

40 years ago, Canadian Quakers approved a Minute on Prison Abolition. The words are as relevant today as they were in 1981.

Penal Abolition 2021

1981 Minute

... prisons are a destructive and expensive failure as a response to crime. We are, therefore, turning our efforts to reform prisons to efforts to **replace them with non-punitive, life-affirming and reconciling responses.**

\$2.5 Billion

The financial cost of the Canadian Prison System per year

"Prisons perpetuate trauma"

- Dr. Gabor Maté -

The prison system is both a cause and a result of violence and social injustice. Throughout history, the majority of prisoners have been the powerless and the oppressed. We are increasingly clear that the **imprisonment of human beings**, like their enslavement, is inherently immoral and is **as destructive to the cagers as the caged.**

1981 Minute

Roots of crime and violence

Poverty, marginalization, histories of oppression, racism, sexism and patriarchy, continued colonization, and systemic discrimination

350,000 +

children in Canada are affected by parental incarceration

57%

of Corrections Officers screened positive for a mental health disorder

30%

of Corrections Officers screened positive for PTSD

from a recent study

imagine replacing the imprisonment of human beings with non-punitive, life affirming responses



Healing lodges
Community-based treatment
Therapeutic communities
Restorative justice

1981 Minute

The challenge before us is to use alternatives based on economic and social justice and on the fulfillment of human needs. **Some alternatives to prisons have already been developed and more are needed** to bring about reconciliation and healing within the community. Friends need to seek out, develop and support such programs.

At the same time, we need to foster awareness in ourselves and others of the roots of crime and violence in society to ensure that our lives do not unintentionally reinforce these evils.

Prison abolition is both a process and a long-term goal. In the interim, there is a great need for Friends to reach out to and to **support all those affected: guards, prisoners, victims and families.**

We recognize a need for restraint of those few who are exhibiting dangerous behaviour. The kind of restraint used and the help offered during this time must reflect our concern for that of God in every person.

Read the full 1981 CYM Minute here:

<https://bit.ly/3rEolOn>



Cost per inmate per year

\$120k **\$200k**

\$120k

The annual salary for 2 addictions counsellors or one year of rent for approximately 4 families

\$200k

One year of university tuition for 30 individuals or the annual salary for 4 community support workers

Learn more at
quakerservice.ca

90
YEARS



QUAKERS
Canadian Friends
Service Committee



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