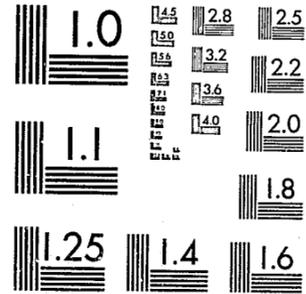


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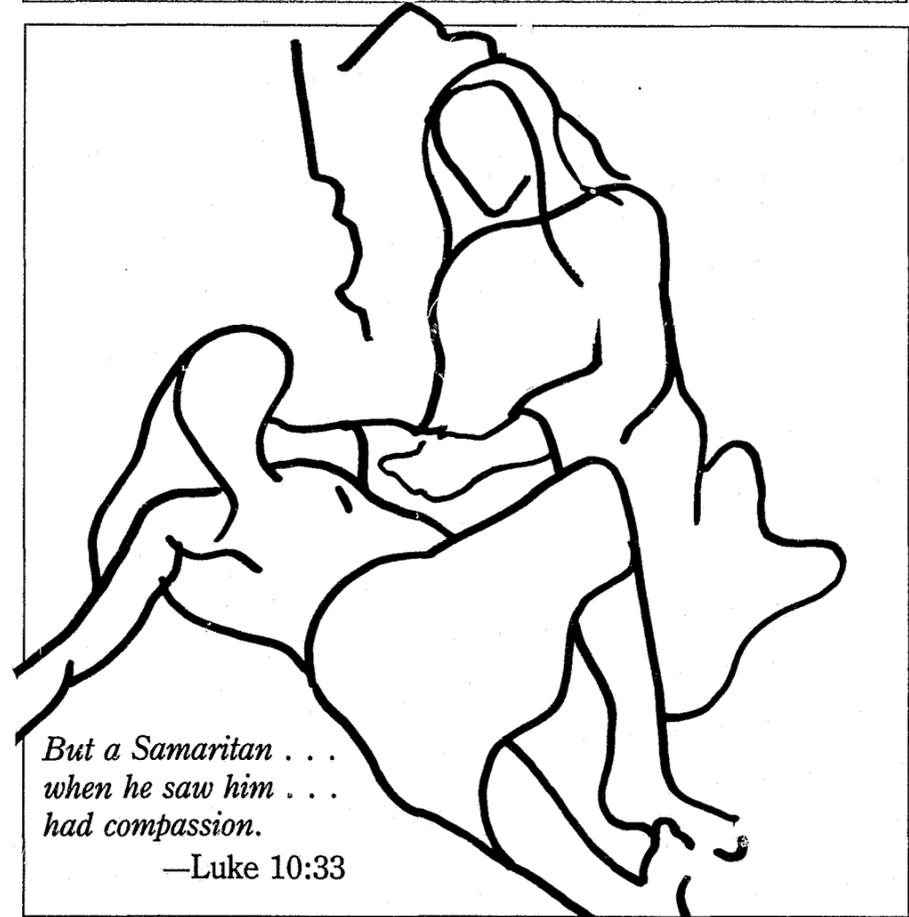
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# VICTIMS OF CRIME



*But a Samaritan . . .  
when he saw him . . .  
had compassion.*

—Luke 10:33

## A Christian Perspective

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# VICTIMS OF CRIME



*But a Samaritan . . .  
when he saw him . . .  
had compassion.  
—Luke 10:33*

## A Christian Perspective

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# VICTIMS OF CRIME

A Christian  
Perspective

by  
Henrietta Wilkinson  
and  
William Arnold (Chapter 3)

Published by the  
Presbyterian Criminal Justice Program  
of the  
Presbyterian Church U.S.  
United Presbyterian Church U.S.A.  
1982

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This material is not copyrighted  
in the hope that it might be  
widely used to encourage churches  
everywhere in their ministry with  
victims of crime.

## THE STORY OF A VICTIM

*And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him [Jesus] to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

*He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?"*

*And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."*

*And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."*

*But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

*Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half-dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"*

*He said, "The one who showed mercy on him."*

*And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

—Luke 10:25-37 (RSV)

# CONTENTS

NCJRS

FEB 13 1984

ACQUISITIONS Page

PREFACE .....	vii
Why this book was written	
INTRODUCTION .....	viii
Some ideas about perspective, applied to victims of crime	
1. PERSPECTIVE ON VICTIMS .....	1
A self-test way to find out the most common victims of crime	
2. PERSPECTIVE ON FEELINGS .....	7
The usual reactions of victims: fear, anger, guilt, helplessness, and theological questions of victims	
3. PERSPECTIVE ON PASTORAL CARE .....	13
A description of the stages in victimization and how ministers and church members can help	
4. AN ACTION PERSPECTIVE .....	19
A list of possible steps to undertake individually, with others in your church, community, state, and nation	
5. A BROADER PERSPECTIVE .....	29
Thinking about victims of crime in the light of our beliefs; our systems of society, criminal justice, freedoms; and our Christian responsibility	
STUDY/ACTION GUIDE .....	33
A way to use this book with a group in from seven to thirteen study sessions involving action on behalf of victims	
NOTES .....	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	49

## PREFACE

That crime is a serious problem is obvious. Solutions are not easy to see or to put into action. The role of the churches of the United States in the whole picture of criminal justice has led to debate and work since the country began. Early in United States history Quakers were instrumental in initiating penitentiaries as an alternative to severe physical punishment and as a place for an offender to repent. Later church initiatives led to ideas such as parole and alternatives to incarceration.

As a mandate from its highest denominational body, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church U.S., a Task Force on Criminal Justice worked from 1976 to 1982. It led the denomination in study and action, primarily on issues which were most closely related to offenders: a study of the theological rationale for the church's activity in the field of criminal justice, work on juvenile justice, on alternatives to incarceration, on prison reform, and on opposition to the death penalty.

As a balance in the six-year emphasis, this Task Force felt that more attention by the church to victims of crime was essential. Victims, too, were peo-

ple in need. So this publication was begun. The members of this Task Force have been very helpful in providing material, reading manuscript copies, and encouraging the writer: Theodore Allen; Dorothy Davis; Harry W. Fogle, chairperson; Donald Gokee; Joseph Harvard; Rebecca Howard; Kent S. Miller; Melzer A. Morgan; Rush Otey; Abraham Torres; Mary Porter Weston; and the staff, Vernon Broyles.

The leaders in the same field in the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. heard of the project. They asked to be a part of the effort and have given valuable advice. Particular thanks should go to Ronald Bell, and to their staff, Kathy Young.

In addition the writer wishes to thank Virginia Mackey and Joanna Adams for their advice and suggestions.

It is the prayer of leaders in both denominations that churches through this resource will achieve a new perspective on the needs of victims of crime, while continuing equally important work in many other areas for mission and ministry related to criminal justice.

### **This book has three uses:**

- 1. To be read by individuals.**  
(Chapters 1-5)
- 2. To be used by congregations to help victims.**  
(Chapters 2, 3, 4)
- 3. To be used for study and action by congregational or ecumenical groups.**  
(Whole book through the use of the Study/Action Guide)

**Resources ready for duplication for use with victims or with study/action groups are indicated by either a large or a small arrow.**



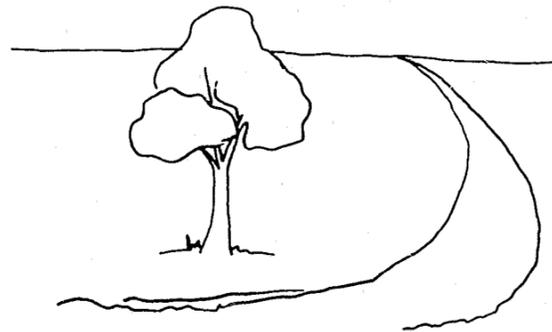
## INTRODUCTION

PERSPECTIVE makes you think of art classes learning to show the various dimensions of scenes and objects. PERSPECTIVE can lead you also to think of the many dimensions of any complex problem, such as ministry with victims of crime. Some of the aspects of PERSPECTIVE include:

### DISTANCE

How you see a scene may depend on how close you are to it. A road, from one end, may look as if it gets more narrow as it converges on the horizon.

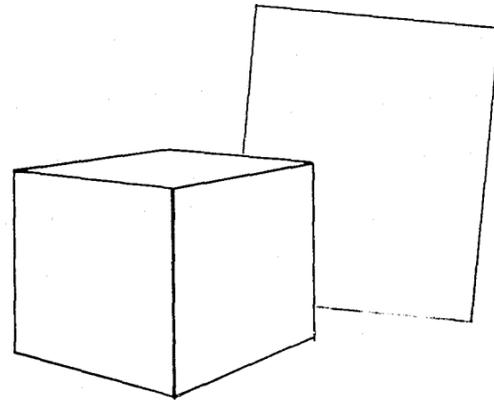
Being a victim of crime is seldom something you only hear about—something that happens to some-



one down the road. Probably you yourself or one of your friends has been a victim of crime. You no longer have distance from the scene to give you perspective. You are *in* the scene.

### COMPLEXITY

When you look at a box and at a sheet of poster paper, the box has much more perspective or

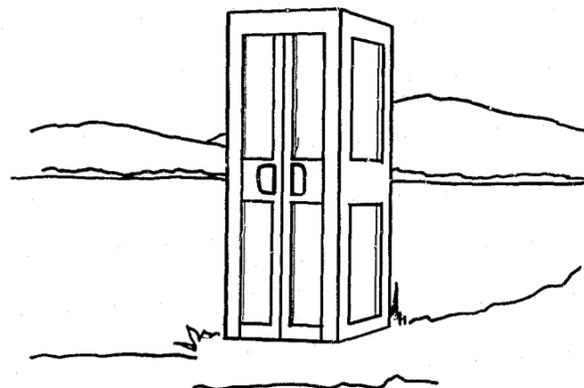


depth. It is both more interesting and more complex.

A view of ministry with victims of crime is definitely a complex rather than a simple problem. You need to look at the whole issue from many different angles to gain a proper perspective.

### BACKGROUND

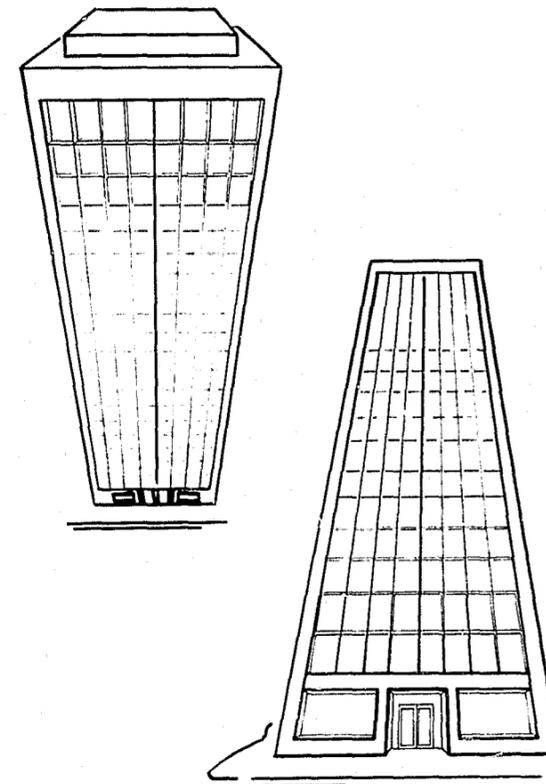
The telephone company years ago ran a series of advertisements showing a phone booth in many different locations. Backgrounds included a busy city street, a remote mountain road, a noisy factory. What is in a scene beyond the center of attention, the focus, conveys a very different perspective to the view.



The victim in this resource is the focal point of the picture. As in the phone company advertisement, the background changes from street to police station to courtroom. The whole social complex and the process of criminal law are in the background. As Christians you cannot limit your concern only to victims.

### POSITION

One principle of perspective is the importance of the relation of the viewer to the object being seen.

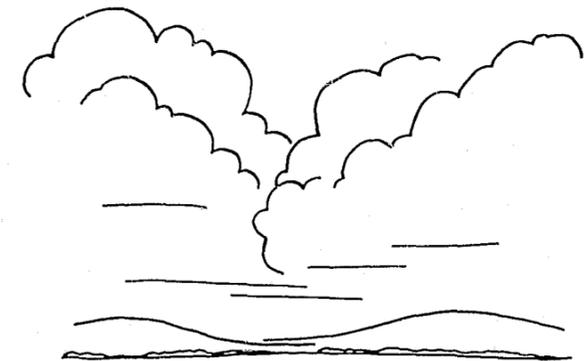


For example, think how different your perspective would be if you were on top of the Empire State Building versus being on the sidewalk looking up at the building.

You can assess where you are as a Christian in your attitude toward criminal justice and toward victims in particular. Your viewpoint is definitely determined by where you are looking from in regard to crime: average citizen, minister, police officer, parole officer, judge, lawyer.

### MEANING

One question in art is whether or not the scene or object takes you to another dimension, to ideas beyond the obvious. A scene that emphasizes a sum-



mer sky with fleecy clouds may make you think of the glory of all creation.

Beyond normal human feelings about victims or being victimized is your theological perspective. In the midst of the everyday, Christians are called to live by love and compassion. You are challenged to a different perspective on all of life.

