9 Faith-Based Interventions for Reducing Gang Violence in the Caribbean: Reflections from a Professor and a Priest

Edward R. Maguire and C. Jason Gordon

Gang violence is a complex phenomenon that requires comprehensive solutions. While many people instinctively view gang violence as solely a police or a criminal justice problem, it is best conceptualized as a *community* problem. This perspective widens the range of potential strategies and tools that might be used to prevent or reduce gang violence. In designing comprehensive strategies to address gang violence, a basic principle is to leverage resources from different sectors, whether governmental or nongovernmental, that might be able to play an important role. Thus, a preliminary step in diagnosing a gang violence problem (see chapter 6 for information about diagnosing gang violence) is to conduct a detailed inventory of community resources that are currently being used and that might be mobilized to address the problem. The faith community constitutes a vital resource with potential to contribute in unique ways to preventing or reducing gang violence.

This chapter discusses a set of faith-based initiatives that were launched in 2005 and 2006 in and around Gonzales, a distressed community located in East Port of Spain in Trinidad. Gonzales was experiencing serious problems with gangs and gang violence, and community leaders placed significant pressure on the police and other government officials to address these problems. We present a unique perspective from two people whose backgrounds and vantage points for thinking about gang violence differ. Edward Maguire is a criminologist and

university professor from the United States who was hired by the government of Trinidad and Tobago to serve as an advisor on issues related to policing, gangs and violence. Jason Gordon is the Bishop of Bridgetown (Barbados) and Kingstown (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). Previously, Father Jason (as he was then known) served as the parish priest at a Catholic church in Gonzales.[1] Together, we examine the gang violence problem in Gonzales, reflect on its nature and sources, and discuss the role of the faith community in addressing that problem.

Gang violence strategies are often placed into three categories: prevention, intervention and suppression (Klein and Maxson 2006). Prevention efforts are designed to keep youth from joining gangs in the first place. Intervention efforts focus on those who are already in gangs and encourage them to leave the gang, provide them with new skills or opportunities that can provide alternatives to gang life, or encourage them to mitigate the severity of their behaviour if they decide to remain in the gang (for instance, encouraging them to choose options other than violence for resolving disputes). Suppression involves the use of the criminal justice system to monitor, arrest, prosecute and punish gangs. Though all three of these components are necessary for a comprehensive approach to gangs and gang violence, here we focus primarily on the intervention component. The faith community often plays a vital role in prevention efforts as well – and we applaud those vital efforts – but our primary purpose in this chapter is to reflect on the role of the faith community in gang violence *intervention* strategies.

The Role of the Faith Community

There are many reasons to anticipate that the faith community can play an important role in addressing gang violence in the Caribbean. First, at the most general level, research shows that religion exerts a moderate negative effect[2] on crime (Baier and Wright 2001; Evans et al. 1995). This effect is thought to operate through various causal pathways. For instance, at the individual level, studies show that religion enhances self-control and self-regulation as well as the selection and pursuit of more pro-social goals (McCullough and Willoughby 2009). At the community level, studies show that religious participation and religiosity serve as sources of informal social control, mainstream values, civic engagement and social capital (Johnson and Jang 2012). Though research evidence on the relationship between religion and crime is not unanimous, the

majority of studies find an inverse relationship (more religion, less crime) at both the individual and community levels (Baier and Wright 2001; Evans et al. 1995; Johnson and Jang 2012; McGarrell, Brinker and Etindi 1999; McCullough and Willoughby 2009).

Second, Carribbean communities typically hold the faith community in high regard. For instance, a survey of more than ten thousand residents in seven Caribbean nations found that 88.4 per cent of respondents said that religion is "very important" or "rather important" in their lives. This compares with 67.4 per cent of respondents in the United States and only 43.9 per cent in Canada.[3] This same survey shows that the trust and confidence with which faith leaders are viewed in the Caribbean is equally prominent in communities without gang problems and those with serious gang problems.[4] This trust and confidence serves as a potentially solid foundation from which to launch intervention strategies aimed at reducing gang violence.

Third, throughout the world, the faith community plays a vital role in distressed, impoverished and socially disorganized communities where public services and infrastructure are often weak and gangs and crime tend to thrive. For instance, Foley, McCarthy and Chaves (2001, 215) note that "religiously based social service efforts carry an important part of the burden of providing for the needs of poor communities". Similarly, McGarrell, Brinker and Etindi (1999, 7) note that the faith community has "a centuries-old tradition of caring for the poor, the disadvantaged, and the troubled sectors of our society", and doing so in a proficient and committed way. Faith-based organizations care for the disadvantaged through a variety of programmes, including food banks, clothing drives, tutoring classes, after-school programmes, healthcare programmes, substance abuse counselling and more" (Dilulio 1998). Because the faith community has such a long record of experience in addressing a wide range of social issues, McGarrell, Brinker and Etindi (1999, 6) argue that it can serve as "a key mediating institution" for addressing crime problems.

Fourth, although working with violent offenders is inherently risky, faith leaders are usually considered off-limits for violent victimization. This is an important consideration in communities where outsiders are often unwelcome and may place themselves at great risk for violent victimization when trying to work in certain neighbourhoods, particularly with gangs. For instance, an outreach worker who works with gangs in and around Gonzales told us that gang members sometimes shoot at workers from the power company when they come to make repairs. The gang members will then complain when the lights do not work. So he asks them: "If you're shooting people when they

put the ladder up, how they going to fix the light? Why are you shooting?" In Trinidad, several people have been shot while attempting to work within gang communities (such as utility company employees, contractors, taxi drivers) because gang members perceive them as encroaching on their territory, working in their area without prior authorization from the gang leader (in some cases, without paying a "tax" or a "security fee" to the gang leader) or threatening their economic interests. Similarly, numerous "peacemakers" who attempted to mediate gang disputes have also been killed. In the face of such risks, faith leaders are often unique in their ability to navigate the community in ways most people simply cannot. They often hold a special place in the hearts of community residents by virtue of their important role as spiritual advisors and their key role in the community's most intimate rituals and events including childhood rites of passage, weddings, funerals and religious holidays.

Faith leaders around the world are actively addressing serious social problems including economic injustice, homelessness, human trafficking and prostitution, hunger, illegal immigration, teen pregnancy and other issues. The faith community also has an important role to play in reducing violence in all of its various manifestations, including child abuse, elder abuse, sexual violence and intimate partner violence (Horton and Williamson 1988; Peters 2010; Rotunda, Williamson and Penfold 2004; Wolff et al. 2001). This chapter is particularly concerned with the role of faith leaders in addressing *gang* violence.

Two Examples of Gangs, Violence, and the Faith Community

To begin our discussion of faith-based interventions for reducing gang violence in the Caribbean, we draw on two of the most well-known examples from the United States. Both initiatives have served as an inspiration for similar efforts elsewhere, including the Caribbean. The first involves the longstanding efforts of Father Gregory Boyle whose work with the gangs of East Los Angeles has been chronicled in two books and a movie (Boyle 2010; Fremon 2004; Mock 2012). The second involves the work of Reverend Eugene Rivers and his colleagues in Boston's TenPoint Coalition. Although we highlight these two examples, we acknowledge that many other faith leaders around the world have also intervened with gangs to reduce gang violence.

