by inmates was slowly eroded in favour of a greater integrated population.

A riot occurred on one of ranges while this new policy was being enforced. Inmates trashed their common room, destroying refrigerators, couches, and cooking stoves. They barricaded themselves in their cells, not allowing officers to come onto the range.

The warden's response to this violence was to punish the perpetrators involved while letting the rest of the inmates mingle freely in the prison. The range on which the riot had taken place was barricaded so that none of the inmates on that floor could leave. The inmates were locked in their cells. Food was delivered to the inmates. This situation stayed the same for three months. The barricaded inmates observed the other offenders being given a variety of liberties. The prison as a whole adjusted to the new reality of integrated populations.

After three months, staff moved onto the barricaded range and renovated the common area. Inmates were allowed to leave their cells for a certain amount of time every day. Life slowly returned to normal. Inmates on that range accepted the fact that life was different from what it had been before.

I learned over the course of this six month period that it is possible to set a clear direction of reform. It was possible to enforce this reform in order to show inmates that they were not ultimately the ones who were in charge. The power and control that the Hell's Angels had been able to exert over the prison was slowly eroded. Pro-social interactions replaced the intimidation that the gang had used to enforce what is known as an inmate pecking order.

This cautionary tale demonstrates how coercion can be used to establish pro-social relationships. The Hells Angels are a powerful gang precisely because they believe in using whatever means it takes to get what they want. They sell drugs in order to make a lot of money. They intimidate inmate "informants" in order to keep drugs coming into the prison. They force any inmate who has been convicted of a crime against women or children to "check into the hole" and leave the prison. They flaunt the law by using force and violence to establish their own rules of life. These rules include racketeering, prostitution, selling drugs, and money laundering. The Hells Angels have replaced society's ideals of harmony and good order with their own sense of "justice."

It takes time to right the listing ship because of a power struggle between inmate and staff. Gangs have been formed to exert political and social pressure on the situation. Staff become intimidated to a point where they feel paralyzed in acting. This is why a new seasoned warden was asked to deal with the situation. He was given the power and authority to make changes. He was wise enough to know how to undermine the Hell's Angels' power. He showed inmates at the prison that there was a better way. They could be free of the intimidating hold that the Hells Angels had over them by cooperating with the new policy of integrated populations. Making members of the Hells Angels live on different ranges had the desired effect of decreasing their influence. The Hell's Angels' inmates had to learn to cooperate with a variety of different people. Their skewed view of the world was diffused in favour of pro-social values and policies.

#### Issuing Peace Bond Orders to Keep People Safe

A third example has to do with the provincial courts issuing peace bonds known as 8/10 orders to released inmates who are considered a high risk to reoffend. Some

inmates refuse to take programming for their offences. Other inmates who find it hard to control their sexual impulses. Still others with mental challenges or other disabilities do not know how to deal with emotional, psychological, and behavioural challenges.

Circles of Support and Accountability is a nation wide program that has been set up to help inmates become law abiding citizens.<sup>35</sup> Inmates upon release agree to meet regularly with a group of volunteers to receive support as well as be held accountable. This program has been quite successful.<sup>36</sup> The fellowship offered by this group of people helps to keep an ex-inmate on the straight and narrow.

The provincial courts issue two-year 8/10 orders to some ex-inmates because they are considered a high risk to reoffend. These peace bonds involve the ex-inmate wearing metal bracelets on their ankles so that the high risk unit of the police force can monitor their movements. These peace bonds are set in place after the inmate has completed their federal prison sentence.

Inmates reacted strongly against this peace bond order when it was first implemented over twenty-five years ago. They took the government to court on the basis of their rights. A few of these court orders were lifted. The majority of them stayed in place because of the assessed risk of the inmate to the community.

Many of the inmates I worked with accepted the imposed court order. They admitted that they were still a risk to society. They considered COSAs along with the wearing of an ankle bracelet necessary to keep them safe. They did not want to commit another offence. They were willing to abide by these conditions in order to reintegrate into society.

Several ex-inmates expressed anxiety and trepidation when these bracelets were removed two years later. They understood the nature of their crime cycle. They knew how easy it was to slip back into a negative way of thinking and acting. These ex-inmates continued to be part of the volunteer group of Circles of Support and Accountability. COSAs represented a safe place where they could process the challenges of day-to-day living. COSAs evolved as a social support network that went beyond its original mandate of a one-year covenantal relationship with the core

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<sup>35</sup> Note the discussion, Donald Stoesz with Hank Dixon, *A Prison Chaplaincy Manual*, 36-38.