### INVITATION

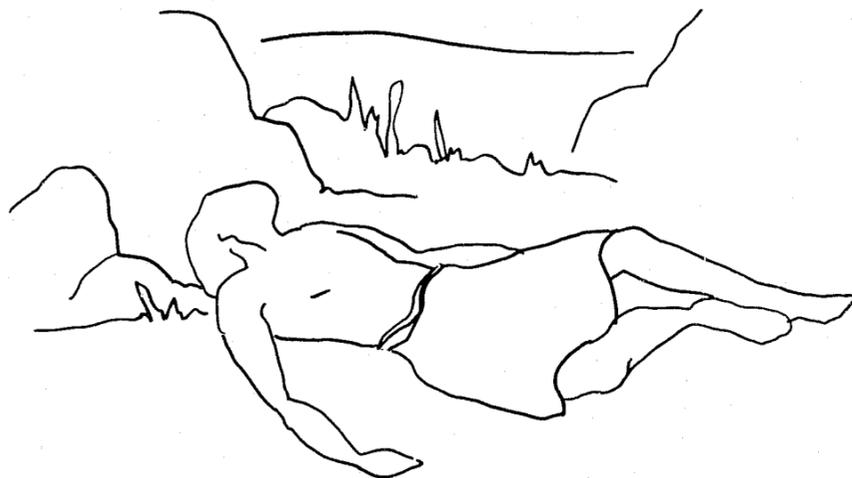
This book is provided as a tool toward gaining perspective on victims of crime. That perspective will include a oneness with *every* person, a solidarity with all kinds of people.

A Christian view always begins with an admission of your own sinfulness and need for redemption. From this vantage point, you can then look at your conviction that Christians and your fellowships, the churches, are called to have a unique dimension of concern for victims of crime.

May this tool for reading and study help you to gain perspective on both belief and action in regard to victims of crime.

*A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half-dead.*  
—Luke 10:30

*In the New Testament story of the Samaritan, Jesus did not identify the race, economic status, or church connection of the victim. His perspective was to speak simply of a human being in need of help.*



# Perspective On Victims

Often we form generalizations from a few personal experiences, from talking with others, and from media reports. Our perspective on who victims are may or may not be true to reality. This chapter is intended to help you check on your perspective.

Before you read further, take the test found on the next page. Grade yourself, allowing 5 points for each question you answered correctly. Aiming at a score of 100, how did your perspective on victims check out? Explanations of the answers begin on page 3.

**This test is arranged so you can duplicate it for use in any group that is beginning study and action regarding victims. (See page 33) Or, try it alone to see how you score.**



## Check Out Your Perspective on Victims

Take this test, circling your answer; then check your answers. Count your correct answers and grade yourself, allowing 5 points for each right response. Explanations of the answers are given in Chapter 1.

### Identifying Victims

1. The majority of victims of murder are killed by a relative or someone they know. **T or F**
2. At least three-fourths of victims of serious crimes are whites assailed by blacks. **T or F**
3. Four times as many non-white women are raped than white women. **T or F**
4. Twice as many men than women are victims of homicide, burglary, robbery, and assault. **T or F**
5. Victims of street crime are most often the poor who are assaulted by the poor. **T or F**
6. Every four hours in the U.S., a victim of child abuse dies. **T or F**
7. Most people do not think of the families of offenders as victims of crime. **T or F**

### Victims of Different Crimes

8. The percentage of the population who are victims of homicide increased significantly from 1880 to 1960. **T or F**
9. Victims are most often murdered by use of a hand gun. **T or F**
10. More people are victims killed by drunken drivers than all those who are victims of arson, rape, robbery, murder, aggravated assault, larceny, and auto theft combined. **T or F**

11. Wives are most frequently victims of domestic violence in families of blue collar or migrant workers. **T or F**
12. Every eleven minutes in the U.S. some person is the victim of rape. **T or F**
13. We are all victims of higher prices because 10% of the cost of what we buy is a result of workplace stealing. **T or F**
14. We are all unknowing victims of organized crime. **T or F**
15. Our financial loss as victims of white collar crime is three times as great as for all crimes of robbery, burglary, auto theft, and larceny. **T or F**
16. Banks and savings and loan associations are victims of their greatest losses through hold-ups. **T or F**

### Present Responses

17. Public cries to "clean up the streets" cause police to spend more time on victimless crimes such as prostitution, drug users, and loitering. **T or F**
18. Half of our 50 states have some program to pay victims for financial losses and medical expenses. **T or F**
19. Police cannot spend the majority of their time on behalf of victims who have suffered physical injury and property loss. **T or F**
20. Our whole society is a victim of crime. **T or F**

- Answers**
- |          |          |           |          |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| 1. True  | 9. True  | 17. True  | 20. True |
| 2. False | 10. True | 18. True  |          |
| 3. True  | 11. True | 19. True  |          |
| 4. True  | 12. True | 16. False |          |
|          |          | 15. True  |          |
|          |          | 14. True  |          |
|          |          | 13. False |          |
|          |          | 12. True  |          |
|          |          | 11. True  |          |
|          |          | 8. False  |          |
|          |          | 7. True   |          |
|          |          | 6. True   |          |
|          |          | 5. True   |          |

### Who Are Victims?

In order to develop a realistic perspective on victimization, it is necessary to keep in mind the difficulties of obtaining valid figures. Record-keeping is often haphazard and forms vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Homicide is the only category uniformly reported.

An increase in crime, for example, needs to be related to an increase in total population. An increase is also directly connected with better reporting because of recent funding to make staff and equipment possible for this purpose.

Realizing these difficulties, it is still possible to get some overall picture of victims and crime today.

### Identifying Victims

Although most persons involved in rape, robbery, and assault were victimized by strangers, the majority of victims of murder are killed out of strong emotional conflicts between members of the same family or conflicts with someone the victim knows.<sup>1</sup> Killings just within the family account for one-third of all homicides.<sup>2</sup> Since the early 1960's, however, murder at the hand of a stranger has increased twice as fast as murder by relatives, friends, and acquaintances.<sup>3</sup>

One study shows that nearly 79% of all serious crimes are committed by a person of the same race as the victim.<sup>4</sup> Of deep concern to blacks is the fact that such a high percentage of crime is committed black against black, destroying the solidarity of the community.

All racial/ethnic groups have a particular concern about rape. In a group of 100,000 women, nearly four times as many non-white women as white women were forcibly raped.<sup>5</sup>

It is known that twice as many men as women are victimized through homicide, robbery, assault, and burglary.<sup>6</sup> Most crimes are men against men.<sup>7</sup>

A typical victim is black, 16 to 19 years old, with an income under \$3,000. The victim is most often an unemployed service worker rather than a farm worker or a manager.<sup>8</sup> The majority of street crimes are committed by the poor against the poor.<sup>9</sup> Victims from the poorest families had the highest rate of personal violence; the most affluent had the highest personal larceny rate.<sup>10</sup>

Most people do not think of children as victims of crime. Child abuse and coerced sex acts cause untold suffering, both physical and psychological, for thousands of children each year. About 2,000 abused children die each year, one every four hours. At least a million children are abused in some way. Child abuse is not limited to any type of community, social class, or educational level. It seems, instead, to be associated with whether or not a par-

ent was abused or neglected as a child; with a parent's ability to cope with crises; with a parent's own self-image; with isolation from others; and with unrealistic expectations of children. People generally are reluctant to get involved when child abuse is suspected, showing a false feeling that parents "own" their children.<sup>11</sup>

Most child victims of sex crimes were attacked at a median age of 11 by male abusers within the family or known by the family (75%). Two-thirds of these children have been found to be emotionally damaged.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to crime against children, they also are called on to bear the brunt of punishment for a parent who is apprehended.

Frightened by the sudden removal of a parent, these children are left to face the imprint of stigma, the mockery of peers, the enforced isolation, the sense that those placed in physical charge of their lives do not really want or love them, and the uncertainty about their future. . . . Offenses for which women are arrested are most often victimless. Only 2.9% of female arrests in 1972 were because of serious crimes of violence. These facts demonstrate the needless cruelty of abrupt separation of mothers from their children at the time of arrest or pending trial, when there is no threat to the safety of others.<sup>13</sup>

In listing victims of crime, the families of offenders should be included. Arrest and imprisonment can mean loss of income along with social ostracism for families, including the children. Even when a person may be innocent, he or she can be held until trial for lack of bail, causing the victimization of families in the interim.

Sometimes a victim's place in society means that he or she is not thought of as a victim. Deaths of those in prison fall in this category. When the Attica prison riot occurred in 1971, Governor Rockefeller said that the hearts of the citizens of the state went out to the families of the hostages who died in Attica. He did not mention the families of the prisoners who were also killed. One who was killed was a young man sent to prison at 18 for forging a money order for \$124.60. He had also driven a car without a license. Since this act was a parole violation, he had been sent to the Attica prison just before the uprising.<sup>14</sup>

### Victims of Different Crimes

Because of improved communication today, it probably seems to you that the murder rate in proportion to the total population has been rising in the last 100 years. On the contrary, rates of murder, non-negligent homicide, rape, and assault all declined appreciably between 1880 and 1960. In the

1960's the rate was 70% of the rate in the 1930's.<sup>15</sup> In recent years, however, the picture has changed:

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniform Crime Reports*, the chance of being the victim of a major violent crime such as murder, rape, robbery, or aggravated assault nearly tripled between 1960 and 1976; so did the probability of being the victim of a serious property crime, such as burglary, purse-snatching, or auto theft. . . . If recent rates continue, at least three Americans in every hundred will be the victim of a violent crime this year, and one household in ten will be burglarized.<sup>16</sup>

More than half of the murder victims are now killed with a hand gun.<sup>17</sup>

Even greater than the total number of those who are victims of murder, rape, arson, robbery, aggravated assault, larceny, and auto theft are those killed and injured by drunken drivers.<sup>18</sup> In one year there were 53,000 traffic fatalities and 13,650 homicides. Intoxicated persons were involved in 65% of those wrecks.<sup>19</sup> An additional cause of traffic fatalities, of course, is drugs.

Wife beating, considered by many law enforcement officers as the single most unreported crime,<sup>20</sup> is not associated with race, but is correlated with class. Poor women are beaten more often by their mates than middle-income or affluent women.<sup>21</sup> In a survey to determine general attitude, however, 20% of all Americans approved of hitting a spouse, while 25% of the college-educated approved.<sup>22</sup> There is evidence that wife beating may occur in 50% of all marriages.<sup>23</sup> In fact, domestic violence is blamed for about one-third of the homicides in the U.S.<sup>24</sup> Though wife beating is a much more common occurrence, male spouse abuse is also a problem.

Though a rape occurs every 11 minutes in the United States,<sup>25</sup> this crime has probably seen the most hopeful change from the victim's standpoint.<sup>26</sup> Rape crisis centers are being established, the public is being educated about the nature of the crime, and law enforcement personnel are being sensitized to the needs of victims. The public is beginning to disclaim once-prevalent myths such as women's lying more than men, women's bringing on rape by their actions or dress, or women's enjoying and secretly wanting rape.<sup>27</sup> Rape is now understood as a crime of violence rather than of passion.

Fifteen, not ten, percent of the cost of our purchases goes to pay for workplace stealing. "Estimates are that Americans steal up to 5% of the gross national product, some \$65 billion, from themselves and then have to make restitution through higher insurance premiums, higher prices, and higher taxes."<sup>28</sup>

While statistics are hard to obtain in regard to or-

ganized crime, the cost to each person is tremendous. The cost for white collar crime is \$1,730 million, as compared to \$608 million for all crimes of robbery, burglary, auto theft, and larceny.<sup>29</sup> It is estimated that the cost for organized crime (payoffs, arson, illegal gambling) is about three times as much as for white collar crime. Yet, in certainty and severity of punishment, crimes of the poor account for a much higher percentage of the prison population than either organized or white collar crime.

Institutions, like banks and savings and loan associations, are also victims. They lose 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> times as much by embezzlement and fraud as by armed hold-ups.<sup>30</sup>

### Present Responses

It is true that less attention is given to victims of crime when police are urged by public opinion to give more attention to so-called victimless crimes such as prostitution, drugs, and loitering.<sup>31</sup> The result can be an exterior impression that streets are safer and cleaner, while as many people as ever may be victims of crime.

Just over half of the states have any program to compensate victims for financial losses and medical expenses resulting from the crime. Those reimbursed usually have to wait months for the compensation.<sup>32</sup>

Police cannot spend as much time as would be desirable to investigate crimes involving personal injury or property loss. Half of all arrests and two-fifths of the crime bill come from handling victimless crimes in which three million persons are processed annually.<sup>33</sup>

One of the primary casualties of the whole crime picture is a sense of community in society in general. Our whole social fabric is a victim of crime. One reason is the contrast between our socio-economic conditions and the American dream about the "good life." Each of us, as part of society, is a victim of fear and anger because of crime. Our second chapter deals with the *feelings* of victims and of all of us toward those who are victimized.

### What One Denomination Has Said

In 1980 the 120th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church U.S. adopted the following statement and call to the churches regarding victims of crime:

As a community of compassion, hope and restoration, the church has a mission to fulfill regarding victims of crime. Too long have church and society overlooked the problems and needs of victims within the criminal justice system. As one Christian ethicist, L. Harold DeWolf, has stated, "It is time that American Christians remember the Good Samaritan's caring for

a victim of crime. It is time we insist that American agencies of justice take victims into serious account as very few of the states now require. We devote much attention to the offender as we consider his rights, his 'just deserts,' and the like. But whatever a court may decide about the convicted, the victim is only used as a witness, and then discarded to bear his loss alone. Can any Christian defend such callousness?"

Who are the victims?

- Persons whose bodies are assaulted, violated, and murdered, and their families or survivors;
- Those who are intimidated, harassed, and coerced;
- People whose property is damaged or stolen;
- People whose lives are disrupted by criminal behavior of community or family members;
- Consumers who pay higher prices because of "white collar" offenses, employee theft, or greed and mismanagement by businesses and corporations;
- Taxpayers whose money supports a cumbersome and often ineffectual system of justice and imprisonment.