Homeboy Industries (East Los Angeles)

Father Gregory Boyle, a Jesuit priest, was appointed as pastor of the Dolores Mission Church in the gang-ridden Boyle Heights community in East Los Angeles in 1986. In 1988, Father Boyle started Jobs for a Future (JFF), a job training programme intended to provide high-risk youth in the area with an alternative to gang life. Through JFF, Boyle was able to find jobs for "recovering" gang members. In 1992, just after the riots that consumed Los Angeles, Father Boyle launched Homeboy Bakery in order to provide additional job opportunities for recovering gang members. In 2001, Father Boyle launched Homeboy Industries as a non-profit organization. In 2007, Homeboy Industries moved into an impressive $8.5 million building in downtown Los Angeles. Homeboy Industries now provides a variety of services, including case management, legal services, tattoo removal, job training, mental health and substance abuse counselling, and life skills classes, among others. It is also home to enterprises that employ former gang members and help fund the organization's outreach activities, including farmer's markets, a bakery, a diner, a catering operation, and a silk-screening and embroidery shop. Some have called Homeboy Industries "the largest gang intervention program in the nation" with an annual operating budget of nearly $15 million that allows them to employ hundreds of former gang members.[5] Two mottos summarize the approach of Homeboy Industries: "nothing stops a bullet like a job" and "jobs, not jails".

Father Boyle, known as G-Dog by his "homies", reflects on his efforts in his autobiography, *Tattoos on the Heart* (Boyle 2010). The book is a gut-wrenching testament to the difficulties faced by kids growing up in the projects in East Los Angeles and those like Father Boyle who try, often against the odds, to help keep them on a positive path. Father Boyle shares the stories of many anonymous young men and women he has worked with who lost their lives to gang violence. He established Homeboy Industries to create "a community of unconditional love" because "community will always trump gang . . ." (p. 94). He reminds us that gang members come from broken communities and broken families where few services and opportunities are available to the children growing up there. The passage below summarizes his views on the role of the faith community:

> We imagine, with God, this circle of compassion. Then we imagine no one standing outside of that circle, moving ourselves closer to the margins so that the margins themselves will be erased. We stand there with those whose dignity has been

> denied. We locate ourselves with the poor and the powerless and the voiceless. At the edges, we join the easily despised and the readily left out. We stand with the demonized so that the demonizing will stop. We situate ourselves right next to the disposable so that the day will come when we stop throwing people away. (p. 190).

For Father Boyle, gang intervention means investing in young people, providing them with services and jobs, and constantly reminding them that their lives matter – that they are "exactly what God had in mind when God made them" (p. 192).

TenPoint Coalition (Boston)

Boston's African-American community has historically had a negative, conflict-filled relationship with the police. Boston's African-American ministers, acting in their roles as advocates for their communities, also had historically strained relationships with police. As Berrien and Winship (1999) note, "individuals within Boston's religious community were some of the most vocal and publicized critics of the Police Department's aggressive tactics during the late 1980s and early 1990s." Reverend Eugene Rivers in particular earned a reputation for his harsh criticism of police. Also, Boston's faith community struggled to work well together. This all changed due to one tragic and unexpected event in May 1992, when violence erupted among gang members attending a funeral at the Morning Star Baptist Church for a young man who had been shot to death in a drive-by shooting. A church is considered off-limits for violence, even in troubled communities, and the shootings and stabbings that occurred during this incident were shocking to the collective conscience.

As Berrien and Winship (1999) noted, "the brazenness of this attack, taking place within a church sanctuary, inspired many of Boston's black clergy to take action. They realized that they could no longer effectively serve their community by remaining within the four walls of their churches. Instead, youth and others in the surrounding troubled neighbourhoods needed to become extensions of the church congregations." Thus began Boston's TenPoint Coalition, a group of approximately forty churches working together to address issues affecting Boston's youth, particularly those at risk for serious social problems like violence, drug abuse and other forms of delinquent or destructive behaviour. The TenPoint Coalition allowed clergy to step outside of their churches and engage more fully with youth using a street-based ministry approach (1999).

Boston's dramatic drop in violence in the 1990s, particularly youth homicide, is now well storied. Multiple explanations have surfaced to account for this drop in violence. Some credit the police, while others credit the faith community, police-probation partnerships, a public health initiative intended to reduce violence, or a combination of these factors (for example, Berrien and Winship 1999; Braga et al. 2001; Braga, Hureau and Winship 2008; Corbett 2002; Prothrow-Stith and Spivak 1996). Berrien and Winship (1999) argue that the faith community played an important role in reducing violence, but their explanation suggests a more complex causal process than might ordinarily be expected. They argue that the "key contribution of TenPoint and efforts by other church based groups does not lie in their outreach and programmatic work with at-risk youth" because there were simply too few of those activities to have produced such a dramatic effect. Instead, the TenPoint Coalition served as an intermediary institution between the police and the community.

The faith leaders acknowledged that some gang members were so violent and intractable that the formal criminal justice system was necessary to prevent them from offending. Thus, the TenPoint Coalition provided police with "an umbrella of legitimacy" that enabled police to work on reducing the violence. The faith community contributed an extra layer of surveillance for police by providing information based on their extensive network of contacts on the streets. At the same time, the faith leaders made it clear to police that they would not tolerate unnecessarily aggressive policing tactics and would go to the media if necessary to prevent such behaviours. Boston's faith community had manoeuvred themselves into a unique position in which both the police and the community viewed them as partners. Berrien and Winship (1999) argue that these multi-way partnerships between the clergy, the police and communities generated a stock of legitimacy and cooperation that contributed to the drop in Boston's youth homicides in the 1990s.

Background

Nothing in seminary trained me for this.
– Father Jason.

On 6 January 2003, Father Jason was appointed parish priest of two inner city parishes: Holy Rosary, a gothic church on the corner of Henry and Park Streets in Port of Spain, and St Martin de Porres in the community of Gonzales.

By Good Friday of that year (18 April 2003), there had already been five murders in or around Gonzales. The community was thrown into deep crisis. The war was ostensibly between gangs in Upper and Lower Gonzales, but the presence of other very active and violent gangs in immediate proximity complicated the network of alliances and conflicts between gangs in the area. A gang led by two brothers (Pig and Bumbles) in St Barb's, a community located just above Gonzales, had a long record of violence and an avowed dislike for Muslims. Next to St Barb's was Snake Valley, with a small gang led by Prophet. Located just below Gonzales on Charford Court was the G-Unit gang, led by Fresh. Nearby, there was also a small gang on Quarry Street. Its leader was reputed to be wild and irrational and was suspected in a number of killings. Father Jason viewed him as the greatest challenge. There were many gangs in the Port of Spain metropolitan area, but these six gangs located in and around Gonzales were the ones of greatest relevance in the areas where Father Jason was assigned. So he began working with them.[6]

Professor Maguire was hired by the government of Trinidad and Tobago in late 2004 to begin teaching a course on strategic crime control for police managers. His responsibilities were later expanded to include advising the government on police reform, gangs, and violence issues more generally Very quickly, Maguire began looking for additional resources within the communities where gang violence was most problematic. After decades of criminological research in the United States, researchers have clearly established that gang violence issues are more than just a policing problem; they are a community problem. Many of the communities in Trinidad with the highest levels of gang violence have little or no resources to draw upon in mounting prevention and intervention efforts. Maguire was brought on to build improved capacity in the Police Service, but he reasoned that concentrating only on the police would constitute an incomplete solution. A truly comprehensive approach to gang violence would also focus on building capacity in troubled communities.

In many of Trinidad and Tobago's most distressed areas, the faith community – the churches, mosques, temples and other places of worship – is highly active and provides an obvious vantage point for launching interventions. Thus, at Professor Maguire's request, an Assistant Police Commissioner arranged an interview with the leader of one of the major religious organizations in the nation's diverse faith community. In this meeting, Professor Maguire explored what role the faith community might play in a partnership with police to focus on Trinidad's gang violence issues. The faith leader kept insisting that gang violence was a police problem. It was a long and frustrating conversation and it went nowhere. Back to the drawing board.

