A Christian Abolitionist Reading List:
articles and online resources

General resources:

The Marshall Project
The Appeal

These are two key sources of criminal-justice reporting, sharing a broad spectrum of topics from criminal justice policy to prison conditions to first-person accounts from incarcerated people. The Appeal also sponsors “The Daily Appeal,” a daily e-newsletter gathering criminal-justice news from around the nation.

TransformHarm.org—a collection of resources and curricula about prison abolition, restorative justice, transformative justice, and community accountability

Christian theology and prison abolition:

A Christian Case for Prison Abolition by Hannah Bowman

Why Christians Should Be Abolitionists—Again by Hannah Bowman

Mass Incarceration is Religious (and so is Abolition) Joshua Dubler and Vincent Lloyd

Can Justice Demand Prison Abolition? by Kathryn Getek Soltis

From Slavery to Incarceration by Katie Walker Grimes

The Christian Virtue of Justice and the US Prison—a academic article by Kathryn Getek Soltis in the Journal of Catholic Social Thought

Penitence, Plantation and the Penitentiary—academic article by Nikia Evans Robert in The Graduate Journal of Harvard Divinity School

If you need for undocumented immigrants to be punished then you don’t believe in Jesus’ cross—a provocative atonement theology from Morgan Guyton

Criminals With Him: A Karl Barth Sermon to the Basel Prisoners—on Christian community formed among prisoners
Abolitionist theory and policy:

Abolitionist Futures Reading List—a syllabus of articles, books, and excerpts providing an introduction to abolitionist thought. This also includes a bibliography of other helpful resources providing reading lists on abolition.

Critical Resistance: Abolition Now! Ten Years of Strategy and Struggle Against the Prison Industrial Complex—essays on abolition


What Abolitionists Do—an introductory essay to prison abolitionist ideas

What is Prison Abolition?—an introduction in The Nation

Prison Abolition is the Feminist Issue We Need to Talk About—a feminist case for abolition

How Can We Reconcile Prison Abolition with #MeToo?

Are We There Yet? The Promise, Perils, and Politics of Penal Reform

What to Do Instead of Calling the Police—resources for alternatives to calling the police

Prison conditions and mass incarceration:

Prison Policy Initiative: The Whole Pie 2018—report summarizing how many people are in US prisons and jails and for what reasons

Mass Incarceration in America, Explained in 22 Maps and Charts

Solitary confinement:

Solitary Confinement Is Used to Break People—I Know Because I Endured It 43 Years in Solitary—an interview with Albert Woodfox

Malnutrition, rape, family separation, and conditions of confinement:

Prison Rape Is Not a Punchline

Prison Rips Babies From the Arms of Their Mothers: A View From Behind Bars

What’s in a Prison Meal?

My Four Months as a Private Prison Guard—Mother Jones investigation on private prisons

Limiting Human Contact for Prisoners is Counterproductive and Un-Christian

Prisons that withhold menstrual pads humiliate women and violate basic rights
Life sentences and sentencing issues:

- **The Moral Problem of Life-Without-Parole Sentences**
- **Why So Few Violent Offenders Are Let Out on Parole**
- **To End Mass Incarceration We Need to End Long Sentences**
- **The Lifelong Learning of Lifelong Inmates**

*Brenda died in prison, but we lifers and long-termers will keep her legacy alive* — a moving essay about the role lifers play in stabilizing community within prisons

**Restorative justice:**

- **Can Forgiveness Play a Role in Criminal Justice?** — a New York Times magazine story from 2013 describing the use of a restorative justice circle in a murder case involving two teenagers.

- **The Moving Target of Forgiveness** — a personal reflection on forgiveness from a woman whose husband was murdered

- **Restorative Justice is not Forgiveness** — a response critical of the use of “forgiveness” as the only model for restorative justice, as placing too much of a burden on survivors

- **Victims and Offenders Come Together to Make Their Own Justice** — a description of a restorative justice program in practice

- **Radical Compassion: Restorative Justice Programs Meet the Needs of Both Victims and Offenders** — an interview with a restorative justice practitioner about the process

- **After Assault, Some Campuses Focus on Healing Over Punishment** — about the use of restorative justice processes in cases of sexual assault on college campuses

- **A Different Path for Confronting Sexual Assault** — an article about what a restorative justice process can offer in cases of sexual assault and misconduct

- **A New Approach to Violence Treatment** — an interview with Dr. James Gilligan on restorative responses to violence

- **Judge Abby Abinanti Is Fighting for Her Tribe—and for a Better Justice System** — an article about a Native American judge bringing traditional tribal principles to her court

- **Abolition Culture: Moving Beyond Disposability in the Movement** — a reflection on using principles of restorative justice to address conflicts within activist communities

- **The Art of Restorative Questions** — an exhibition of art dealing with principles of restorative justice