All these are victims of crime. In short, spiritually and economically, "when one member suffers, all suffer together." (1 Cor. 12:36)

The problems facing victims include physical and mental suffering or disability, insensitive practices by law enforcement and medical agencies, time-consuming participation in pretrial and court procedures, inadequate programs of restitution and compensation in property crime or physical assaults, the absence of independent public counsel to insure that victims' rights are represented, and distress ensuing from the victimization of family members.

Because of the high crime rate in our society and the general lack of systemic and personal attention offered to victims, the General Assembly calls upon the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church in the United States—working insofar as possible with other religious and secular groups—to reach out in compassion to victims of crime.<sup>34</sup>

### Limitations of This Resource

This book purposefully concentrates on one major form of crime: the type of so-called street crime, individual property losses, or assaults by an individual. The reason is based in the public's current concern for this kind of crime. This book acknowledges, but does not attempt to develop, the way in which we all are victimized by addiction, organized crime, corporate crime, government crime, white collar crimes such as tax evasion and embezzlement, deaths from unnecessary surgery, and the crime of dangerous working conditions. These subjects would require a second volume or more.

There is a danger that one consequence of this limitation can be that of adding to a stereotyped concept of crime and of the criminal.

Think of a crime, any crime. Picture the first "crime" that comes into your mind. What do you see? The odds are that you are not imagining . . . an executive sitting at his desk. . . . The odds are that what you do see with your mind's eye is one person physically attacking another or robbing something from another on the threat of physical attack. Look more closely. What does the attacker look like? It's a safe bet he (and it is a *he*, of course) is not wearing a suit and tie. In fact, my hunch is that you—like me, like almost anyone in America—picture a young, tough, lower-class male when the thought of crime first pops into your head. You (we) picture someone like the Typical Criminal described above. And the crime itself is one in which our Typical Criminal sets out to attack or rob some specific person.

This last point is important. What it indicates is that we have a mental image not only of the Typical Criminal, but also of the Typical Crime. If the Typical Criminal is a young lower-class male, the Typical Crime is *one-on-one harm*—where harm means either physical injury or loss of something valuable or both.<sup>35</sup>

This limiting of the concept of crime should not lessen the severity of offenses *not* covered. Public opinion tends to make this discrimination between kinds of crime. The same issue of a Washington newspaper carried two articles: one on the death of 26 miners the day after inspectors declared the mine unsafe and one on a "mass murder" of a family of six. The question is why the death of the 26 was not also "mass murder"? Add to mines the coal dust and tars, textile dust, asbestos fibers, noise conditions, danger from machinery. For every American killed by a criminal, six workers are killed by their employers.<sup>36</sup>

The answer probably lies in the usual concept of crime as one-on-one violence.

The general public loses more money *by far* . . . from price-fixing and monopolistic practices, and from consumer deception and embezzlement, than from all the property crimes in the FBI's Index combined. . . . Although the individuals responsible for these acts take more money out of the ordinary citizen's pocket than our Typical Criminal, they rarely show up in arrest statistics and almost never in prison populations.<sup>37</sup>

Defining *crime* and a *criminal* is a continuing difficulty. Acknowledging, therefore, the serious but necessary limitations of this book, let us go on in Chapter 2 to look at how a victim of one-on-one crime feels about being a victim.

*But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion.—Luke 10:33*

*The Samaritan was one of a despised race. These people were descendants of intermarriage of other races with the Israelites who remained in the Promised Land after most of the inhabitants were taken in exile to Assyria. Yet Jesus told about a Samaritan as the one showing compassion to a victim.*

*The victim probably felt a combination of fear and anger toward his attacker. Certainly he felt helplessness in his wounded condition. He may have blamed himself, too, for coming alone down a road that was noted for its danger.*

*The Samaritan could have placed himself in jeopardy by stopping. Since the victim was a stranger, the Samaritan had no obligation to stop. The thief might still be around, waiting for yet another person to rob. The story does not indicate that the Samaritan thought about himself, but only of extending compassion to the victim. Jesus is saying to the lawyer that there is no limit to love; there is no one to whom we have no obligation to show compassion.*



## Perspective On Feelings

**H**aving your house robbed, being raped, having your car stolen, having a family member or a close friend murdered—whatever the circumstances, being a victim of a crime generates strong, often unexpected, feelings. Negative feelings common to all victims include fear, anger, guilt, and helplessness. Emotions differ in individuals only in degree and in length of endurance. Because Christians are called upon, as victims, also to deal with their offenders in love, compassion, forgiveness, and true justice, it is important to gain some perspective on our range of reactions to victimization.

### Fear

One normal reaction to all crime is fear, fear resulting sometimes even in withdrawal from society.

All over the United States, people worry about criminal violence. According to public opinion polls, two Americans in five—in large cities, one in two—are afraid to go out alone at night. Fear is more intense among black Americans than among whites, and among women than among men. The elderly are the most fearful of all; barricaded behind multiple locks, they often go hungry rather than risk the perils of a walk to the market and back.<sup>1</sup>

Even though men are victimized more frequently, women more readily acknowledge their fear. A National Opinion Research Center poll shows that 60% of women are afraid to walk in their neighborhoods at night, in contrast to 25% of men.<sup>2</sup> Women are also afraid to appear as witnesses. Of those who witness a crime, 31% of women are afraid of repris-

als if they appear as a witness, while only 19% of the men said the same.<sup>3</sup>

When such fear is present, there are several results:

#### 1. *Fear results in a demand for harsher penalties.*

More than the *presence* of all kinds of crime in America, the *perception* of certain kinds of violent crime has created something close to both hysteria and paralysis in America. The public response to the reporting of crime (very few people witness actual crimes) has been an outraged demand that "something be done about crime." What is usually meant is that the people who murder, rape, assault, kidnap, and rob their neighbors or families or strangers should be either locked up forever or executed by the state. Such a response is admittedly irrational since, if one had the opportunity of studying the actual situations of convicted felons in these categories on a case by case basis, even the most outraged and vindictive citizens would not vote for across the board penalties of death or life imprisonment.

Nevertheless, the irrational response, prodded by fear and fantasies, is resulting in a public demand for heavier reliance on the death penalty (or at least the threat of the death penalty) to deter people from murder, and for longer sentences for "dangerous crimes" to protect society. The second demand is already resulting in the proliferation of prisons and jails on every jurisdictional level.<sup>4</sup>

#### 2. *Fear results in a distrust of our system of justice.*

Fear creates a distrust of other individuals and of the whole system of criminal justice. People begin

to feel that they can no longer trust their safety to the state. Our institutions of law seem to people to be failing. In addition, victims in particular feel that they might not be treated fairly by these very institutions they have to trust with their welfare. Fear and distrust cut into the stability and effectiveness of our whole justice system.

### 3. *Fear results in a community's inability to act.*

We have found that attitudes of citizens regarding crime are less affected by their past victimization than by their ideas about what is going on in their community—fears about a *weakening of social controls* on which they feel their safety and the broader fabric of social life is ultimately dependent.<sup>5</sup>

In a study of ten neighborhoods in Chicago, San Francisco, and Philadelphia, there was as much fear and concern present in regard to abandoned buildings, teen-agers hanging around, illegal drug use, and vandalism as there was about more overt crimes. Fear, in fact, seemed to be linked closely with a sense of the community's ability to act on its problems. Even when one community had fewer serious problems than another, more fear was present if there seemed to be less power, less political ability to make effective change, and less voice by local residents about what went on.

### **Anger**

In addition to fear, being a victim or knowing one brings on strong feelings of anger, resentment, and retaliation. "Why me?" or "Why that nice Mr. So-and-So?" are normal questions. Anger arises out of a seeming unfairness in regard to victimization.

Who's angry? Everyone who is touched by the general problem of crime. Victims feel that they get a bad deal. Not only do they lose property or sustain physical injury, but they have the whole system, intended to protect them, treat them so that they feel they caused the crime and that they have no real recourse to justice. They feel twice victimized. The poor and women have added reasons for anger:

The poorer you happen to be, the less powerful you are and worse these problems are. The poor person is less likely to have a friend or family member who can hop in a car, run down to the hospital and drive you home. The poor person is less likely to be able to afford another car or TV if the one stolen is not returned. Likewise, women, because often they are less powerful, are going to experience some extra hardships, particularly if they are mothers. The courts for the most part are not going to pay for babysitters while they come down to appear as witnesses nor will they help arrange for child care. It has also been

shown in studies that prosecutors and police are more likely to presume that a man has something more important to do with his time, so they will try to inconvenience him less than a woman.<sup>6</sup>

Anger is a natural, and even healthy, initial response to hurt. However, when anger builds up, there are numerous results:

#### 1. *Anger among acquaintances often causes conflict and crime.*

According to the authors of the Vera Institute study of felony arrests, "at the root of much of the crime brought to court is anger—simple or complicated anger between two or more people who know each other." In New York City, they found, the victim and offender had a prior relationship in nearly half the "victim crimes" that were brought to court. The proportions ranged from a low of 21% in auto theft cases to a high of 69% in assault and 83% in rape arrests. But even with robbery and burglary, which we think of as crimes committed exclusively by strangers, victims and offenders were acquainted in 36% and 39% of the cases, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

#### 2. *Anger brings on anti-social behavior and vindictiveness.*

Strange as it may seem, crime victims themselves are often arrested soon after they have been victimized. Those who have received physical harm or property loss seem to engage in anti-social behavior as a result. Anger leads to doing as was done to the victim.

One victim of repeated break-ins, although believing in non-violence, found himself thinking about getting a gun. He talked with neighbors, all of whom owned guns. He and his wife realized in watching movies how often we turn people into things in order to be delighted when they are destroyed. They found it hard to fight against the tendency of anger to bring on what they had previously thought of as anti-social behavior and vindictiveness.

#### 3. *Anger involves resentment.*

One victim of a break-in reports:

I have never given much credence to the notion of territoriality. I do not believe that I have certain proprietary feelings toward a given space or place. But I have had trouble sleeping for several weeks. . . . The thief invaded my space without permission. We have been defiled. He went through our desks and drawers, looked at our pictures, walked on our rugs. Something primal has happened which I can neither explain nor put aside. He violated those symbols which mediate our identities to us.

Our home is defiled, and we have no ritual that will

erase the pollution, no way to reorder our personal space (in a sense, *sacred* space) from the common space. It is not that the thief stole something tangible, physical, material from us, but that the symbols we have arranged around ourselves are so vulnerable to any marauding, faceless stranger.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. *Anger damages relationships*

Crime, in the final analysis, is a form of conflict between individuals. It has to do with damaged relationships and alienation. It calls for intervention in and resolution of the conflict, for addressing the cause of alienation, and for restoration in some way of the offender and victim to the community. Here is a story of one victim's experience of the different aspects of broken relationships:

Several months ago while Susanne was getting into her car in a residential area of town, she was attacked for no apparent reason by a man with a hammer. She struggled with him but received significant injuries. . . . Today she has largely overcome her experience. Nevertheless, she continues to struggle with paranoias, feelings of anger as well as guilt about these feelings and about the way she responded.<sup>9</sup>

### **Guilt**

The feelings of fear and anger can be easily understood as reactions to victimization. Not so obvious is the subtle nature of the feeling of guilt which can often appear.

#### 1. *Guilt is self-inflicted.*

Victims naturally ask themselves "what if" kinds of questions. What could I have done differently? Was the crime, in fact, a result of my foolish chances, of neglecting to take necessary precautions? What if I had been more careful?

#### 2. *Guilt is suggested by police, hospital staff, or courts.*

Sometimes persons with whom the victim comes in contact seem insensitive or even hostile. They can, at times, act as though the victim is really the offender, or equally as guilty of the crime.

Treatment of victims by the police and hospital employees can make a person feel like either he or she is to blame for the crime. I know we have all heard this said about rape victims, but it is true for other kinds of victims too. A seemingly innocent remark made by a police officer or hospital employee right after the trauma can be devastating. I know from personal experience that a comment like, "Well, if you had not been alone at night, or if you had better locks, or if you had not been riding a bicycle, that would not have hap-

pened," can be very damaging. This is the kind of statement which seems innocent, but can add serious psychological injury to the physical injuries and may take months or years to get over.<sup>10</sup>

#### 3. *Guilt can result from sexual assault*

The crime of sexual assault, along with murder, is possibly the most damaging of all crimes to the individual. It is very hard to prove in court, and has the greatest possibility for making the victim feel guilty and definitely embarrassed.

Even family and friends of the assaulted woman or child often do not understand and thus contribute to a feeling of guilt on the part of the victim. One woman, who lived in a very affluent neighborhood, finally left home and asked for help after repeated incidents of assault, even while pregnant. She and her children had been severely and repeatedly beaten by her husband. She writes:

I had been abused, perhaps, 15 times severely during my marriage; and when I went to my mother, I had a black eye and my lips were quite swollen. She said to me, "Well, what did you do wrong?" I found this reaction was quite common even among girlfriends.<sup>11</sup>

### **Helplessness**

In addition to fear, anger, and guilt, often comes a sense of helplessness, of being the forgotten one in the whole case.

#### 1. *The victim feels forgotten*

To the victim, it seems that attention is given to the offender, not to the victim. There is great concern about the arrest and confinement of the offender, about whether there is fair treatment in court and in sentencing. The victim looks to the same system for fairness and consideration, but often feels neglect and even hostility from those on whom the victim must depend for help.