Professor Maguire continued to search for faith leaders who would be willing to work with the police to address gang violence issues. Eventually he heard about Father Jason Gordon's work in Gonzales. Professor Maguire and Father Jason met for the first time in early 2005. By that time, Father Jason was fully ensconced in his position in Gonzales and Professor Maguire was searching for someone in the faith community who was willing to take a leadership role on the gang issue. In April 2005, Maguire and Gordon met with officials from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Ministry of National Security to design a plan for an ambitious community policing programme for Gonzales that would augment the ongoing Pride in Gonzales initiative. This community policing programme was launched in February 2006. Very quickly it won a community policing award from the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police but, due to a lack of sustained support from the TTPS, it never fully took shape in the way it was originally envisioned. Although the community policing initiative hatched by the initial meeting participants was unable to focus on gangs and violence in the ways we had hoped it would, Father Jason and Professor Maguire continued to work together to address the gang violence issue that plagued Gonzales.

The Intervention

Gonzales is like an old medieval town, located on a hill with five ways in and out. Its population is only about fifty-six hundred, but it generates a substantial amount of violence despite its small size.[7] Gangs control all of the access points. A three-hundred acre community with six gangs located in and around it means a lot of egos and guns in a very tight space.

In response to the crisis, the parish hosted a meeting for all leaders in the community to begin a conversation about possible paths to peace. Out of this initiative grew the Community Intervention for Empowerment (CIT+E) Programme. CIT+E featured homework clinics, an Internet cafe, sports programmes, a photography and video club, and a drama programme. By 2005, CIT+E had partnered with the City of Port of Spain and the Canadian Institute of Planners to bring participatory governance to Gonzales.

At the time, Father Jason believed that there is a simple dynamic to move a community forward – get participation, make it real and make it revolve around the real issues of the community. Most importantly, make sure you deliver on whatever you promise. In 2005, Father Jason started by asking the community what its main concerns were, and recorded the community responses onto a

flip chart. The answers started rolling out, and twelve were listed. Father Jason and his team grouped them and then started a voting process to put the list into hierarchical order:

- crime, indiscipline of youth,[8] and lack of community integration
- unemployment
- disposal of garbage
- reconstruction of roads and infrastructure
- community centre
- inadequate social activities
- water

The stark reality of a visible list provided a sense of priority and a place to start. The process involved the collective participation of community residents; this process was unique because it gave them a voice without the usual litany of woes that go nowhere. All participants worked together to gel the group into a community with a purpose and a mission.

Naming the issues proved to be fairly simple, but moving the group toward solving them was significantly more challenging. Father Jason and his team went through the list item by item and asked the community for solutions. They began with crime, indiscipline of youth and lack of community integration. The solution was to hire a social worker to work with the youth, both one-on-one on the streets and in groups. The aim was to improve community integration and socialization of youth. Community members who attended the meeting discussed the solution and then voted unanimously that this was a good way forward. The intervention was deepening and the community was beginning to trust and move from despair to hope.

The year 2006 began with underlying tensions between the gangs in Upper and Lower Gonzales. The long history of conflict was reaching a fever pitch, and on 9 January, war finally broke out. Two of the "lieutenants" from Snake Eye's gang, Tim*[9] and Brian*, came together to encircle Upper Gonzales. One Sunday night the guns rang out, and the young men scattered. There was one casualty – an eight-year-old girl hit by a splinter launched by a bullet. Father Jason met with both leaders, trying to understand the issues and bring some resolution. It did not work. Father Jason went to visit Snake Eye one morning in early January. It was Eid al-Adha, and the Mufti, a local Muslim faith leader, brought a bull to sacrifice and cook. Snake Eye said he would call off the war, but Father Jason looked into his eyes and knew he did not mean it. The guns

spoke instead. Lower Gonzales went on the offensive, and stated that the reason was some robberies in Jubilee Crescent. Then the rapes came, and gang warfare seemed inevitable.

Father Jason made night-time visits to Upper Gonzales a few times and called the lieutenants to hold them to the cease fire; it did not work. In the last week in January, when an automatic weapon rang off, Father Jason called a meeting between the leaders of the two main gangs. They brought the leaders of two other gangs into the meeting as well. The location was secret and transportation was provided. The gang leaders present at the meeting included Tommy Gun* from Upper Gonzales, Snake Eye from Lower Gonzales and Belmont, Prophet from Snake Valley (located just above Gonzales near St Barb's) and Fresh from Charford Court (located just below Gonzales). Two other gang members were present: Kevin* (a member of Tommy Gun's gang) and Tim (a lieutenant in Snake Eye's gang). Absent from the meeting were the leaders of the gangs in St Barb's (located just above Gonzales) and Quarry Street, neither of whom were invited to participate.

Also present at the meeting were Professor Maguire, a mid-level police official with close ties to the Gonzales community, a female police official who was selected to lead the community policing project in Gonzales, and a police sergeant with extensive knowledge of gangs and gang violence in the area. The sergeant assigned a complement of officers to stand guard outside the meeting to prevent any acts of violence. Later, Professor Maguire learned from contacts in the Police Service that a rival gang had planned to shoot up the meeting, but when they drove by and saw the sergeant's heavily armed team outside they called off their plans. Luckily, disaster was averted.

The discussions held during the truce meeting revealed that one of Tommy Gun's young gang members in accordance with another young member of the St Barb's gang were behaving in ways inconsistent with "the order" – the informal set of values and expectations among the gangs for what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Others described them as "loose cannons" who did whatever they wanted without appropriate approval from their leaders. The other gang leaders told Tommy Gun that he was no longer able to control his people. The police sergeant told him that he "lose his belly", a euphemism meant to suggest that he was no longer as courageous or as effective a leader as he had once been. The truce focused on this problem by encouraging Tommy Gun to control his youngest members. As young men began to assert their independence and failed to heed "the order", they reinforced a theme that emerged prominently not only in our study of Gonzales, but also in our study of gangs and violence 38xy

in Trinidad more generally. There is a steady and unrelenting supply of young men coming of age, ready to challenge the status quo not only about *what* is acceptable, but also about *who* is in charge.

According to Father Jason, the meeting seemed to work "like magic". Fresh intervened at a pivotal time when Tommy Gun and Snake Eye were at each other. Professor Maguire remembers being awestruck by the fact that Fresh – a notorious gang leader who had committed or ordered numerous acts of violence – was able to calm Tommy Gun with his reassuring words and by patting Tommy Gun's leg in a gentle way. Fresh also took on Prophet, resolving their differences and providing a way forward. Tommy Gun and Snake Eye followed and a four-way resolution happened. All four leaders committed to a ceasefire. It worked. The objective was achieved.

As the meeting ended and participants began to disperse, Father Jason arranged for people to be driven home. Father Jason took Snake Eye and Fresh in his car. When they pulled up to Charford Court, Fresh invited Snake Eye to lime[10] with him. Father Jason thought, "Great! They are now trusting and bonding." That night, on 26 January 2006, a young man was killed around the corner from where they were, just below Gonzales. The dead young man was the brother of the gang leader from Quarry Street who had not been invited to the meeting. A new dynamic had emerged – Fresh and Snake Eye against the leader of the gang on Quarry Street. Just two days later on 28 January, another young man, the Quarry Street gang leader's 18-year-old stepson, was killed at his home in Gonzales. He was an innocent victim unrelated to the war. When gangs cannot locate their intended targets, they sometimes choose to victimize the families or friends of the target instead.

