

Barring a Stay, Christian Set to Become 500th Execution in Texas

On Wednesday, the state of Texas is scheduled to perform its 500th execution since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. Since that time, Texas has executed more people than the next six states combined.

Kimberley McCarthy will receive a lethal injection unless she is pardoned or the execution is stayed. She was convicted of murdering her neighbor, retired professor Dorothy Booth, in 1997. According to the state, a confrontation developed when McCarthy broke into Booth's house with the intent of robbing her to pay for cocaine.

The execution is particularly sad for the Crossroad Bible Institute (CBI) community, as McCarthy is a CBI graduate who earned her certificate in 2006. She received high marks from her instructors throughout her participation in the discipleship program.

On June 18, McCarthy appealed her sentence on grounds of racial bias. Her execution had already been granted a reprieve in January while her lawyers appealed the case, claiming that the convicting jury was racially biased.

Problems of race have long plagued the capital punishment system in Texas. Though African-Americans constitute only about 12 percent of the state's population, they make up 37 percent of those executed since 1976. Furthermore, 60 percent of women executed in Texas have been African-American, and of the 283 people currently on death row in Texas, 39 percent are African-American.

"Whether you believe in the death penalty or not is irrelevant

right now. We should all be able to agree that a moratorium must be placed on executions until the ultimate penalty can be administered justly," says David Schuringa, CBI's president.