Hear the feelings of the family of one murder victim:

One of the saddest factors in murder is how quickly the victim is forgotten. After the first few days, the attention of the media shifts from the murdered to the murderer and follows him through the trial, appeals, and public debate over the death penalty. The murdered becomes a statistic, while the murderer becomes an individual who will be remembered. . . .

How do you react to death by murder? . . . . The victim's family has been drawn into an act that has brought consciousness to the subliminal terror of society out of control. Society's determination to push back the terror and enforce order takes precedence over the death. The ritual of revenge takes precedence over the ritual of mourning and remembrance.

Would it not be better if we spent more time and energy mourning the death and remembering the life? When we concentrate on the killer to the exclusion of the victims, do we not wound our own sense of humanity? When we make the killer a celebrity, do we not encourage the deranged to seek out innocent victims in order to obtain immortality? And most importantly, what are we teaching our children about the value we place on human life?<sup>12</sup>

**2. The victim feels needs are neglected.**

Victims who have been injured or have been robbed of valued possessions often have no one to counsel with them. Their person or home has been violated, yet no one seems to care.

Compensation for loss is seldom available. Victims try to file a claim, but have to wait months. The process seems reasonable and normal to those involved, except to the victim. Property is sometimes held as evidence for months. Victims volunteer to serve as witnesses, but end up being embarrassed or harassed by the prosecution. Court delays and postponements can result in excessive inconvenience, time off from work, parking or sitter fees, and the prolonging of the emotional trauma.

Victims who are children beaten by their parents receive sympathy, care and attention for a while. If, however, they grow up to be themselves battering

parents, no one seems to consider them victims of feelings and actions they learned while young.

**Christian Growth**

Victims feel some, if not all, of the above reactions. But what is, or should be, any difference in the feelings of those who are Christian? Fear, anger, guilt, helplessness are natural reactions. But perhaps the hoped-for final reactions for a Christian would be compassion and justice—or even forgiveness and love!

Crime raises theological questions. Victims may not verbalize their theological questions clearly, but their experiences bring some deep ponderings to the surface. Ministers and members of the congregation can be helpful by discussing the shaking of beliefs that often comes with being victimized. On page 11 are some of these questions with very brief answers. Chapter 5 on the broader perspective of victimization also will give theological help.

One practical way of dealing with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, and helplessness is through pastoral care which can be offered to victims by the church. The church can help victims work through their feelings, see the relevance of their faith to their experience, and learn how to live in forgiveness. This ministry of pastoral care by both ministers and lay persons is the subject of the next chapter.

**The following page can be duplicated, to give to a victim to read or to use for discussion in a group of victims.**



*As a victim, you may have asked yourself some of these*

**THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS**

**QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD**

*Does God still rule the world, including my community or city?*

The evil you experience can come from the abuse of God's good gift of freedom of choice. God's desire is that you choose life and all that nurtures it.

God rules and is omnipotent. The resurrection has settled the ultimate victory of good over evil. We, however, live between the times. The fact that God is victor is not always obvious now.

*Why did God let this crime happen to me? How can I believe in God's will now?*

This dilemma is as old as Job who finally declared, "Though God slay me, yet will I trust him." (Job 13:15 KJV) As Christians, we are not assured protection against the world's ills but are promised strength to face what comes. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9)

God can miraculously transform even tragic events in your life for good. Many victims of crime have found their faith strengthened, their family ties made closer, and their interest increased in change in society.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT A VICTIM'S RESPONSE**

*How can I go on now, working for wholeness in my life?*

Like most victims, you probably need to acknowledge that you are not a super-person. You need help to get your life back in balance, to be the person God intended you to be. You can find assistance through pastoral care, counseling, and support groups of victims. Let yourself be helped by the love and nurture of some human community (your family, church, friends) and by the loving care of God to whom you can turn.

*Are my honest feelings of anger, fear, and resentment acceptable as a Christian?*

Yes. God is not afraid of your honest reactions. To deny you have these feelings is to deny you are human. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:26: "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." Admitting your anger is not a sin, but letting it fester, not dealing with it, is a sin. God accepts you regardless of your condition—even when you are angry, fearful, and helpless.

*Aren't love and forgiveness unrealistic expectations in the light of the crime I suffered?*

Christian love is not *liking* another person. It in-

volves actively seeking the welfare of another. Working to help the offender is not too much. You as a victim, along with others in society, can keep on making efforts to redeem the offender to a useful life.

You cannot make yourself love another person. Only God can work in you to give you a spirit of forgiveness, a vital part of love, essential for your sake as a victim. Harbored hatred can wither your soul, but your soul can be liberated through your willingness to forgive.

*As a Christian, am I called on to respond to criminal aggression only in a non-violent manner?*

Christians should work and pray for a society where violence and force are unnecessary, where forgiveness and love prevail in all relationships. You will find a wide range of interpretation on this question, but no easy answer. Christians believe that life is sacred, but may sometimes find themselves in a decision between one life over another.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT VICTIMIZERS**

*How can I be sure someone is going to be punished for this crime?*

Your human nature makes you want someone to pay. The crime seems more fair if you see that stiff punishment occurs. As a Christian, you know intellectually that justice is right and that retaliation out of anger was not the teaching or example of Jesus. Yet the desire for retaliation can be a natural emotion for you to have as a victim of crime.

*What happened to this person that made her or him a criminal?*

Christians often ask themselves what disadvantages or circumstances in the life of the offender make him or her turn to crime. You probably wonder what can be true justice for this person, especially if he or she never really had a chance in life.

This question is hard for you as a victim to ask, much less to answer. As a Christian, you have been taught to believe that the offender is also a child of God, therefore your brother or sister.

*Are there people who will always be mean and cruel, for whom there is no chance of redemption?*

God never gives up on anybody. If you ever consider a person outside God's redeeming grace, you are making decisions for God. The question is not what you and others can do, but what God can do with even the worst sinner, even with a thief on the cross.

Recommended for frequent reading  
by victims: *Romans 12.*

*Now by chance a priest was going down that road;  
and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.  
So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place  
and saw him, passed by on the other side.—Luke 10:31-32*

*The priests were the official ministers of their time. Their duties included leading worship in the sanctuary, teaching the people the Law, and inquiring about the divine will for the people. Priests frequently placed ritual and ceremony above clear human need. One law stated that if the priest had touched a dead man, he could not lead worship for seven days.*

*The Levites originally were a separate tribe, set apart to take care of the sanctuary when that duty meant packing up, moving, and reassembling the Tabernacle. They later became assistants to the priests in the sanctuary as gate keepers, judges, scribes, and musicians.*

*In the story of the Samaritan, the Levite could have been afraid that the wounded man was a decoy. Robbers had been known to use one of their number to stop travelers who would then be robbed. Imagine a little: if the victim had been a member of the synagogue, would either the priest or the Levite have stopped?*

*How did the wounded man's hurts go deeper than cuts and bruises? If he had to continue to travel that road on his business, would he walk along afraid and full of hatred? How does our understanding of pastoral care differ from that of the priest and the Levite?*



## Perspective On Pastoral Care

**G**iven the statistics on crime in recent years, it is difficult to imagine that much time can go by without a pastor and a congregation discovering a victim in their midst or in close proximity to them. However, if we have not gone through the victim experience ourselves, there may be a tendency to believe that everything will be taken care of. After all, there are resources to which persons may turn for reparation in such forms as insurance, professional counseling, family emotional and financial support, and compensation laws in some states. At least, we may be tempted to believe that.

Even if those resources are available, however, victims need more. The fear, anger, guilt, and helplessness described in the last chapter are challenges to the church's ministry of pastoral care. The victim's theological questions and his or her need to move to forgiveness and compassion are direct invitations to the unique contributions the church can make.

Pastoral care involves several kinds of attention that ministers and church members can give to victims in the congregation and among the unchurched of the community. The suggestions below are intended to help church leaders see what is involved in the pastoral care of persons who become victims of crime. To meet this challenge, Christians can take these six steps:

1. *We can gain knowledge about the stages of victimization.*

The victim's experience is not unlike that of the surviving spouse when death occurs, the victim of a tragic accident, or the members of a household di-

vided by divorce. These events are ones to which we have become more and more responsive. And those experiences of ministry have prepared us to care for victims of crime more effectively than we might first suspect.

Most pastors are familiar with the stages of the grief process, but lay persons may need to learn these steps. The stages have been written about frequently in the fields of pastoral care, psychiatry, psychology, social work, and medicine. And the grief experience is just what victims of crime are going through. They have suffered a loss, a loss in many ways that leaves deeper scars because of its very unexpected nature. They no longer possess a very basic sense of safety. Whereas death and interpersonal conflict are somewhat expected in these days, few of us prepare ourselves to be the victim of a crime. And so there is an immediate, unexpected wrenching away of things we thought we could count on—safety, security, and, in many cases, the inviolability of our bodies. When physical assault is a part of the experience, there is the additional traumatic loss of our concept of having control over what we do with and what is done to our bodies.

While the nature of the crime may alter the specific manifestations of these stages of grief, the stages tend to be common to the experience of victims.

a. *The first stage is one of shock and disbelief.* Disorientation, having to check again or be told again, feelings of numbness, helplessness and confusion over what to do—all are characteristic of this first stage of response to victimization. Returning home to discover a burglarized house, the victim may

simply collapse into a chair and stare for a time, appearing to be in a daze. Victims describe the experience as if being in a dream. After a physical assault, the victim may simply sit in the place where she or he is left. That person may return home to sit and stare into a mirror or out a window while the sense of self slowly begins to absorb the reality of what has happened. Routine matters of reporting may be accomplished, but there is still a sense of unreality about it. Or, there may be a need to have someone else carry out very basic steps that the victim under ordinary circumstances would be able to do quickly and efficiently.

This first stage of shock, numbness, and disbelief seems to serve a very important function. Radical disruption of a sense of well-being is, quite literally, a violation of the person. A period of apparent numbness enables the self to prepare to absorb the pounding shock waves of this assault. One woman reported returning home to find the front door of her house standing open. She remembered having locked the door, but walked in as if nothing had happened. Moving through the house, looking at spilled drawers, ravaged china cabinet, and empty jewelry cases, she commented that it was almost like walking through a museum, looking (with detached curiosity) at objects of interest. Only after thirty minutes or so did it occur to her to call her husband, the police, and neighbors to report the robbery. Suddenly "it dawned on me that I had been robbed," she reported.

b. *The second stage is one of recoil.* A transition seems to occur between the first and second stages of response to victimization. There is a rhythmic alternation between disbelief and awareness of the reality. Almost like waves hitting the beach, there is increasing realization that the person is indeed a victim. Then comes the second stage, referred to by some writers as a stage of recoil, a period of intensity, a sense of being overwhelmed by the reality of what has happened. One writer has described reality as those features in one's life that appear least alterable. And that is exactly what has occurred. An unalterable experience has taken place.

The response during this second phase may vary radically among victims and even within the same person. Most of the feelings described in Chapter 2 occur during this stage. Horror, resentment, sadness, rage, depression, grief, revulsion, desire for revenge, desire to just forget it and pretend that nothing has happened—all are characteristic potential reactions. There may be feelings of self-blame as well. Many persons move through a period of "kicking themselves" for not having taken more precautions.

Note that the characteristic of the words describing this stage is *intense*. That intensity reflects the strength that the experience of victimization carries. We have referred to the response as one of grief and loss. The loss is intense and difficult to manage. Following a death there are other people who surround and comfort the bereaved. In time, there may well be new relationships that meet, in part, the needs formerly met by the deceased. In other words, there is some reassurance that the vacuum created by the losses of death can be partially filled. But the loss suffered by a victim of crime carries some added subtleties. What has been lost is a sense of physical safety, of control over one's life, of a basic kind of assurance that one is protected from harm. Consequently, persons who have been victims often move about with a sense of fear and dread for some time following their experience.

That fear and dread may manifest itself in a variety of ways. Some persons will become excessively dependent on others, fearful of being alone, wanting the comfort of elaborate safety precautions. Yet, company and security measures don't seem to dispel the feelings of anxiety. Other persons will become intensely angry, inviting anyone to "dare" to take advantage of them in any way. Still others will attempt to "return to normal" with a denial that anything is wrong. Yet, in their private moments, there is restlessness, insomnia, or preoccupation with memories of the event. Often, too, there is a sense of shame about this having happened to them, even though they can be shown that the fault does not lie with anything they did or did not do. Particularly when rape is involved, there is a sense that the "loss" is unacceptable to the surrounding community. A sense of guilt becomes intense.

This period of intensity will be longer lasting than the first stage of denial and disbelief. Yet the length of time spent in this second stage will vary greatly among individuals. For some, it will be a matter of days. For others, weeks and even months will be spent in reliving the experience or living in a "state of alert" lest it happen again. If some victimization has occurred before, the intensity will last even longer.

c. *The third stage is one of resolution.* Fortunately, for most victims the third stage of resolution comes with relative speed. People find a way, or time does its work, to move through the experience and return to a more normal existence. This return to normality ordinarily will carry with it a new awareness of danger, but the awareness will not be preoccupying or paralyzing. Some people are less fortunate and remain more permanently damaged by the experience, unable to experience a relative

sense of safety again.

This resolution comes about in many ways. For many, the story must be told over and over again. The working out is done literally. For others, a physical return to the scene seems to help. Still others make adjustments in their lives, from better insurance coverage to new decisions about being alone to taking courses in self-protection. Such adjustments provide a measure of protection for themselves against future reoccurrences. It is toward this stage of resolution that our best efforts in pastoral care need to be directed.