Father Jason notified Professor Maguire of the second murder just after it occurred and they both went to the home. The young man's bullet-ridden body was still lying in the bedroom where he had been shot. The room was eerily still. Children milled about on the covered porch just outside of the bedroom, with a clear view of the body. Professor Maguire observed this phenomenon at several homicide scenes, where parents would allow children to remain in the area near a homicide victim. He worried that allowing children to grow up around this kind of violence might desensitize them. Exposure to violence as a child is one of the risk factors for violence as an adult (O'Keefe 1997; Song, Singer and Anglin 1998). Gang members will often say that they expect to die early because that is the life they have chosen. That is not to say that they don't fear death, because most do. But this young man was a casualty of a war that he was not involved in. And the suspected shooters were from a gang that just days before had agreed

to a truce in our presence. But, very importantly, they had agreed to a truce *with each other*, not with gangs who were absent from the truce meeting. While this decision calculus may appear senseless through the lens of conventional logic, it makes perfect sense through the lens of gang logic. Father Jason reflects:

> Once more, Indi, like Rachel, lamented. Two years before, on Good Friday morning, another young man from that house was killed in the same way. It was Jamal's death which started CIT+E and the whole Gonzales initiative for me. To this day, I hold responsibility for these two deaths. I did not pull the trigger, but I set in motion the dynamic that produced the logic. Gang intervention is a messy business. These two deaths were the direct result of the meeting. The gangs did not violate the Assumption Accord – the agreement forged at that church where Father Garfield gave us hospitality. But they violated the spirit of the meeting. That was a subtlety lost on the gang leaders. I was hurt, shattered and betrayed. But it was not about me; it was about peace.

The Sunday after the meeting in Upper Gonzales, a young man named Fonzie* said to Father Jason: "Fada, why you leave we out?" Fonzie was a member of the St Barb's gang, located just above Gonzales, and they had not been invited to participate in the truce meeting. Father Jason had been warned by Snake Eye and Tommy Gun never to go to St Barb's. "Fada, dey dread and evilous," they'd said. The mythology surrounding the St Barb's gang was legend. They were reputed to have killed Chen, the powerful Muslim boss who controlled the Unemployment Relief Programme, a government-sponsored work programme that had been infiltrated extensively by criminal gangs. The St Barb's gang, led by brothers Pig and Bumbles, had a reputation for being fiercely independent and violent.

Father Jason went to St Barb's at 3:00 p.m. the next day and found a warm welcome. At 8:00 p.m. as he was making his way down the hill, he experienced something that felt stirring and powerful. He returned on Wednesday and met with Roger*, a government-based gang outreach worker who did a lot of work with the gangs. Together Father Jason and Roger used the Gonzales methodology to find out what the gangs really wanted. Thirty young men came out – lean, mean and curious. The real gang members were the target audience. They wanted to organize themselves for business in a new way. Father Jason promised to return with a facilitator to take the next stage of the journey.

Father Jason called Ravi*, who was at that time involved in founding a tertiary level organization in Trinidad. Ravi agreed to facilitate the process and mentor the young men in business. He had started a home for socially displaced

young men many years before and was accustomed to the "rough and tumble". At the same time, Martin*, a local businessman who had called Father Jason about a personal matter, ended up offering to lend a hand in working with the gangs. Martin, Ravi and Father Jason came together and went up the hill.

That Wednesday was the most hopeful that Father Jason had ever been. Martin and Ravi facilitated and mentored, while Roger was present and supportive. More young men turned out, and they were enthused about the programme; they wanted to start business, to make legitimate money. They had ideas and passion. Ravi told them, "If you are serious, we need a day of training." Sunday at Club Dominoes was the decided location. They organized to borrow chairs and cook lunch. It was impressive.

"That Sunday," according to Father Jason, "we arrived heart in hand." Everything was in place. The meeting began half an hour late, as is customary, but a full house turned out and Brothers United for Peace (BUP) was formed. They established a mission and vision statement, as well as a list of priority projects: feeding the community, distributing goods wholesale on the hill, creating a recreation club with a large-screen TV, infrastructural contracts and a sports day. They were on a roll. Euphoria came to the hill. The group was comprised of St Barb's led by Stretch*,[11] Upper Gonzales led by Tommy Gun, and Snake Valley led by Prophet. The future seemed secure. Integral development through participation was taking root. They were the architects of their own destiny. Father Jason recalls, "It seemed to me that day, peace broke out."

The euphoria lasted, built further with a football match in March. Ravi lent them $4,500 TT ($750 US) to fund the event. In part it was a test of the ability of these young men to organize and to be accountable and honest. It was a success for the most part. The event was well-organized and managed. The money was repaid, and expectation grew. However, the tide of hope turned that day. After the success of the football match, Josh, the economic leader of the Sandy gang in St Barb's, was killed Sunday evening [the night after the match]. Stretch was the acting leader of St Barb's because his brothers, Pig and Bumbles, were both in prison. Josh had had wider acceptance by Prophet (from Snake Valley) and Tommy Gun (from Upper Gonzales) because he controlled the marijuana trade and thus the money. The brothers were not included in the peace process, which turned out to be a costly omission. They controlled things from jail with a cell phone. Josh was a casualty of war, the war for control. It was an inside job and everyone knew it. Father Jason recalls, "On the Saturday before the sports, Josh had told me he wanted to talk 'personal'. We never did. A bullet came between us."

This death broke the alliance. Once again, Tommy Gun and Prophet couldn't trust St Barb's, which changed things dramatically. Ravi had a group of fifteen people attending a computer literacy course in a facility at his institution. This continued for a long time with great success. Martin and Father Jason visited the three gangs on a regular basis to keep lines of communication open. Then in May, Prophet, the leader of the gang in Snake Valley, was killed. Everyone knew it was St Barb's. In fact, Prophet knew they were coming for him at some point. Father Jason reflects:

> The deaths of Josh and Prophet were directly connected to the alliance that we created. For the second time in the year, our best intentions did not keep people alive. To live with this is not easy. Welcome to the real world of the 'hood where the coming of the Christ has a high price – murder. Have you ever seen this dynamic at work in your life; the unexpected appearance of the God experience followed by mayhem? That year, I touched the powerlessness of God. Imagine what it must have been like for the Father to sit and watch the slaughter of the innocents and do nothing. That is God, His signature in transformation. Living with it is living the Christ mystery.

While things in St Barb's heated up from March onwards, Gonzales cooled down. In March, Mack* (from Upper Gonzales) and Brian (from Lower Gonzales) had a few face-offs in Jubilee Crescent. Brian was running a job there at the foot of the steps and Father Jason recalls that "Mack would jumbie him just for so."[12] One day, Brian could not take it and went and shot up the Upper Gonzales community. Father Jason intervened and asked him why he broke the peace.

Brian:	Fada I had to send a message to dem, I had to tell dem we ain't taking it no more.
Father Jason:	You went to Upper Gonzales and fired shots to send a message!
Brian:	Is de only ting dey understand!
Father Jason:	You fired off bullets to send a message?
Brian:	YES!

Father Jason recalls thinking, "Wow! My lesson of the year! The gun is a tool of communication!"

Together, they explored the way Brian's message was probably received and brainstormed alternative and more effective ways of sending his message. They agreed that Brian would call Father Jason next time to help convey the message in a more peaceful way. This was a significant step forward. One week later,

Father Jason received a call from Brian. Father Jason called Mack and then called Brian back. It worked like a dream, and Brian was amazed. A week later a call came again and Father Jason went out at night and found Mack. He then called Brian on his phone and had the two of them speak. It went well until an all-out "cuss-out" took place – what a disaster!

Four days later, Brian stopped Father Jason: "Fada, sorry about the other night, no disrespect was meant. Anyway, me and Mack sort out we business."

"What, how?"

"Well I was working by the step and I saw Mack above and called out to him and said, 'We is big men and we can't have de Fada carrying messages between us like dis.' Mack said, 'I agree, but I have my piece on me.'"