<sup>36</sup> Wilson, Robin, Franca Cortoni, and Andrew McWhinnie, "Circles of Support and Accountability: A Canadian National Replication of Outcome Findings," *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 2009:21, 412-430.

member. The social group acted as an informal authority figure that kept its members along with society safe after the removal of the bracelets.

Ex-inmates' commitment to "do no more harm" and willingness to abide by conditions represented the heart of the program. These ex-inmates were technically free to do whatever they felt like, even with an ankle bracelet. The bracelet represented a monitoring tool reinforced by accountability to forensic units of the hospital, high risk police units, along with volunteers and friends who were willing to walk alongside these ex-inmates. Persuasion and coercion worked hand in hand to keep society safe.

### Relationship between Theological Principles and Use of Coercion

How do the theological principles outlined in the first half of the paper apply to the use of coercion detailed in the second half? The role of a beatific vision represents a good starting point. Power and control issues are so prevalent in a prison setting that I experienced an ecstatic vision of divine intimacy. The latter experience was necessary to cope with the lack of love and care occurring on a human level. I could suggest to inmates that intimacy, affection, and friendship were, in fact, real. Experiencing intimacy of a deeply religious and existential level helped to show the way past the reality of power and control.

Alternatives to Violence workshops are effective within prisons for the same reasons.<sup>37</sup> Inmates are looking for ways to relate to each other in ways that are different from what they are used to. They are tired of the manipulative ways in which power is exerted by other inmates to gain advantages over them. Alternatives to Violence shines brightly in this controlled atmosphere.

Gordon Kaufman's pacifism speaks directly to this issue. Jesus responded non-violently precisely because of the violence of conviction and death that was foisted upon him. His selfless sacrifice illustrated for all to see what atonement and redemption meant. His suffering and death obviated the need for people to save themselves. This salvific event liberated people to follow another way.

Restoration to innocence, trust, faith, honesty, and kindness is possible because of the ways in which these attributes have been real in people's lives. Human beings have been created with these characteristics regardless of how these bases of peaceful interaction have been abused. Inmates' ability to trust and share with one other person represent the beginning of a long, infant-like journey that builds on

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<sup>37</sup> Note the discussion in Donald Stoesz with Hank Dixon, *A Prison Chaplaincy Manual*, 133-140.

itself. Restoration to original righteousness is necessary precisely because of inmates' loss of all of these things. Inmates are challenged in their cynicism, despair, arrogance, and disdain to consider another way. Christians become like children again in order to flourish.

Placing the Ten Commandments within an encadrement of care brings out the best of these laws. Covetousness outlined in the ninth and tenth commandments applies particularly well.<sup>38</sup> Inmates have robbed banks and stolen from others because of material covetousness. They have sexually assaulted other people and killed their girlfriends' lovers out of sheer jealousy. The Ten Commandments suggest that believers should be content with what they have by way of material possessions and intimate friendships. The taboo emphasis of the law is undergirded by the fact that believers can love unconditionally. Mutual and selfless love are realized through divine and human relationships.

The goal oriented nature of teleological pronouncements obviates the urgency of the immediate situation. Inmates are anxious to get on with their lives because of the privations of incarceration. Their experiences of genuine trust and care within a confined setting propel them into optimistic preoccupations with reintegration and restoration. Too many promises are made. Too many expectations are invoked. The journey from power and control to persuasion and mutual love takes time.

Pierre Allard's vision of reconciliation represents an endpoint of faith. Reconciliation of believers to God, to each other, and to their victims is a long journey that involves a lot of forgiveness, forbearance, compassion, empathy, faith, and gracious redress. Paul declares that God has already reconciled the world to the Godself. Believers are simply witnesses of that reality. Christians tell others because of their experience of it within themselves.

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<sup>38</sup> Note the discussion in *The Catholic Catechism*, 601-613. Except for Lutherans, who follow Catholics in this regard, Protestants only have one taboo against covetousness in their ordering of the Ten Commandments. They divide the Catholic first commandment of "having no other gods before me" and "making no graven image" into two.