Bear in mind that when we speak of a victim in this discussion, we are speaking of a particular kind of experience in which the person has done nothing to cooperate with, encourage, or anticipate the crime. Perhaps the best two words to make this distinction would be blameless and helpless. In this discussion victim is indeed victim. Burglary, theft, and physical assault, for example, assume that an intrusion has been made into persons' lives against their will, without their aid, and without their prior knowledge. These characteristics make the experience clearly result in grief over an unexpected loss.

Pastoral care, then, to the victim of such a crime first calls us to gain knowledge about the probable response of the person. The stages of victimization described above enable us to have such knowledge and, in turn, prepare us to take further steps in caring for the victim.

## 2. *We can listen to victims.*

A second expression of pastoral care is listening. This process of listening is critical throughout the stages of grief, but it is especially important in the early phases. Listening, being careful not to offer advice unless it is requested, is one of the most critical means of "providing ongoing support by clergy and laity, through the full pastoral and liturgical ministry of the church, to victims and their families, hearing and sharing grief, pain and lamentation (cf. Psalms 69, 77, 86, 88) and affirming the solace and hope of our faith (cf. Psalm 23, Romans 8:31-39)."

We seldom recognize the value of being listened to until we undergo an experience of loss or major upheaval. One woman who was attacked in her home by a burglar reported that the most helpful thing to her in regaining a sense of emotional equilibrium was the willingness of her friends to listen to her recount the story over and over again. Now she reports herself to be far more willing to listen to other people speak of difficult moments in their lives—without interrupting.

An important part of listening is making the issue *speakingable*. First, we deal directly with the shame

and felt embarrassment of many victims by telling them that we are concerned for and about them. We need to be willing to say the first word, because often they feel uncomfortable about saying it. One woman, beaten up in her own home, remained there for 24 hours before calling for help. When she did call, it was for a taxi to take her to the hospital, because she was embarrassed to have family or friends see her in that condition. While we may not see a person immediately after their traumatic experience, we can let them know that we see them now, and we care.

Listening is not something that just comes naturally for many of us. There is real art involved, along with sensitivity. Churches may want to consider occasional courses or workshops on listening skills to prepare members to listen more effectively and helpfully to those who have been victims of crime.

## 3. *We can help victims feel care and a sense of community.*

A third important ingredient in the working-through process involves understanding, which has several dimensions. Understanding carries a note of being cared for. Persons need to feel understood, to know that other people believe them in their fear or anger, to believe that those people are willing to stand by them during this process of resolution, to be assured that their welfare is important to persons other than themselves.

Understanding and caring provide reintegration into the community. One part of the experience of victims is a sense of having been isolated, singled out as the target of a crime. Suddenly they were not a part of a larger community; they were defenseless. Now there is the need to be reintegrated into the community, to be assured that they are cared for, to be relieved of the possible guilt they may feel for being a victim, to no longer stand out because of their experiences. This need is particularly acute for rape victims, who often find that they are treated as guilty in spite of their helplessness in the event. Embarrassment to be seen in public is a frequent experience for them, and there is special importance in providing them with this sense of being understood in their fear, anger and sense of being violated because of what has happened to them.

Church persons can telephone to express concern, visit to provide company, and extend invitations to go out somewhere. They are simple things to do, in one sense. But those simple things communicate to these persons that they are still a part of our life and that of the community. They need to know they are still welcome. The discomfort we may feel about whether to talk about it is not unlike

the discomfort we may feel about visiting someone who has experienced death of a close family member or friend. We still need to go, even if we are uncomfortable.

So the process of helping victims feel understood is a delicate balance between giving them special attention and assuring them that they are a part of the community, not excluded because of their experiences.

4. *We can encourage an awareness of victims' needs.*

The church can encourage awareness of the needs which exist for victims of crime. Without such awareness, the previous recommendations will not become available to victims because the victims will simply not be seen. Part of our human nature moves us not to see victims as persons in need because we would prefer not to acknowledge that the possibility exists for *us* to be victims. It is our unwillingness to see that leads to the isolation so crucial for crime to take place. If we refuse to see, then those things we prefer did not exist may run rampant. It is ironic that victims feel guilty for making themselves visible to the community and thus serve as reminders of what we prefer did not exist.

Becoming aware is not an easy thing, because it calls on us to acknowledge parts of ourselves that we are ashamed of and fear. To know, listen to, and understand a victim of crime may call us to recognize more clearly our own fear, anger, and revulsion. Particularly when sexual issues are involved, there is reluctance on our part to become aware of the ways in which persons, including ourselves, can be victimized.

One way of helping persons become aware is to set up various educational programs. A seminar to outline the various reactions which victims have to their experience can help us to feel more free to say a word to a specific victim. Such educational formats are good for victims and friends of victims alike. And the setting up of the program makes the whole issue more visible, even to those who do not choose to attend. Sermons on caring should include reference to victims of crime. All too often those persons are not included in the list of persons who are struck by grief, loneliness, or oppression.

5. *We can find information and locate resources.*

Victims need information. They need to know why they were singled out as a target, if a reason is known. If legal proceedings are taking place as a

result of their experience, they need to know how that process is moving along and what will be expected of them. All too frequently victims are deprived of such information out of oversight or some desire to "protect" them. The result is needless speculation on their part about whether they will be attacked again, whether they will have to go through a court hearing, whether they are in danger, whether there is any explanation about what happened to them at all. While such information is not always available, the victim should have access to it if it is available. Numerous communities have victim assistance projects which fill this need.

Another important ingredient in the pastoral care of victims of crime is helping them know about the availability of specialized resources. While many victims, with appropriate family and community support, will move through the stages of recovery, there are many for whom the experience has been so intense that special help is called for. Denominational statements rightly call attention to the importance of support for specialized crisis centers. There are some kinds of help that victims need that ministers may not feel equipped to handle. Special training is called for. So one of the ways that we can help is by supporting special centers that provide such levels of caring. Victim advocacy programs, crisis counseling centers, shelters for battered and abused persons, and long-term counseling centers need volunteers and financial support. Where there are established centers, investigate the quality of their care and see what assistance they may need. Where there are none, groundwork should be laid to provide them. Twenty-four such actions are described in the next chapter.

6. *We can face our own finality.*

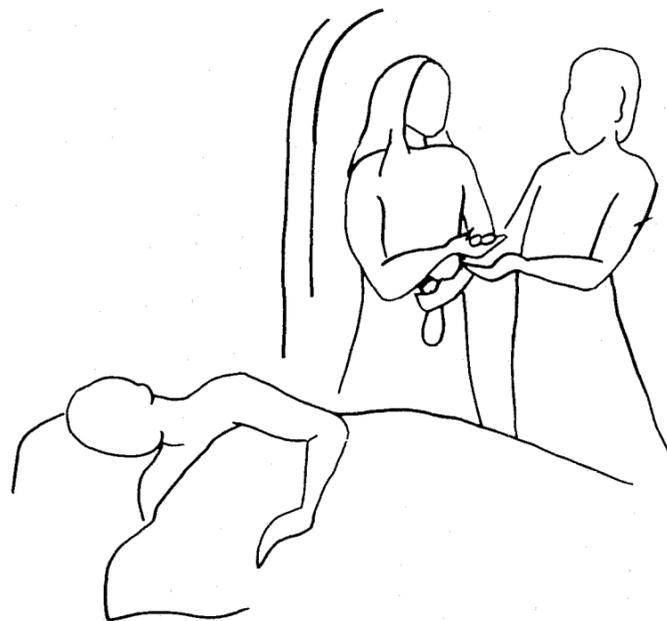
For the church to truly render pastoral care to victims, we must be willing to face realities about ourselves. And the facing of those issues calls on us to acknowledge again that we are finite creatures, that we shall die. As long as we refuse to face those truths about ourselves, we remain isolated. Only when we do face those truths are we able to become community by God's grace.

When we face our propensity to deny the realities about what we are capable of doing to each other, we can repent and turn to each other. In that moment the victim in all of us will be a member of the community made up of all of us, and we shall care for one another.

And [the Samaritan] went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back."—Luke 10:34-35

The Samaritan was considered a theological heretic by the Jews, but he was the one with compassion enough to act. He met the victim's immediate, first-aid needs, took care of him himself, and provided for the victim's complete recovery. The Samaritan spared no time or money.

Speculate a little to imagine what else might have happened if the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan had joined to set up ways to help all such victims? Or had worked with the citizens of Jericho to solve the problems that caused crime on that infamous road?



## An Action Perspective

**Y**ou have a concern for victims. You have thought about how they feel, about the unique contribution of pastoral care to victims and their families. This chapter outlines other actions compassionate persons have taken—individually, within their churches, with others in their community, and with others in their state and nation through legislation.

These ideas are presented to encourage you to take hold of help to victims wherever you see possibilities for action in your situation. Often involvement at one level leads to deeper involvement. As you learn about the victim problem and help those who are victimized, you will begin to ask what you can *do* through your congregation. A church study/action group begins to see opportunities for action that call for cooperation of other denominations or of the community as a whole. Entire communities, realizing that "there ought to be a law," seek state or national legislation.

As you take one small step to imitate the Samaritan's action on behalf of a victim, other possibilities will follow. For now, express your concern in *some* action.

### Individual Action

#### 1. Learn.

Broaden your concern. Become informed about victims and crime. Read some of the resources listed in the Bibliography on page 49. Clip magazine articles that show ways to help victims. Study the current economic situation. Learn about the problems of unemployment, housing, job training, and racial inequities that are basic reasons for victimization.

#### 2. Help victims personally.

There are numerous ways you as an individual can help victims who are afraid and angry. Reread Chapter 3 of this book. Visit and call friends and neighbors who need to recover confidence. If one is injured, prepare food. If one is afraid to go out alone, offer to share rides, to travel together. Some older adults who live alone have decided to share housing with several others in the same predicament. Find out what they want and how you can help. Simple expressions of concern mean much to a victim who feels very alone against a suddenly hostile environment.

#### 3. Take precautions.

There are ways you can avoid becoming a victim:

- "Lock up, light up." Police encourage taking the precautions of locking house and car doors. Otherwise you may be inviting crime. Elaborate alarm systems are one way, but not leaving keys in a car is a basic deterrent for us all. Police also encourage marking possessions and seeking adequate street lighting where we live.

- Maintain communications. An active neighborhood watch program discourages crime. Within the fellowship of your church you could call each other regularly, know when visitors or service personnel are expected, learn each other's normal patterns of being at home.

- Reduce possessions. If our homes have little that is worth stealing, thieves will be less apt to come. For many Christians today there is a serious questioning of over-abundance in the face of human needs and scarce resources on a worldwide basis.

- Travel together. Call others to make neces-

sary trips together, especially at night. When persons live alone, you can go in the empty house or apartment with them briefly on returning, even in the day time.

#### 4. Volunteer.

Many of the efforts of your congregation and community (some suggested below) need volunteers on a regular basis. Here is a specific way you individually can help victims. Rape crisis centers, shelters for battered or abused spouses, restitution centers, for example, are eager to find volunteers. Adequate foster homes are constantly needed for children who are abused. Find the most urgent need in your community.

#### 5. Be open to facing the offender.

If you are needed as a witness, be available. If a friend is witnessing, go with that person. If the idea of a face-to-face meeting with the offender is suggested, talk as one human being to another about your feelings, agreeing on fair restitution. Be willing to stick with the restitution agreement until completed (see page 21).

#### 6. Run for public office.

Most church people do not consider political involvement. Yet Christians can bring about change even in defeat. One such person, Doris Havran, says, "I lost in order to win."

Doris is active in both Lutheran Church Women and Church Women United in New Jersey. In November 1976 she decided to run for sheriff of Somerset County because she had firm convictions about penal reform and justice. She spent \$164 for the campaign and ended up with 5% of the vote—more than any previous independent candidate for sheriff. She won the opportunity to publicize the issues and to force other candidates to address them. She also educated many county residents about their responsibilities. Would she do it again? "Indeed," she answers.<sup>1</sup>

#### Action with Others in Your Church

Though there is no substitute for personal care and interest, there are ways that your compassion might be even more effective through the efforts of the total church group. Below are some ways congregations have helped victims:

#### 7. Form a study/action group in your congregation.

You could begin with a use of this book, using the study/action guide beginning on page 33. Check with your Christian education planners about a possible adult/youth elective for one quarter during the church school hour. The Presbyterian Church U.S.

General Assembly urged congregations to join in "studying biblical, theological, and secular material relative to victims of crime; . . . paying special attention to those crimes which cost citizens more financially than robbery and other property offenses, including 'white collar' crimes."<sup>2</sup>

A study group would want to watch particularly for articles on a new development in regard to victims: community crime prevention. The focus may be changing in the secular world from looking at potential offenders and their motivations to a closer scrutiny of potential victims, their environment, and the socio-economic factors which underlie victimization. Increasing attention is being focused on keeping people from becoming victims.<sup>3</sup>

#### 8. Provide pastoral care and relevant worship.

Churches in their studies have urged such actions on behalf of victims:

To provide ongoing support by clergy and laity, through the full pastoral and liturgical ministries of the church, to victims and their families. . . .<sup>4</sup>

To provide pastoral ministries that deal compassionately and constructively with persons who are experiencing injustice, including those who suffer as victims of crime.<sup>5</sup>

It is perhaps in this realm that a congregation can give help uniquely to its members and to other victims in the community. For this reason, Chapter 3 was devoted entirely to this ministry.

#### 9. Organize support groups.

No persons are as interested in the victim experience as victims themselves. Your church might call together on a temporary basis those in the community who have been victims of similar crimes. Talking with others will help work through the stages of victimization described in Chapter 3. Or a neighborhood congregation could organize its members into geographic groups for prevention of victimization through checking on each other and through instigating and maintaining an active, effective neighborhood watch.