Brian said, "Me too," and handed his gun over to one of his friends. Mack did the same. They met, they spoke, and they found new ways to send messages. Father Jason reflects:

> Peace has a literacy of its own. It requires communication and this requires skill and imagination. Brian and Mack had never imagined a different way. So, even in a time of ceasefire, they did not see alternatives to their conflict. This, too, is the Christ story. Peace has been given to us and we keep going with the same old ways of living; the ways that continue to perpetuate the mess that we have. There is a literacy for peace that we must learn and teach. Yes, it is about communication and imagination but, fundamentally, it is about believing that peace is given, believing that our role in salvation history is finding alternative ways to send messages. We might not pick up a gun but a tantrum, a fit of anger, shaming someone, resentment, bad talking, are all the same destructive path. On that day when Brian and Mack spoke, the war and all of its logic and machinery were dismantled. They soon began meeting in each other's part of the community. The Community could not believe what it saw, yes, a miracle! Through all of the pain and disappointment, peace was born.

In the new circumstances, the community wanted to do an Easter Extravaganza. Three community leaders from different faiths came together to do this: a Muslim, a Rasta and a Seventh-day Adventist. Together with all of the other events, they wanted to do a walk through the community to demonstrate the newly found goodness and peace. Father Jason listened deeply and together they decided it would be a Holy Saturday event. A mixture of parishioners and some residents gathered at the Church, and interestingly, nobody found it strange. One of the community leaders had prepared signs; each had one word – goodness, peace, blessings, love, unity. They had jerseys printed with the new logo

of Pride in Gonzales, each with one of those uplifting words. At 5:30 p.m., they departed, travelling up Indian Hill by the temple, through the dreaded walkway where the war was launched, into Upper Gonzales. Tim, one of the lieutenants from the gang in Lower Gonzales, met them on the hill, greeting them with smiles. He had heard about the walk and was joining. When they reached Upper Gonzales, Father Jason asked him if he would come. He said, "Fada, if you going, I going with you." Father Jason reflects:

> We went, and elation in the group of pilgrims mounted slowly. Tim had not walked in Upper Gonzales for five years. Brian and Mack had agreed to a peace two weeks before. The community had heard but did not really believe. We met Spider*, one of the "lieutenants" from Upper Gonzales. Tim was on one side of me and Spider on the other. Holy Saturday! This was Resurrection!
>
> We reached the playfield around 6:30 p.m. The sun had set and the acolytes had already lit the Easter fire. I spoke to the young men sweating on the court and they fell into the assembly. Tim said: "De Fada have to pray. Let's form a circle." A circle emerged around the fire as the last light faded. I invited each person to say something positive about Gonzales, then light a candle from the fire. It was the most profoundly moving Easter experience that I have had. The positives and the candles being lit, the two gangs present with the Church and the Community. When the candles were lit, I prayed, the community rejoiced and we continued the pilgrimage towards the Church through other parts of the Community, bringing blessings. We did not need feet to walk. God carried us that night.
>
> Roger Turton has an architectural concept that the inner space of a building is in conversation with the outer space of the community, and vice versa. Well, that is good pastoral theology and good liturgy. We brought the inner space of the Church into the outer space of the Community for Easter. This "conversation" continued within the inner space of the Church for a long while. And this is what Pride in Gonzales is about: a conversation among the different constituents, building the logic for peace. Dialogue and Solidarity are the twin foundations. Pope Benedict XVI, in his message for World Day of Peace 2007, says: "Likewise, peace is both gift and task. If it is true that peace between individuals and peoples – the ability to live together and to build relationships of justice and solidarity – calls for unfailing commitment on our part, it is also true, and indeed more so, that peace is a gift from God.

In July, war broke out between Upper Gonzales and St Barb's. Bumbles and Pig from St Barb's had been released from prison in June. It was the second time they had been released after murder charges against them were dropped. Pig resumed leadership of the gang, which brought things to an impasse; Martin

and Father Jason went up the hill that Sunday to mediate. Pig's army had already been assembled and after some negotiation he said, "Fada, I just make up my mind we have to have war. I want you to leave and don't come back. In war, anyone moving between the sides can be seen as the enemy."

Father Jason recalls, "That was as direct a threat as I have ever received. I tried to negotiate but he had passed that point. I told him to call me if he changed his mind. Pig said, 'Fada, when you leave, I will delete your number.' It was final." That Sunday, the Fatima devotions began with a pilgrimage in Gonzales walking to the Shrine to pray for peace. It involved passing through the troubled area. Father Jason reflects:

> I left St Barb's and went to the St Martin Church to begin the pilgrimage. We walked, we prayed, we believed. That afternoon, St Barb's came down and shot up the community. It was mayhem. Whenever we do not know what to do, the golden rule is to sit and wait and watch, because God is doing something and we need to be in tune with it. In grief and disbelief, we waited and watched and, that Thursday, I received a call that I never expected – Pig. He wanted to re-open negotiations.
>
> A week and a half later, Martin and I were driving back up to St Barb's at 7 p.m. with an offer from Tommy Gun for a ceasefire and a commitment to step back from the war. Pig was shocked that we came up at night and elated that negotiations had reached that far. While there, Tommy Gun called to see if we had a deal. Sean guessed it was Tommy on the phone and asked to speak to him. We hesitated, but handed him the phone. In the midst of the conversation Pig said, "Tommy, we sleep in the same bed as children, we grow up together, we went to war together, plenty people try to put me against you. What hurting is that you believe I am against you. Well, let me tell you, I will never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never raise my hand to kill you." With tears in his voice, Pig poured out his heart. The war was because he could not reach Tommy, because of hurt, because a friend misunderstood his intentions. About communications! Literacy and peace go together. Two weeks later, in St Barb's, there was a meeting of all the gangs. They all signed for peace.[13] It was fragile and tenuous, but it was clearly the thing that God was doing. The thing we have to work hard to maintain.

Pig was killed in late November 2006, shot while sleeping in bed with his girlfriend; an inside job, it would seem, a disgruntled inner faction of his own gang. Later we learned that part of it was that he had proposed to kidnap Martin and Father Jason. His men would have no part of it and lost faith in him. According to Father Jason, "We managed to build relationships that kept us safe."

Pig kept the peace between St Barb's and Gonzales and he kept the peace in the wider Laventille community. He was buried at the Shrine in a magnificent liturgy, a service of remembrance led by his father, then the funeral. It brought healing to the hill and changed the role of the Church in the peace process. On 3 December 2006, Father Jason was re-assigned to the Social Justice Commission of the Catholic Church, and Father Clyde Harvey became parish priest at St Martin de Porres. Father Jason reflects:

> On that Good Friday morning in 2003, when I led the Stations of the Cross from Rosary and got the news about Jamal being killed that morning, I had no idea what God was doing. The passion of Gonzales and the Passion of Christ intermingled. In my conversations with Leela Ramdeen, then head of the Social Justice Commission of the Catholic Church, about a Catholic response to the violence on the hill, we did not know what we were beginning. When the Archbishop asked that we start a project to address the crime and violence in Laventille, he could not have known what he was asking.
>
> This has been a season of Grace. Let me be more specific: God has been building peace in East Port of Spain; block by block it is happening. The work is beyond anything we have done collectively. Like the Christ story, it is God's appointed time. The birthing of peace is what the Kingdom is most deeply about, what Christ is most deeply about. It is what God has been about in Gonzales.
>
> There are many parts of this story that I cannot tell, these remain in my heart; like Mary I ponder them and see the magnificence of God every day. We built a team in three and a half years that made a significant impact upon Gonzales, East Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. In 2006 we won a prize from the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police for community policing. Little Gonzales! The Prime Minister, in his 2007 budget speech hailed Pride in Gonzales as the leading community initiative in the country. He pledged support for any community using this approach or method to bring peace and build the community.
>
> Gang intervention is a messy business. To do good, evil follows. Responsibility is a difficult thing to work through. Does the lowering of the murder rate and drop in murders justify the four lives lost directly? No! Every life is sacred! Every one is precious. It is only relationships that are deep and true that can keep you safe in this fluid environment. I was threatened directly more than once. I made peace with God going to a meeting more than once. I walked into a serious threat and plan to kill me for bringing the police into Gonzales and because I faced the leader squarely and spoke directly, he did not use the 9mm when it arrived. Why did I do it, why put my life in danger? Well I did a 30-day retreat and during it God said if he would ask me to do something, would I say yes? One week after the retreat

> I was introduced to the gang leader in Upper Gonzales. I knew that walking the street and intervening the best that I could was the thing God asked me to do. Any other reason would be either suicide or madness.

