

Webpage – Resources – Suggested Reading

[Ministry to the Incarcerated](#) by Dr. Henry G. Covert

The internationally endorsed book *Ministry to the Incarcerated*, originally published by Loyola Press, has been republished and is now available on Amazon and with other online book sellers. It is also on Kindle (3.99) and eBook. Note the "New" green cover and ISBN number for the recent paperback printing. Please [click here](#) for more information. To order from Amazon, click on the book title.

[Slumber Party from Hell](#) by Sue Ellen Allen

Sue Ellen's memoirs of her 7 years in an Arizona prison is more like an overheard conversation. You feel you're intruding but you can't stop listening. Although her book leaves you wishing things were not as she describes them, you find joy and humor in the small things she celebrates during her years of incarceration. This book describes Sue Ellen's battle with breast cancer while behind bars and the tragic death of her bunkmate, Gina. It also describes a woman that came out of the prison system determined to change things for the better. Her motto is "Education, not incarceration" and she works tirelessly with the women of Perryville to reduce recidivism and improve rehabilitation practices. To order from Amazon, click on the book title.

[Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption](#) by Bryan Stevenson

Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship - and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

Just Mercy is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.

[Change of Heart: Justice, Mercy and Making Peace with My Sister's Killer](#) by Jeanne Bishop

Change of Heart begins with tragedy: the murder of Jeanne Bishop's sister Nancy, along with Nancy's husband and their unborn child, in their home some twenty-five years ago. After the murderer (a local teenager) was tried, convicted and sentenced, Bishop determined to forgive and then forget him. She became a public defender, an outspoken opponent of capital punishment, and a supporter of the sentence her sister's killer received: juvenile life without the possibility of parole. Her story is about that uneven journey that led to confronting and reconciling with a

murderer. The book takes on the larger issues of restorative justice, life sentences, and incarceration in the criminal justice system. It unflinchingly acknowledges the personal cost of advocating for mercy for people convicted of serious crimes. In the end, the book is a story of moving beyond mere forgiveness to the deeper waters of redemption and grace.

Living Next Door to the Death House by Virginia and David Owens

Huntsville, Texas, has been the site of more executions since 1982 than any other place in the United States. For Virginia Stem Owens and four generations of her family, it's also home. In this book, Virginia and her husband, David, explore the history of capital punishment and of Huntsville's prison system. The result is both even-handed and chilling. They study the lives of prison officials, public defenders, parents of criminals, and an executioner. Readers on both sides of the death penalty debate will find *Living Next Door to the Death House* a valuable contribution.

Jesus on Death Row: the Trial of Jesus and American Capital Punishment by Mark Osler

The arrest, trial, and execution of Jesus bear remarkable similarities to the American criminal justice system, especially in capital cases. From the use of paid informants to the conflicting testimony of witnesses to the denial of clemency, the elements in the story of Jesus' trial mirror the most common components in capital cases today. How might we see capital punishment in this country differently if we realized that the system used to condemn the Son of God to death so closely resembles the system we use in capital cases today? Should the experience of Jesus' trial, conviction, and execution give us pause as we take similar steps to place individuals on death row today? These are the questions posed by this surprising, challenging, and enlightening book.

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

The New Jim Crow is a stunning account of the rebirth of a caste-like system in the United States, one that has resulted in millions of African Americans locked behind bars and then relegated to a permanent second-class status—denied the very rights supposedly won in the Civil Rights Movement. Alexander shows that, by targeting black men through the War on Drugs and decimating communities of color, the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control, even as it formally adheres to the principle of colorblindness. *The New Jim Crow* challenges the civil rights community—and all of us—to place mass incarceration at the forefront of a new movement for racial justice in America.

My Soul Said to Me: An Unlikely Journey Behind the Walls of Justice by Dr. Robert E. Roberts

Intrigued by the community-building work of M. Scott Peck, Roberts' doctorate research consisted of applying and testing Peck's community-building model in an environment where it seemed only a distant possibility—the prison system. It was there, in Louisiana's Dixon

Correctional Institution, where Roberts' life was forever transformed, as would the lives of hundreds of inmates and former offenders. What started as a literacy program evolved into sessions of shared soul searching, group therapy and a celebration of the prisoners' roots. Roberts went on to found Project Return, the most successful aftercare program for former offenders in the country. Aimed at breaking the cycles of addiction, crime and violence, Project Return is the only prisoner rehabilitation program in the country funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice by National Research Council

Even though youth crime rates have fallen since the mid-1990s, public fear and political rhetoric over the issue have heightened. The Columbine shootings and other sensational incidents add to the furor. Often overlooked are the underlying problems of child poverty, social disadvantage, and the pitfalls inherent to adolescent decisionmaking that contribute to youth crime. This timely release discusses patterns and trends in crimes by children and adolescents--trends revealed by arrest data, victim reports, and other sources; youth crime within general crime; and race and sex disparities. The book explores desistance--the probability that delinquency or criminal activities decrease with age--and evaluates different approaches to predicting future crime rates. Why do young people turn to delinquency? "Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice" presents what we know and what we urgently need to find out about contributing factors. Equally important, this book examines a range of solutions.

Radical Forgiveness by Antoinette Bosco

A woman who has learned to forgive offenses we can hardly imagine teaches us to free ourselves from the anger and resentment that chains us to those who hurt us, including our own selves. Toni Bosco lost one son to suicide and later another son and his wife to the hands of a murderer. Her life since then has been a dramatic journey to radical forgiveness and inner peace.

The Sun Does Shine by Anthony Ray Hinton

This book is an extraordinary testament to the power of hope sustained through the darkest times. Hinton's story tells his dramatic 30 year battle against wrongful imprisonment (on death row!) and shows how you can take away a man's freedom, but you can't take away his imagination, humor, or joy. Mr. Hinton was imprisoned with Walter McMillian, the subject of "Just Mercy." Bryan Stevenson, the author of "Just Mercy" and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, was instrumental in obtaining Mr. Hinton's eventual release.

Arbitrary Death by Rick Unklesbay

This book was released in 2019 and is written by a retired prosecuting attorney from Tucson, AZ. In his 40 years with the Pima County Attorney General's office, he prosecuted well over 100 homicide cases and in 20 of those, he sought the death penalty. In this book, Mr. Unklesbay shares nine of these cases and how they were instrumental in changing his decision about the validity of the death penalty. Mr. Unklesbay advocates that the arbitrariness of this ultimate

punishment makes it impossible to maintain fairness across the state and the nation therefore, capital punishment should be abolished.