#### 10. Observe court, hospital, and police treatment of victims.

A few members of a congregation who observe carefully could soon find needed areas of broader community action. The Presbyterian Church U.S. as a denomination called for compassion through "observing and evaluating procedures of courts, police, hospitals, and other agencies to discover what is being done and what might be done to strengthen victims and their families physically and spiritually."<sup>6</sup>

#### 11. Provide for prisoner-family visitation.

This service, provided by a number of congregations,\* is based on the assumptions that families of prisoners are often indirect victims of the crime of a family member; many prison facilities are located away from centers of population in places where public transportation is not readily available to families of prisoners; and helping to maintain strong family ties through visitation means, for the offender, a more stable family situation and less likelihood of further crime upon release from prison.

Programs of this type are usually organized around an ecumenical group of churches who are sponsors; the use of the facilities of one downtown church, preferably near the bus station; a corps of volunteers arranged in teams who work one Saturday a month on food preparation and serving, transportation, and child care; and/or a schedule of meeting at the church at noon, going to the nearby prisons, returning to the church in late afternoon for a hot meal.

An ever broader scope for such a project might involve programs for families of prisoners including transportation to prison for visits, relocation to communities near prisons, day care and baby sitting, skills training, emergency needs for clothing, food, housing, medical care, sharing groups, information and referral service, including legal advice, and advocacy efforts.<sup>7</sup> One sponsoring church writes about the values of the program:

The prison visitation project will continue to lead to the development of close relationships between members of the congregation who volunteer and the families of prisoners. New experiences provided to volunteers in the project contributed to increased awareness and may influence members of the congregation to serve as advocates for criminal justice reform in their personal and professional lives. By sharing time with and providing support to family members who are often the innocent victims of the present correctional system, the church may strengthen its commitment to this important ministry.<sup>8</sup>

#### Action with Others in Your Community

Often what one congregation can do is limited. Large community problems demand community cooperation, or at least an ecumenical approach. Below are some ideas that have been tried successfully, plans that are to the advantage of the victim of crime.

\*For information from two such congregations, write to Second Presbyterian Church, 13 North Fifth St., Richmond, VA 23219 and to First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 566, Tallahassee, FL 32302.

#### 12. Seek restitution to victims.

(Note: See also Action #21) The idea of repayment to victims by offenders as a substitute to a prison term is becoming a practice in several states. Sometimes this program is called Victim/Offender Reconciliation.

Probation and restitution centers, in Florida for example, offer an alternative to the courts in dealing with individuals who do not need imprisonment but do need more supervision than normal probation provides. In 1982 Florida had 12 such centers. In that state the average stay is four months. The main thrust of the program in Florida is a highly structured treatment program designed to motivate the offender into acceptance of individual responsibility and socially condoned behavior. The Florida program includes such features as:

- controlled supervision requiring regular employment and payment to the state of room and board fees as well as monthly costs of supervision.
- structured treatment programs utilizing community resources in educational, vocational, and other self-improvement opportunities.
- required nightly sessions which increase self-awareness and respect for others.
- house rules establishing guidelines for conduct, behavior, appearance, duties and responsibilities, guest visits, drug tests when required.
- free weekends allowing the offenders to go home or elsewhere in the community, time earned when a rating of "good" or "excellent" is received in all program categories.
- work details, an integral part of the program whereby the offenders have the responsibility for kitchen duties, facility maintenance and cleanliness.
- individual counseling sessions scheduled at least once a week to assess progress, identify any problems, and provide guidance and motivation.
- regular restitution payments.

The program eligibility is normally limited in Florida to those convicted of property crimes where no threat of violence was used and where there is no recent history of assaultive behavior. Youthful offenders of ages 17-24 make up the majority of those in the Florida centers.

There are numerous *advantages* to the use of restitution:

a. Restitution, if used increasingly by trial judges, helps the victim whose losses are repaid. Fines and court costs now go to the state. Restitution makes more sense than a system in which the state is repaid, not the victim. But help to the victim goes beyond the practical:

The victim is given the rare opportunity of confronting the person who violated him or her. This eyeball-

to-eyeball meeting, in the presence of a trained community facilitator, allows the victim to express some very intense feelings of frustration, hurt, and even anger. The victim is able to get many practical questions answered. Why me? How did you get into my house? Were you stalking me for a number of months? Why did you have to destroy my kid's toys? Was there something I could have done to prevent you from coming in?

Beyond these emotional benefits, the victim is able to work out an acceptable form of restitution and repayment by the offender. In short, the traumatic experience of being a victim can be processed in a more whole sense, worked out, and brought to closure.<sup>9</sup>

b. The possibility of restitution encourages victims to report crime.

c. Restitution calls for a contract based on the cooperation of the victim, the offender, and law enforcement personnel. It brings the victim and offender together as human beings. The offender sees the human impact of crime. The victim sees why some people turn to crime.

A teen-age youth in Tucson, Arizona, was caught while stealing a television set from the apartment of a single, elderly woman. During a later face-to-face meeting with the woman, the youth learned that she was a semi-invalid and that the TV was her only readily available source of entertainment. She saw that he was a scared, nervous youth. He agreed to return the TV and, in addition, to do odd jobs for the woman such as mowing her lawn. He was such a good worker that the neighbors began to hire him to do odd jobs for them, too.<sup>10</sup>

d. Restitution can be in the form of money or services. This flexibility can be an advantage since the earning potential of many offenders is low. A juvenile restitution program in Quincy, Mass., in its second year of operation, has 1,200 participants, 90% of whom successfully paid a total of \$89,000.<sup>11</sup>

e. Restitution by the offender can relieve the state of the responsibility for compensation (See Action #26) where such is the law. Restitution residential centers also are cheaper to maintain than prisons.

f. Restitution gives the victim a chance to help the offender, to do something constructive about crime.

- A 20-year-old who stole lumber from a farmer . . . worked off a 30-day jail sentence by painting a building for the farmer. . . . The farmer liked the job so well he hired the youth to paint three other buildings. They are now best of friends.<sup>12</sup>
- A 40-year-old burglar who spent half his life behind bars was caught breaking into a minister's home.

Instead of going back to jail, he went to work for the minister. Three years later, the minister performed a marriage ceremony for the former burglar and his bride.<sup>13</sup>

g. Restitution means that a community in its dispute mediation centers (See Action #13) can handle minor non-violent cases. This program can relieve the overloaded court system of many less serious crimes.

h. Restitution means that an offender can use community organizations for mental health, alcohol, and drug problems. Positive changes can keep them from being future victims.

There are also several *disadvantages* to restitution:

a. Restitution obviously depends on the catching of the offender.

b. Restitution depends in many places on a change in law so it can be *in place of* prison, not in addition to prison.

c. Restitution is most effective in cases involving a victim's property or finances. It is more difficult, but not impossible, to use restitution for crimes involving a loss of life. Community service sentences are more widely used as a form of restitution for murder or rape.

d. Restitution depends on the willingness of the victim to give time and energy.

"I've puzzled a lot," [a juvenile] judge said, "about how to get people to care. . . . Why did some people risk their lives to hide Jewish children from the Nazis where others did not? . . . It is awfully hard to get victims to care."<sup>14</sup>

Restitution has been used successfully in communities in Georgia and Florida; in Saginaw, Michigan; Elkart, Indiana; and Kitchener, Ontario.

### 13. Start a dispute mediation program.

Dispute mediation sponsored by a community is another way to allow people to settle their differences out of court. It de-emphasizes who is to blame and focuses on how persons can live together in the future. Often such mediation *prevents* there being a victim where disputes are heated.

One example of this program comes from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where domestic, neighborhood, landlord-tenant, and customer-business problems are solved out of court. Cases are referred to the center from the District Attorney's office and local lawyers. Volunteers who talk to those involved in a dispute are mediators chosen from a cross-section of the community and trained by the community relations personnel from the U.S. Department of Justice. They work in pairs and are

available day, night, or weekends. The mediator sets up an appointment with both of those in the dispute. The aim is to clarify the issue and find a solution that is acceptable to both parties. Any agreement is written down and signed by all those present. The agreement is not legally binding but is a statement of mutual trust. In 1980 the Chapel Hill center handled 125 cases, solving 95% of them.

Dispute mediation is helpful as a preventive measure to open conflict. It has been used primarily in domestic disputes, arguments between friends, clashes of rights in a community, cases of apartment owners and tenants. Successful centers are to be found in Columbus, Ohio; Rochester and Albany, N.Y.; Philadelphia; Kansas City, Mo.; Dallas; Palo Alto, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

### 14. Begin a victim service center.

Victim service centers offer a comprehensive, integrated response to victims' needs. These centers typically provide victim counseling on emotional and legal problems, transportation services to the court or the doctor's office, emergency repair service for victims of burglaries, and assistance with presenting victims' needs to social service agencies. They may also be equipped with a victim hotline, providing information on police and court procedures, compensation programs, and program services. They may provide day care for victims' children on those days when the victims are in court, and free emergency medical care. They will help to persuade employers to hold a victim's job until he or she can return and to convince banks and merchants to delay credit or mortgage payments.

One particularly successful program which provides most of these services is the Aid to Victims of Crime, Inc., located in the inner city of St. Louis. About 45% of the city's violent crime is committed within the area surrounding the center. The center has 100 trained volunteers, primarily from the neighborhood itself, and only a small paid staff. The program operates separately from the police and inner city agencies, but cooperates with them. In one year the center helped more than 700 victims.<sup>15</sup>

Another helpful program is the Victim Assistance Unit, a permanent unit of the Rochester, N.Y., Police Department. This program helps victims and witnesses in filing for compensation for victims of crime, transportation to court, home or hospital visits, case status information, short-term crisis counseling, help on criminal justice procedures, and referral to other social service agencies that can help the victim. This Victim Assistance Unit distributes widely a leaflet explaining the program with all its features, and encouraging those who needs its services to contact the unit.\*

### 15. Help in victim-witness assistance programs.

Individual victims of street or property crime are subject to a seemingly uncaring justice system in which their feelings and convenience are often not considered. The police station and courthouse are foreign territory for them. They often refuse to cooperate in naming the offender for fear of reprisal or because pressing the issue involves too much hassle. If they are summoned to court, they are not compensated for their lost wages and they do not have much indication of when their case will come up. The victim may spend days before the case is disposed of. They may be subjected to seemingly very personal questions by prosecutors and harassment by defense lawyers. If the case is disposed of by plea bargaining, they are often not consulted about it, and they do not understand why they were needed as witnesses if the prosecutor summarizes the evidence and does not call them to testify.

Efforts to coordinate witnesses have been carried out in a number of prosecutors' offices. A witness coordinator is named and that person helps schedule the appearance of state's witnesses. The National District Attorneys Associates operates a Commission on Victim Witness Assistance.\*\* The District Attorney for Forsyth County, North Carolina, utilizes such a coordinator.\*\*\*

In New York City the Vera Institute of Justice operates a project with free transportation for handicapped and elderly witnesses, for victims who fear reprisals from defendants. Elsewhere individual church members can go to court to support victims through the trauma of the justice system, to interpret the system to them, and to be their advocate and friend. (See also NOVA under Action #23.)

### 16. Begin a rape crisis center.

A new development, especially in the early 1970's, was the establishment of rape crisis centers primarily in urban and suburban locations. The need was strong for help to victims of rape who were usually filled with fears: of the attacker's return, of being alone, of venereal disease and pregnancy, of what would happen if the rape were reported, of how friends and family would react.

Rape crisis centers often provide hot-line telephone counseling; going with the victim to the police and hospital; educating and sensitizing the pub-

\*For a copy, write to City of Rochester, Police Department, Civic Center Plaza, Rochester, NY 14614.

\*\*More information may be obtained from NDAA, Commission on Victim Witness Assistance (address in Bibliography).

\*\*\*Contact that office, c/o Hall of Justice, Forsyth County Courthouse, Winston-Salem, NC.

lic, police, doctors, prosecutors, media personnel, and other services. Some centers are self-supporting community organizations. Others are run by police departments, hospitals, mental health clinics, or churches.

One example comes from Kansas City, Missouri, where the eight-county program is called Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault (MOCSA). Its primary purpose is to provide support for rape victims and their families, assisting them in working through the trauma. It also attempts to educate the public about rape as an act of violence, to provide training for police and hospital personnel in dealing with victims. It helps police and courts in seeking convictions. The program, depending heavily on volunteers, receives 30% of its support from the United Way and 70% from churches, community organizations, and individuals.\*

Other active programs are to be found in Berkeley (Bay Area) and Santa Cruz, Calif.; Atlanta; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; Seattle; Nashville; New Brunswick, N.J.; New York City; Detroit; and Albuquerque.

#### 17. Start a shelter for abused persons.

Where does an abused spouse turn for help? Communities are beginning to answer with varying patterns of shelters for the spouse and children.

Kansas City, for example, has two programs. One, called NEWS (Neighborhood Ecumenical Witness and Services) serves primarily the northeast side of the city. It gives battered women and their children a chance for survival and for shelter from their situations. They take up to 30 persons of any age. Coupled with emergency shelter is an effort to improve the family situation, child advocacy, and education for prevention. A unique feature of the program is a belief that workers need to deal with the whole person, including physical, psychological, and spiritual needs. The Kansas City program is funded by Presbyterian and United Methodist churches, foundations, and individuals.\*\*

Kansas City has a second such program: Rose Brooks, Inc. A special feature of this program is a 24-hour hot line, staffed by volunteers with phones in their homes. This hot line can be used by battered women, and also by the police, emergency room personnel, mental health and social workers, lawyers, doctors, friends, and families.\*\*\*

\*More information is available from Jean Newlenburger, 3607 Broadway, Kansas City, MO 64111.