Reflecting on the Effectiveness of the Intervention

A comprehensive impact evaluation of the gang intervention carried out by Father Jason and his partners in and around Gonzales is beyond the scope of this chapter. Evaluating these types of initiatives is difficult for many reasons. First, crime data compiled by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service do not match up with the boundaries of Gonzales. The majority of Gonzales is situated within the Belmont police station district, but the Police Service did not have the capacity at the time to disaggregate crime records to account for crime at anything less than the district level. Moreover, although the boundaries of Gonzales are contested, a small portion of the community is actually situated in the Besson Street police station district, further complicating our ability to gather crime records for Gonzales specifically.

Second, even if we were able to compile the crime data for the community of Gonzales, it would be very difficult to determine the most appropriate geographic boundaries for the evaluation. Gangs typically have their own geographical boundaries which do not coincide with police districts or census tracts (known as "enumeration districts" in Trinidad and Tobago). For instance, Snake Eye's territory was distributed; he lived in Belmont and controlled portions of Belmont outside of Gonzales, yet he also controlled Lower Gonzales at the time of the intervention. Moreover, gangs often commit acts of violence in locations separate from territories that they or their rivals control. It is very complex to determine what geographic boundaries to use in evaluating the effectiveness of a gang intervention. We discussed six gangs in this chapter – two in Gonzales, Snake Eye in Lower Gonzales and Tommy Gun in Upper Gonzales, and four located on the outskirts of Gonzales: the G-Unit run by Fresh on Charford Court, Prophet in Snake Valley, the St Barb's gang, and a small gang on Quarry Street. Yet, the Port of Spain metropolitan area was home to at least twenty-eight street gangs with many connections to those included in the intervention described in this chapter. Those gangs had their own collection of conflicts and alliances, and other interventions occurred among some of those gangs at around the same time as the intervention described here.

Third, the fact that the intervention described here was distributed over time and included a variety of different elements means evaluating its effectiveness is very difficult. Most quasi-experimental methods used to evaluate the impact of interventions rely on the idea that it takes place at a specific point in time (the "interruption" in interrupted time series analysis, for example). As a result, it is possible to determine whether that intervention affected the outcomes of interest. Here, the intervention unfolded over time and included multiple components. There are statistical methods for evaluating temporally distributed interventions like this, but they are nearly impossible to apply with the types of data available to us here.

Finally, another much larger truce was launched throughout the Port of Spain area in September 2006 and it involved several of the gangs in and around Gonzales. It would be very difficult to separate the effects of the ongoing intervention taking place in Gonzales from the effects of this larger truce.

Although we cannot carry out a formal impact evaluation of the intervention described in this chapter, the limited data available to us allow for some crude inferences. First, we examine the relationships between the six gangs in and around Gonzales before and after the truce, which was just one component of the intervention. Our knowledge of these conflicts and alliances is based on Father Jason's street work with the gangs and Professor Maguire's access to police intelligence on these issues. Figure 9.1 contains a sociogram illustrating conflicts and alliances before the truce, figure 9.2 illustrates the same phenomena one week after the truce, and figure 9.3 illustrates the same phenomena six months after the truce. It is impossible to construct a meaningful sociogram for the end of the intervention period (which occurred in December 2006 when Father Jason was reassigned). By then, the larger gang truce negotiated in September 2006 had occurred, thus complicating our ability to draw inferences about the effects of the truce organized by Father Jason. Furthermore, the leader of the Quarry Street gang had gone into hiding from his rivals and the police by that point. Pig and Prophet had also both been murdered, along with numerous other members of the six gangs discussed in this paper. In addition, new gangs were emerging in the area as young men came of age and sought to make their mark on the streets. These sociograms demonstrate that the truce was successful in transforming conflict relationships into alliances, though a number of violent incidents continued to occur between the gangs in an around Gonzales.

Second, the Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) Branch in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service provided us with data on violent incidents in

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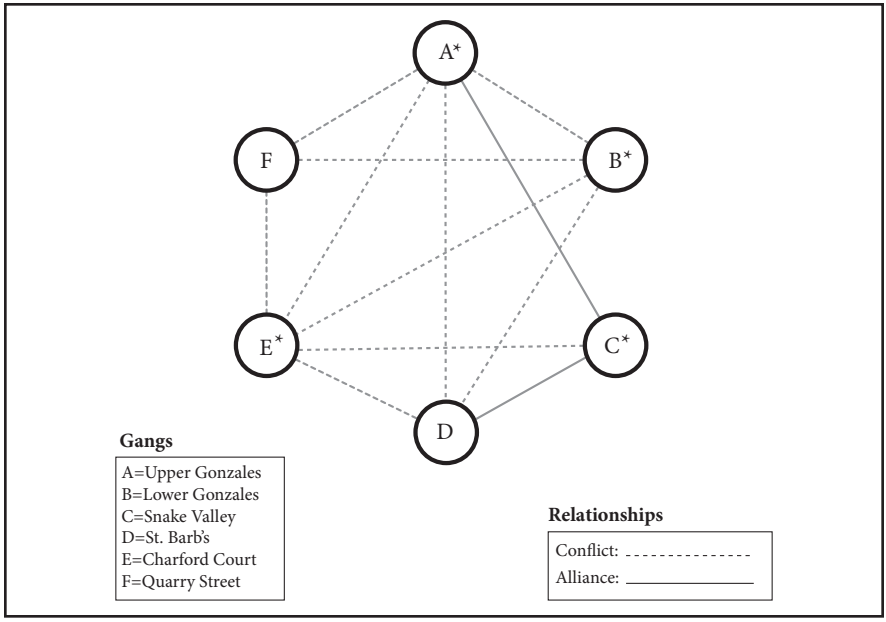

