

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

February 24, 2012

Breaking News!

Council of Churches Announces Eleven-Fifteen Initiative

There was a news release a couple of days ago from Rev. Jerry Hancock stating that Milwaukee area churches were banding together to seek a reduction in Wisconsin's prison population. The goal is to reduce the prison population from over 22,000 to 11,000 by 2015, hence the moniker "11-15".

Wisconsin's correctional system compares poorly with Minnesota's. While both states have similar demographics and crime rates, Minnesota has only 11,000 people in state prisons, opting for community-based treatment as a viable alternative to costly incarceration. The Jonah Project seeks to transform Wisconsin's criminal justice system into something more like Minnesota's system.

Sounds like a good idea to me. But it will be hard to overcome a political culture that feeds off mass hysteria and fear mongering generated by the mass media. There's also the DOC bureaucracy which is not going to want to cede any of its power or authority. The only way to turn this idea into a money-saving venture is to shrink the DOC and divert a portion of those savings toward community-based alternatives.

But all things are possible with God. If the Lord wills it, it will happen. It takes faith and a belief in the goodness of God to launch a project like this. These churches start with an important advantage - unquestioning faith and a belief that with God all things are possible. I'll be praying for their success.

Further details to follow, or visit their website:

[prayforjustice.org](http://prayforjustice.org)