\*\*For further information, contact Sharon Garfield, P.O. Box 4509, Kansas City, MO 64124.

\*\*\*For information, contact Linda May, Rose Brooks Center, Inc., P.O. Box 27067, Kansas City, MO 64110.

#### 18. Help children who are victims.

Some child abuse is handled in the above centers for battered and abused spouses. Children are, however, victims of several kinds of crimes: physical harm, neglect, emotional abuse, and sexual attack.

About 4% of all abused children die; 30% will sustain permanent injury, in the form of severe emotional problems or loss of limb or sight. Any child abused over a long period of time no doubt suffers some kind of permanent damage. Ten percent of the children under age six in an emergency room are probably there for non-accidental injuries. About 25-50% of the abused children that are reported by hospitals have histories of prior abuse.<sup>17</sup>

Surely there are no victims more helpless than children. The challenging problem is how to find them when abusive or neglectful parents do not ask for help and keep their violent acts secret.

#### 19. Start a counseling center for victims.

Many of these programs concentrate on rape victims, but anyone, especially the elderly, who has suffered assault, been the victim of a robbery (from purse-snatching to armed battery) or traumatized by criminal acts of any kind may be in need of this type of assistance. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, pastors, and others with professional training can be enlisted to aid in these programs, either as volunteers or for minimal fees. Also, volunteers may be utilized to accompany the victims to the places of treatment when necessary because of incapacities or because of fear, since many such programs operate after regular business and professional hours.

Note: a most important community activity could be compensation to victims (Action #20.)

#### Action with Others in State and Nation

As is true with many problems of society, individual concern and community service is needed and helpful, but not enough. Work must be added on a legislative level to effect changes on a broad state and national basis. Whole communities and ecumenical organizations can work for passage of laws helpful to victims. The Presbyterian Church U.S.' General Assembly called on its members to become "familiar with existing law with respect to victims, and by initiative and lobbying for such legislation as may benefit victims, such as compensation and restitution programs."<sup>18</sup>

#### 20. Work for legislation for victim compensation.

Compensation, the most comprehensive legislative proposal, refers to payments to victims by gov-

ernment for personal injury, loss of life of family member, medical costs, loss of time on the job, or incapacitation for future work. The offender may or may not be apprehended. Restitution (See Action #12), on the other hand, refers to direct local contact and payment between the victim and the offender. It refers primarily to property or financial losses, though injury is sometimes included.

Compensation is not a new idea. It appears in African traditional law, where compensation to the victim and the family is of primary importance. In Europe compensation was the law until the Middle Ages, when the church and state began to demand larger and larger percentages of compensations until the victim was left out. Today about 30 countries and over half of the states in the United States have some form of victim compensation law.

There are numerous reasons why compensation to victims is desirable.

a. Compensation is a way the community can express concern for the victim. It reflects human decency on the part of the state because it is just and right.

b. Compensation offsets some anger and frustration that can build up in victims who are then ready to support irrational and hate-filled proposals regarding crime.

c. Compensation relieves some of the trauma and suffering of the victim and the family.

d. Compensation helps victims who are most often poor, and consequently have inadequate insurance to cover losses and injuries.

e. Compensation would encourage reporting to the police.

There are differences in laws among the states which have victim compensation provisions, yet there is some consensus about desirable elements of compensation laws:

a. Eligibility. Compensation should include cases of personal injury, death, and rape. The latter is not always included. In North Dakota and Hawaii, for example, compensation is given for "pain and suffering" which can include psychological trouble resulting from rape and going beyond a small medical fee which is the usual law. Other laws for eligibility should include:

Compensation should be available to all victims of crime within the state, whether resident or non-resident, related to the offender or unrelated. . . . There should be an explicit requirement that state statutes provide compensation to rape victims. The lost time and labor of all persons, including unemployed persons and housewives, should be compensated at a flat rate equivalent to that of working men and women.<sup>19</sup>

Another provision should be that compensation is not dependent on the offender's being caught. Only the victim's injury or loss should be the criterion. Compensation should cover medical bills and loss of wages. It should also have provisions for interim payments while cases are being considered. These payments are essential for the especially needy persons who have filed a request for compensation. Compensation, however, should not be expected for cases of property losses or for cases where the offended person actually contributed to his or her own injury.

b. Coverage. Some states require the victim to bear the first \$100 in bills, or the equivalent of two weeks' salary. Payments range from about \$5,000 in Georgia and Nevada to as high as \$45,000 in Maryland.<sup>20</sup>

c. Process: fast and simple. Compensation is definitely related to effectiveness when it is quickly received. The process should encourage the victim to notify the police quickly, receive legal counsel if it is needed, receive notice if the claim is adequate; be told of a right to appeal. An ecumenical statement encourages a quick process: "The elapsed time between filing a claim and receiving an award should be shortened, with rules and procedures made flexible to facilitate the process for victims."<sup>21</sup>

d. Management of program. Compensation is sometimes expected to be managed by an administrative unit of government and sometimes by a judicial one. The administrative kind of program is usually most effective because courts are already over-loaded. In an administrative unit, a focus can be created on just versus unreasonable compensation.

e. Safeguards. Any program of compensation should be subject to judicial review. Such an arrangement can work two ways. The victim can have the right after compensation has been named. A compensation board can ask the court to review an award for fairness.

f. Finances for the program. In the past the general thinking has been that costs of the program could be shared between the states and the federal government. Recent changes in national policy in this regard, however, may make a shift in thinking necessary.

g. Public education. A definite part of any program of compensation should be that of equal opportunity for all to collect: "All victims should be advised of possible compensation benefits by police who are investigating the crimes committed against them. There should be public education to alert potential victims, especially those who are poor, to the existence of compensation programs."<sup>22</sup>

21. *Work for legislation on probation/restitution centers.*

(Note: Look back at Action #12 in this chapter.) Following is the Florida statutory authority for this program, as an example of possible legislation:

944:026 Community-based facilities and programs.

(2) The following facilities or services shall be provided or contracted for by the Department [of Corrections].

a) Residential facilities . . . in which probationers, participants in pretrial intervention programs, and other committed to or under the supervision of the [Department] may reside while working or attending school. A plan shall be established for the phasing-in of these residential facilities over a period of five (5) years from July 1, 1974. The purpose of these facilities and services is to provide the court with an alternative to commitment to other state correctional institutions and to assist in the supervision of probationers.<sup>23</sup>

22. *Work for legislation on gun control.*

Laws to regulate the possession of guns are hotly debated, but might prevent there being many victims of violent crimes. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church U.S. urged "promoting a spirit of nonviolence in our communities through the media, through strict controls of concealable handguns . . . and through our own attempts at reconciliation."<sup>24</sup>

It is estimated that there are from 140 million to 200 million firearms in private hands in the United States, the number having expanded rapidly within the last few years. The FBI reported that in 1977 there were over 9,000 murders with handguns (48% of all murders), over 170,000 robberies with firearms. One way of assessing the magnitude is to compare the number of Americans killed by guns in the U.S. between 1963 and 1973, and the number of U.S. soldiers killed in Vietnam during the same period . . . 46,121 killed in Vietnam and 84,644 murdered by firearms in the U.S. (about 90% with handguns).

It is more difficult to bring fruit into America from a foreign country than to buy a gun. It is also harder to drive a car—certainly harder to buy a car than a gun. It takes some time to get married and a lot more time to get divorced, but it takes no time to buy a gun. This is possible because of an archaic interpretation of the Second Amendment which deals with the right of the people to raise a militia, not the right of some . . . young [person] to buy a gun.<sup>25</sup>

Everyone knows that this is a highly controversial issue, involving a strong gun lobby and some degree of organization among the gun controllers.

There is considerable support for some kind of control. Public opinion polls have shown that "the vast majority of Americans have favored some kind of action for the control of civilian firearms." National organizations such as the National Coalition to Ban Handguns have the support of religious groups, labor, educational and other public service groups. Legislation providing for registration of handguns, reasonable licensing provisions including a waiting period, and prohibition of ownership by anyone convicted of a crime involving a gun and by those not mentally competent has been advocated.

Police departments generally support some version of gun control. Yet the lobbies against control have been so strong that very little has been accomplished. Thus for any group to bring about change, it will have to be informed and patient. Decisions will have to be made about objectives—e.g. tightening existing laws; permissive licensing for long guns; restrictive licensing for all handguns; prohibition of cheap handguns.\*

There are models from individual states that can serve as a starting point. New York, Washington D.C., and Massachusetts have the strongest gun control laws. Morton Grove, Ill., in 1981 passed the toughest handgun control ordinance in the country. This ordinance, which banned the sale and possession of handguns, has been upheld as constitutional by a U.S. District Court. Thus it is possible to make some progress in protecting the safety and health of people by thorough legislative means.

23. *Support a bill of rights for victims and witnesses.*

The National Organization for Victim Assistance (see Bibliography, "Organizations") is heading a movement to have adopted in every state and locality a bill of rights for victims and witnesses. A helpful statement of proposed points in such legislation has been outlined by this group. Such laws would support rights for those victimized by crime as are now provided for those accused of crime.

24. *Work for legislation to alleviate social inequities.*

A fundamental way to prevent victimization is to

*\*For arguments on both sides, contact:*

National Rifle Association, 1600 Rhode Island Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (202)783-6505.

Gun Owners of America, 101 S. Whiting Street, Suite 112, Alexandria, VA 22304 (703)370-5000.

National Council for a Responsible Firearms Policy, 7217 Stafford Road, Alexandria, VA 22307 (202)785-3772.

Handgun Control, Inc., 810 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 (202)638-4723.

National Coalition to Ban Handguns, 100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002 (202)544-7190.

work constantly for laws to bring significant social changes in problems such as unemployment, slum housing, racial discrimination and extremes of wealth and poverty. Since most street crime involves the poor against the poor, tackling basic economic inequities would be getting at the reasons for such behavior.

**Choose Some Action**

What you can *do* about victims of crime goes all

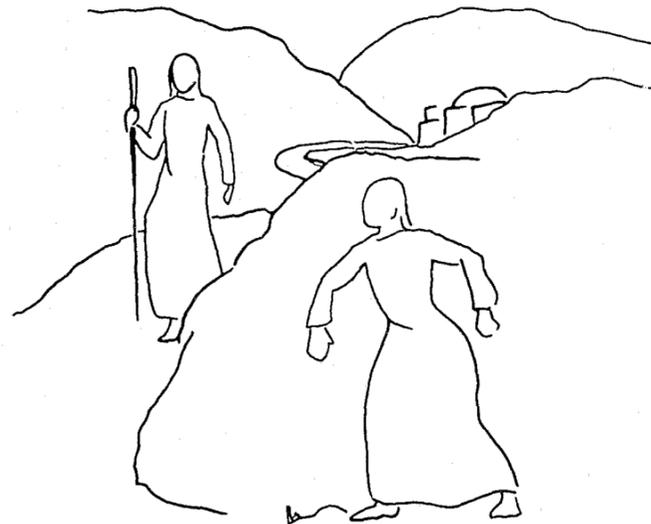
the way from expressing condolence to a victim to working to change present laws and society. Regardless of the level, the complexity of what you attempt, ACT! Not many people today stop on the road to rescue a man wounded by thieves. But all of us have opportunities constantly, figuratively to "bind up the wounds" of today's victims of crime. "Go and do likewise," Jesus said.

“Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” [The lawyer] said, “The one who showed mercy on him.” And Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”—Luke 10:36-37

The broader perspective on the story of the Samaritan leads to a thought on why Jesus told the parable. It all began when a lawyer asked about eternal life, answering that the law is love of God and love of neighbor. By asking who is a neighbor, the lawyer implied that not everyone is included, that only some may be worthy of loving action. He was distancing himself from some people by his question.

Jesus' story is about a person who acted out of a heart overflowing with compassion and pity for anyone in need. The final point is an instruction to us all to act like the Samaritan. Jesus changed neighbor from a noun to a verb. Jesus did not answer who is a neighbor, but how to neighbor.

The story causes us to wonder if the Samaritan saw the larger picture of crime in his day. Did he help the people in Jericho to make safe the notoriously dangerous road? If the thieves were caught, was he concerned with how they were treated?



## A Broader Perspective

After considering who victims are, how victims feel, how the church can perform the unique function of pastoral care and take other effective action on behalf of victims—still there is one more much-needed theme. To complete any study of victims, we need to look at victimization within the picture of all of criminal justice, and of a theological perspective that necessarily undergirds any program of the church.

### Maintaining Our Perspective

When we become vitally concerned about victims, we may be caught up in a community effort to start one of the programs suggested in Chapter 4. We may be busy extending love and compassion to one who has been victimized. All these efforts are essential and most important. Yet, amid activity on behalf of victims, we need always to consider the broader perspective.

In this chapter we will look briefly at the biblical revelation that we are *all* both victims and offenders. We will look at the causes of crime, at our whole criminal justice system, and at our freedoms. We will look at our responsibilities as Christians to live out God's justice and love. Denominations individually and ecumenically have guidelines and official statements that are helpful at this point.

*A Christian perspective includes a look at our beliefs.*

1. *We are all victims.* In his study of the story of the Samaritan, Karl Barth asked the question of the reader: do you identify more readily with the victim or with the Samaritan? The usual answer is “with the Samaritan. After all, the point of the story is to

be a neighbor to anyone.” Barth reminds us, however, that Jesus often told parables with a meaning deeper than a surface one. We probably, as victims of what life can do to us, and needing the healing of the Master, should rather identify with the victim lying beside the road, helpless and bleeding. Barth is reminding us that we are victims as well as offenders.