Figure 9.1. Conflicts and alliances between six gangs beforetruce

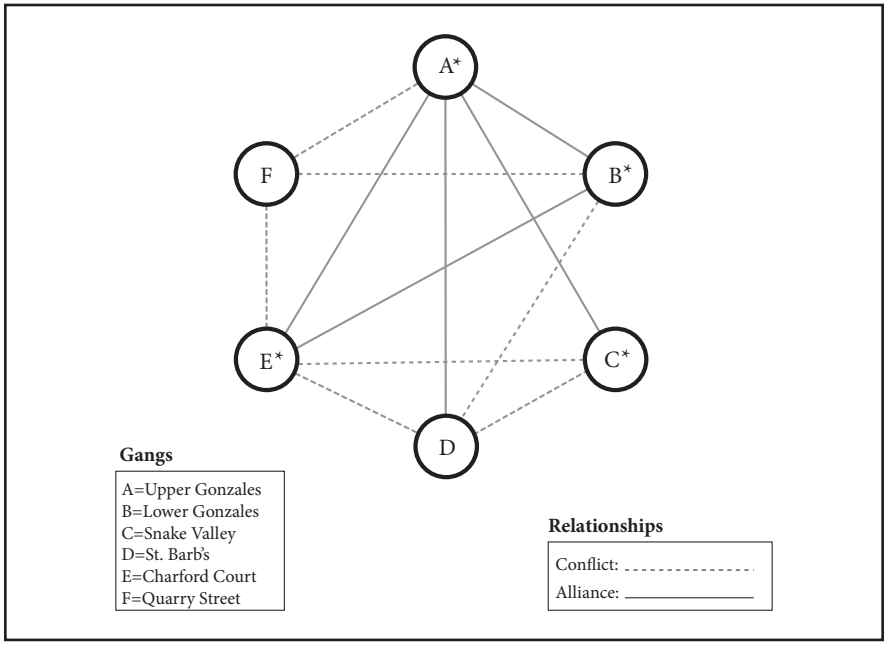

Figure 9.2. Conflicts and alliances between six Gangs one week aftertruce

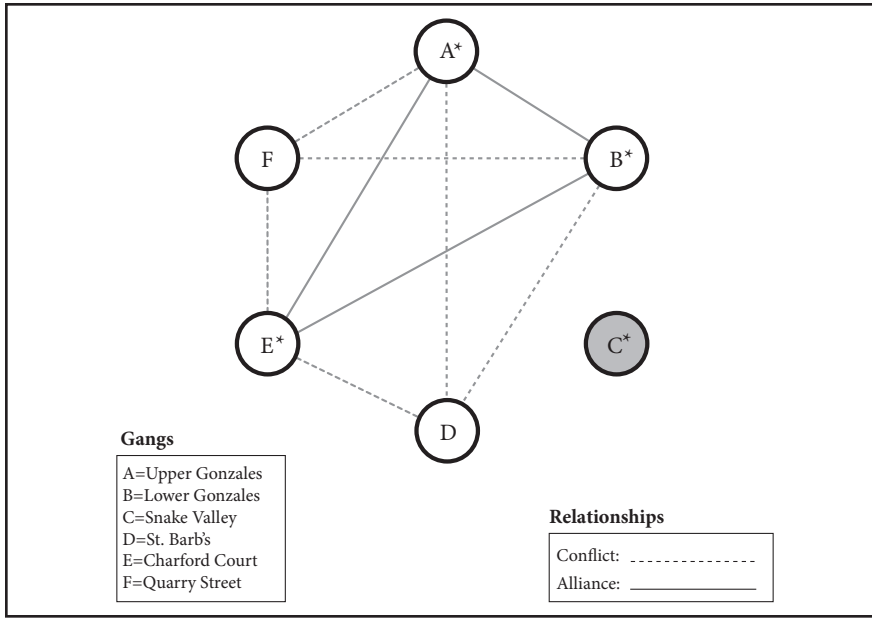

Figure 9.3. Conflicts and alliances between six gangs sixmonths after truce

Gonzales from 2000 to 2010.[14] We selected three incident types most characteristic of the types of violent incidents that gangs participated in: murder, wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm and shooting with intent to do grievous bodily harm. These data represent our best effort to characterize crime trends in Gonzales over time, although we acknowledge the limitations of these data (as described earlier). Figure 9.4 provides a graphic depiction of crime in Gonzales from 2000 to 2010. Within this tiny community, ten people were murdered, shot, and wounded in 2006, and only one in 2007. These data suggest that *something* happened in Gonzales to reduce violent crime. The intervention described in this chapter is a likely candidate for explaining the reductions in violent crime in Gonzales, but we cannot definitively rule out competing explanations. Interestingly, violent crime began to escalate again starting in 2008.

Discussion and Conclusion

Father Jason delivered a well-publicized sermon in September 2007 that was highly critical of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. Father Jason's

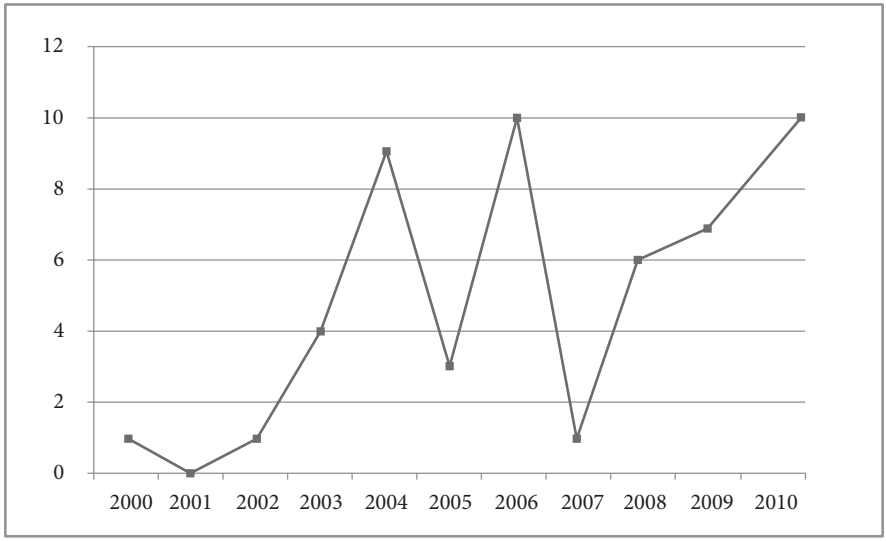

Figure 9.4. Violent incidents per year in Gonzales, 2001–2010

Note: Includes three offence types: murder, wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and shooting with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

comments, which noted that a recently deceased gang leader did a lot more to control crime in his community than the police, were not well received by the police. Father Jason's sermon, coupled with the strong reactions to it from some of the nation's government officials, illustrates the tension faced by faith leaders when involved in interventions meant to reduce gang violence. On the one hand, they are advocates for the community and must be viewed in this role in order to maintain their legitimacy with the community. For instance, when they see police behaving in ways that are not ethical, legal or sufficiently protective, they must stand up for their communities. At the same time, they must be advocates for peace, which will necessarily sometimes place them against those gang members who choose to victimize others. In that role, faith leaders are likely to be on the side of the police. Walking this fragile line is very difficult. Berrien and Winship (2009) argue that the capacity of participants in Boston's TenPoint Coalition to walk this line was part of their success: They were advocates for the community but they also cooperated with police, sharing information when necessary to keep the peace. Father Gregory Boyle also found it difficult to walk this line. Professor Maguire was visiting a police department in the Los Angeles area recently and decided to pay a visit to Homeboy Industries.

(Father Boyle was away at the time.) A police officer that Maguire was interviewing had previously served as a member of the LAPD's gang unit. He told Maguire that he had had an encounter with Father Boyle and his homies one night that left a bad taste in his mouth because it seemed like Father Boyle was on the side of the gangs rather than the police. When Father Jason's editorial was published, police officials told Professor Maguire that any hope of a partnership between the police and Father Jason was no longer possible.

Professor Maguire and Father Jason also collaborated in an effort to form a working group involving people at the community level who were already working with gangs or who were interested in doing so. The Ministry of Social Development had three outreach workers who were already working with gangs. Father Jason invited several members of the faith community, including a Muslim (the Mufti) and a Catholic priest from St Barb's. The group met several times. Professor Maguire brought reading assignments that discussed the potential unintended consequences of community-based interventions with gangs. In particular, he was concerned about the possibility that community-based interventions would increase gang cohesion and further cement the gang as a social grouping. This working group fizzled out. It seemed like everybody had their own theories on how to perform this kind of work, and coming together was simply not in the cards. Creating sustainable working relationships between police, the faith community, the gang outreach community, and other entities is painstakingly difficult work. Even once these fledgling relationships are formed, they are difficult to sustain.

There is a large potential for community interventions to have unintended consequences in these kinds of projects. The most common unintended consequence is increasing the level of gang cohesion by validating the gang's sense of itself as a legitimate social unit. Malcolm Klein, a prolific gang researcher in the United States, has been writing for many years about the tendency for well-meaning people to increase gang cohesion inadvertently. Consider Klein's comments on Father Gregory Boyle in East Los Angeles:

> Greg Boyle is the most emotionally dedicated gang intervener I've come across in many years. He is streetwise, empathic, energetic, and unflappable in the face of abject failure. He mothers and fathers his gang members. He is the ultimate street worker, a one-man agency with his own schooling and jobs programme for "his" gangs. His one-to-one relationship with individual gang members is genuine, warm, and supportive. Greg Boyle epitomizes the very best in individual,

> caring gang intervention. He also epitomizes the kind of ill-conceptualized reinforcement of gang life and cohesiveness that I have found to exist in almost every traditional gang city . . . I have trouble seeing the translation of his heavy and loving involvement into the reduction of gang violence. There are so many ways to feed gang cohesiveness and so few to reduce it. (Klein 1995, 158)

Approximately 15 years after the publication of Malcolm Klein's critique, Father Boyle published a book about his work (Boyle 2010) in which he notes that he began to stay away from direct intervention with gangs to reduce violence:

> I promoted any number of truces, cease-fires, and peace treaties. I spent a great deal of time in a kind of shuttle diplomacy, riding my bike between neighbourhoods . . . securing signed agreements from the warring factions. Some were Pyrrhic victories such as an agreement not to shoot into houses. I learned early on that all sides would speak so positively about the peace process when first approached . . . but once you brought them together, they couldn't resist posturing in high gear in front of one another. I eventually ceased having these meetings, and like the Soviet Union and the USA, I worked out all the details of the peace beforehand and just had the principals sign the agreements. That was then; this is now. Though I don't regret having orchestrated these truces and treaties, I'd never do it again. The unintended consequence of it all was that it legitimized the gangs and fed them oxygen. I eventually came to see that this kind of work keeps gangs alive. (p. 5)

By the summer of 2010 when Maguire's work in Trinidad ended, only two of the six gang leaders in place in early 2006 were still alive; the leaders of four of the gangs had been murdered, and in one case, the replacement to a murdered leader was also murdered.[15] In another one of the gangs, after the leader was murdered, several family members of his replacement were also murdered. In the two gangs whose leaders were still alive four years later, only one was still running a gang, although at a significantly reduced capacity. Informants told us he lived like a prisoner in a fortress and largely avoided outside contact. The other one was on the run from the police. Such is the nature of life and death in street gangs.

Direct intervention with street gangs is messy business. As Malcolm Klein and Father Boyle note, it is easy for well-meaning people to do more harm than good. For anyone thinking of engaging in direct intervention approaches, it is vital to keep in mind the perils of gang cohesion. To be fair, the major complaint of the working group that Father Jason and Professor Maguire attempted to mobilize was that Klein tells us what we *should not* do but he doesn't tell us what

we *should* do. The collective wisdom among gang researchers seems to be that when intervening directly in the lives of gang members, it is best to treat them as individuals and not as members of a gang. This means avoiding any activity that expressly or inadvertently treats the gang as a legitimate social unit. To paraphrase Father Boyle, acknowledging the legitimacy of a gang as a social unit may inadvertently "feed it oxygen".

Avoiding unintended consequences requires those who engage in direct intervention to have a deep knowledge of gangs and the communities where they thrive. Gang members often have a vastly different worldview than those who live outside of gangs. For instance, gang members in Trinidad will describe themselves as "old heads" by the time they reach thirty because so many of their peers die young. In gang logic, it makes sense to shoot at a peacemaker, a contractor working in their community without authorization, or an unknown taxi driver. Father Boyle tells the humorous story of driving with a young gang member whose car was low on fuel. When Father Boyle pointed out that the needle on the fuel gauge was pointing toward "E", the young man told Father Boyle that he thought "E" stood for Enough and "F" stood for Finished. A gang outreach worker in Trinidad had to tell a gang member to hold a party for his daughter's birthday. Afterwards, the gang member proudly informed the outreach worker that he had held the party as instructed. When the outreach worker asked him how old his daughter was, the gang member responded that he was not aware that he should have asked his daughter how old she was.

Gang members often lack perspective, spending much of their time in an environment that has a radically different code of behaviour. Gangs are like fragile ecosystems, where it is easy for well-meaning people who don't understand the environment to make things worse inadvertently. However, the faith community represents a vital social resource for improving the quality of life and the sense of connectedness to something larger in communities beset with gang violence. Thus, we hope our cautions will be regarded as food for thought, and not as an excuse for inaction.

Notes

1 For the remainder of the chapter we will refer to ourselves as Professor Maguire and Father Jason, which is how people referred to us at the time.

2 When social scientists refer to a negative effect, they are referring to the direction of a statistical effect, not a value judgment. In this instance, the finding that religion exerts a negative effect suggests that *more* religion is associated with *less* crime.

3 These findings are based on 2010 survey data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP 2010). They are based on the survey responses of 10,644 participants from seven nations: Belize, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

4 Of respondents who said that the effect of gangs on their neighbourhood was "none", 88.2 per cent rated religion as "very important" or "rather important" in their lives; the percentages were 88.2 per cent for those who said "little", 88 per cent for those who said "somewhat" and 88.6 per cent for those who said "a lot". The differences were not statistically significant (F=.062; p=0.98).

5 For more information, see http://www.homeboyindustries.org; also see Flores (2012, 5).

6 Many of the names and gang affiliations discussed in this chapter are (or were at the time) well known in Trinidad. Much of this information is already publicly available in newspaper articles and other sources. Father Jason has already released much of this information in sermons and Christmas greetings, some of which were widely distributed and are available online. Nonetheless, although much of this information is already public, we adopted the following decision rules around the use of names in this chapter. For those gang members who are known to be deceased, we refer to them by their "street names" (nicknames used widely by gang members). In those instances where deceased gang members did not have a street name, we use their first names. For those gang members who are still alive or whose current status was unknown as this chapter went to press, we use generic descriptions ("member of gang A") or pseudonyms. We do not use any surnames. Moreover, gangs in Trinidad are sometimes referred to using the name of their leader. In those instances where a gang took on the name of a leader who is not known to be deceased, we refer to the gang using the geographic area where it was based.

7 The "official" population of Gonzales from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) is 2,811 but the enumeration district boundaries used by the CSO ignore the community-defined boundaries about what areas constitute Gonzales. Using these community-defined boundaries increases the population estimate to approximately 5,650.

8 The word "indiscipline" means a lack of discipline. However, it is used very commonly in Trinidad and Tobago as a synonym for the word "delinquency". Thus, the phrase "indiscipline of youth" in Trinidad and Tobago is similar to the phrase "juvenile delinquency" which is common elsewhere.

9 As noted earlier, we use pseudonyms for gang members who are not deceased or whose current status is unknown. We use an asterisk to denote the first instance of each pseudonym.

10 In Trinidad and Tobago, the term "liming" refers to "the art of doing nothing". Put differently, it refers to "any leisure activity entailing the sharing of food and drink, the exchange of tall stories, jokes and anecdotes, etc., provided the activity has no explicit purpose beyond itself" (Eriksen 1990).

11 Stretch served as acting leader in St Barbs because at the time Bumbles and Pig were being held in prison on murder charges.

12 To "jumbie" someone is to agitate or annoy them deliberately.
13 The truce meeting that Father Jason references here is different than the one he arranged in January 2006. A much larger and more publicized gang truce meeting took place at the Crowne Plaza hotel on 3 September 2006. That meeting was attended by senior government officials and the media.
14 We are grateful to the CAPA Branch for compiling these data for us.
15 Snake Eye, leader of the gang in Lower Gonzales (and in parts of Belmont) was murdered in July 2010.

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