### 2. *We are all offenders.*

Our best hope for human justice and a just prison system lies in recognizing *ourselves* in those whose sinfulness we seek to correct. We may not be murderers or thieves. We may be the law-abiding, God-fearing pillars of society and not those who threaten the welfare and safety of society. But that does not mean that we are not also guilty sinners. It only means that the ways in which we disobey God and hurt our fellow human beings are more subtle, more refined, more respectable, less obvious, perhaps more efficient—and, to the extent that they are unacknowledged and unrepented, more liable to the terrible judgment of God—than the lawlessness of those caught in our justice system. We will treat them with more compassion *and* more justice if we constantly remind ourselves that in our own way we are what they are, and that when we look at *them* we see openly exposed what God sees when he looks at *us*.<sup>1</sup>

Or, another way of expressing our sinfulness:

For Christians . . . an interest in prisoners, prisons, and jails cannot be put on the basis of doing something for those “poor unfortunates.” Rather, it is based on the uncomfortable awareness that under God there is

no difference between those in prisons and those who are not. We give our attention to prisoners not in any objective and disinterested way, but as fellow prisoners with them.<sup>2</sup>

*A Christian perspective includes a look at our systems.*

1. *Our society.* Basic social changes are needed to get at the root causes of crime, changes concerned with:

Developing community efforts that deal with the chronic problems of unemployment, racism, poverty, lack of education, and alienation, in order to have healthier communities which will result in a reduction in crime.<sup>3</sup>

Denominations speaking together said:

Society has a particular responsibility . . . to eliminate the crime-inducing effects of community life . . . wherever it tends to reinforce already existing social injustices and contributing social experiences.

To accomplish these ends, it is essential, both in terms of personal morality and public policy, that society: emphasize human worth over material values; accentuate social good above self-interest; work toward a more equitable distribution of wealth; banish discrimination based on race, sex, or class; assure adequate housing and health-care services for all; provide educational and employment opportunities for all; reduce the celebration of violence; and provide for greater citizen involvement in the management of conflict.<sup>4</sup>

A statement by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church U.S.:

Human justice which reflects God's loving justice and just love . . . involves concern to correct social situations and institutions which cause or nurture the fear, sickness, helplessness, and despair which lead to anti-social behavior. It involves the concern to see that laws are not made or enforced to the disadvantage of the poor and powerless and to the advantage of the rich and powerful. In short, it means criticizing and correcting every political or legal structure or practice in which equal justice for all really means that some are more equal and have a better chance than others.<sup>5</sup>

2. *Our system of criminal justice.* Denominations speaking together have declared:

Out of a commitment to the struggle for human dignity in all aspects of human relationships, Christians are compelled to express a concern about injustices within the criminal justice system and for those who are victimized by them; and to seek changes that will produce and protect a state of justice in the administration of the criminal justice system.<sup>6</sup>

Punishment should not be the goal of the criminal justice system. Protection against violence and personal loss, specific deterrence, and reconciliation should be the only concepts to rule the response of society to offenders and offenses.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless many citizens, as reflected in public opinion polls, office-seekers, politicians, and agencies of government, turn to increasing reliance on prison sentences, and to new prison construction programs, as "solutions" to the problems endemic to the criminal justice system. Many church bodies, however, do not agree with those strategies. Together denominational representatives have worked for these emphases:

- fewer prisons, seeing a tendency to fill and overcrowd whatever spaces are available;
- shorter terms, knowing that the United States has longer terms than other nations for the same crimes;
- bail reform programs;
- quicker trials, seeing that many people who are later found innocent are in prison for months awaiting trial;
- alternative punishments, finding from experiments that there are many options for about 80% of offenders who are not dangerous to the public and who can be restored to useful citizenship by intensive efforts to reclaim them;
- no death penalty, seeing that such a position is theologically contrary to a belief in the sacredness of human life and to the belief that redemption is always possible;
- the need for reform of present prisons, doing away with inhumane, overcrowding conditions that destroy any chance for rehabilitation;
- juvenile justice reform that enables a community to emphasize other options than juvenile facilities, seeking for reorientation of potential criminals before the cycle is entrenched in their lives;
- attention to victims of crime, including the many aspects and needs discussed in this book.

3. *Our freedoms.* Because of the severity of the problem of crime and the public awareness of widespread violence in our society, there is a growing outcry for more "law and order," and for more severe punishment for convicted criminals. While there are many ways in which enforcement of our laws and the protection of our citizens might be improved, it should be understood that the more power we give to law enforcement officials to monitor and control the lives of citizens, even in the name of "clamping down on criminals," the more danger we run of abridging certain of the freedoms which we enjoy. If citizens react to crime in the so-

ciety simply out of fear, they may well agree to the granting of police powers that have the effect of diminishing such constitutionally guaranteed rights as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom from unreasonable search and seizure.

Another danger in reacting to criminal violence out of fear is that citizens will seek to respond by preparing for retaliatory violence. Individual illustrations of this abound, as the number of "law-abiding" citizens purchasing handguns and learning to use them against human targets has increased dramatically. One town even went so far as to adopt a law requiring every household to own a handgun and take training in the use thereof. The statute provided for a fine and prison term for anyone out of compliance.

In view of the call of the Gospel to reconciliation and to peace with justice, it seems inappropriate for the Christian community to support answers to the problem of crime which call for either repressive legal structures or institutionalized retaliatory violence.

*A Christian perspective includes a look at our Christian responsibilities.*

1. Christians have a responsibility to *react in love, avoiding retaliation*, seeking the welfare of the victimizer as well as the victim.

[We need to remind] ourselves that vengeance is counter-productive as it intensifies anti-social attitudes and further separates the human community, and that compassion for victims should not encourage or result in disdain, hatred, or violent retaliation toward offenders.<sup>8</sup>

As God exercised . . . justice in Jesus Christ in order to grant pardon and new life to guilty humanity, so true human justice can only aim at restoration of the offender to the community. Motives of vengeance, retribution, or punishment for its own sake . . . should be uncompromisingly rejected by Christians.<sup>9</sup>

The Christian must seek always to overcome evil with love. The reintegration of persons into community takes precedence over the deterring of persons from evil; the persuasion of persons to do good is prior to making them pay for the injury done to others; the law of love is the criterion for justice.<sup>10</sup>

In all our human endeavors, our ideal is to imitate the example of Jesus Christ, somehow to combine justice and love.

2. Christians have a responsibility to *work for reconciliation* between victims and offenders, for *restored community*. This concept of community, based in the Bible, applies both to the Christian community, the church, and to the broader secular community.

[The] intimate connection between what we would call punishment and the motive of restoration is dramatically illustrated in the very language of the Bible: the Hebrew word for restitution or repayment is *shalam*, from the same root as the word that describes the state of the community marked by justice/righteousness, *shalom*. The restitution demanded of offenders has no theological justification unless it repairs, symmetrically, the offense and restores the state of shalom.<sup>11</sup>

Reconciliation calls for forgiveness and acceptance, neither of which is an easy attitude for victims.

While wrongdoers must be accountable for their actions, the responsibility for injurious behavior and the reintegration of offenders into the life of the community must be shared by the whole community. Particular responsibility rests upon those who can exercise the power to effect change.

Restoration assumes that conflicting claims of individuals and the community can be adjudicated in non-violent, community-building ways. It involves the offender's abilities to establish a new relationship with those who have been hurt, when this is possible; and to make good the damage or harm that has been done, as well as can be accomplished. . . . Restoration is a dynamic concept that presumes acceptance is a three-way relationship on the part of the community, the victim, and the offender.<sup>12</sup>

The church has a unique role to play. As the lawyer who was questioning Jesus distanced himself from some people just by asking, "Who is my neighbor?" so the church may be guilty today. In its very make-up and program many congregations distance themselves from the poor, the offenders, and even from the victims of some crimes such as rape and domestic violence. Victims are in congregations, are among the non-churched in the community, in families of offenders, and are among those caught in the often unjust criminal justice system.

The church and her members can respond to victims of crime through ministries of compassion, through education and inquiry, through political and economic decisions, and through prayer, worship, and fellowship. We believe that in our life together, the power of God is proclaimed, revealed, and discovered. Where the love of God in Christ is shared freely, people can find healing and new hope.<sup>13</sup>

3. Christians have a responsibility to *stand for all oppressed and powerless*—victims and offenders.

As God in Christ exercised his justice in such a way that he voluntarily stood with and by and for undeserving humanity and made their weakness and need and guilt his own, so a just human community can and

should willingly take on itself responsibility to understand and help the weak, needy, guilty members of our society. It should be willing to make their needs our own concern. And it should be willing to pay the cost in money, time, and personnel it takes to bear such responsibility.<sup>14</sup>

Justice should guarantee and defend especially the rights of those who are weakest, most vulnerable, most likely to be forgotten, exploited, or oppressed, most unable to help or defend themselves.<sup>15</sup>

**"Go and Do Likewise"**

Concern for victims by society as a whole and

particularly by the church has had little attention. This concern should not exclude other emphases in the whole picture of crime. Yet it needs more care, more clear and positive attention. People who are victims or those who know victims are hurting, and hurting deeply. The church, of all institutions, cannot fail to hear their cries for help.

Jesus asked in the parable, "Who *proved* neighbor to the one who fell among robbers?" "The one who *showed* mercy on him," came the answer. Jesus' command and invitation was then, "GO AND DO LIKEWISE."

## STUDY/ACTION GUIDE

You have read this study on victims. You want to get others interested so you will have support for action beyond what you can do individually for victims of crime and their families. You are convinced that the church has a unique role to play in a ministry of compassion, in answering the deeper questions raised by crime. For an outline of this guide, see pages 34-35.

### PREPARATION

#### *Participants in study group*

How do you start? Perhaps do the study in an ongoing group in the congregation, or create a new one for interested persons. Work with your church staff and appropriate existing committees to explain your idea. Invite these persons to participate. Decide whether the study/action group will be just for your congregation or be an ecumenical one. Talk about whether the study will be an elective during the church school hour for a quarter, or at some other time.

Give information on the plans to all victims or families of victims that you know. Publicize your plans through church channels as well as through the newspaper. You will be trying to reach the large number of persons concerned today about ministry with victims.

#### *Schedule*

1. *Use the whole plan: 13 hours.* The plans in this study/action guide are for 13 hours. You might use them in a variety of ways:

- in an elective in church school for youth and adults for one quarter
- in homes for six weekly evening sessions of 2 hours each (compress Sessions 8 and 9 into one hour)
- in a weekend retreat with the 13 hours distributed:
  - Friday evening, 2 hours
  - Saturday morning, 3 hours; afternoon, 3 hours; evening, 2 hours
  - Sunday morning, 3 hours

2. *Or, use part of the study: 7 hours.* If you feel that 13 hours is too long, you could plan for a 7-hour

study by leaving out the five Bible studies in Sessions 3, 5, 7, 10, and 12.

#### *Educational principles*

In studying any issue four points are essential:

1. *Awareness.* Sessions 1-3 help build awareness of victims, who they are, and the extent of the problem.
2. *Analysis.* Sessions 4-7 help participants to analyze the feelings of victims, what is involved in extending pastoral care to victims.
3. *Action.* Sessions 8-10 outline many action ideas and encourage participants to plan and carry out action as a group that recognizes action as an essential part of realistic study.
4. *Reflection.* Sessions 11-13 help the group see its study and action in a broad perspective, including a theological one. Participants are encouraged to reflect on learnings from their action.

#### *Leadership*

There should be a planning and managing group of three people. All the Bible study might be led by the same person (Sessions 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, and part of 13). Leadership from outside the group is suggested, but not essential, for some sessions:

- Session 4 - victims or their family members
- Session 6 - minister or counselor
- Session 8 - representatives of church-wide committees
- Session 9 - community leaders: ecumenical leaders from Council of Churches, Ministerial Association, Church Women United, Jewish women's organization; other leaders such as state legislator, League of Women Voters.

#### *Resources*

- This book (at least one for every regular leader, and enough for each outside leader to read before they meet with the group).
- Bibles and Bible study helps (the helps may be borrowed from the pastor or church library for Session 1 only).
- Access to a mimeograph or duplicating machine (often available in a public library).

## OUTLINE OF POSSIBLE SESSIONS FOR STUDY AND ACTION



SESSIONS	TOPIC	BIBLE PASSAGES	PURPOSE	SPECIAL PREPARATIONS
1. Bible study of the Samaritan story	Samaritan story	Luke 10:25-37	To introduce one victim in the Bible.	Have Bibles and Bible study aids on hand.
2. Use of Introduction and study of Chapter 1.	The idea of perspective; facts about victims today	None	To gain an overview of this whole book; to gain factual knowledge about victimization.	Enlarge drawings from the Introduction; duplicate copies of page 2.
3.* Bible study on Joseph	Victim of family and acquaintances	Genesis 37:1-28; chapters 39-43; 45:1-8.	To illustrate in the Bible some facts learned in Chapter 1.	Have paper, pencils, and Bibles on hand.
4. Study of Chapter 2.	The feelings of victims	None	To understand how victims feel about their experiences.	Interview police ahead of the session.
5.* Bible study on David	The feelings of victims	I Sam. 16:14-23; 18:5-11; chap. 26; II Sam. 11:2-5, 14-18, 22-27; 12:1-14; Psalm 51.	To illustrate in the Bible the feelings of victims described in Chapter 2.	Have ready Bibles, newspaper, markers, tape. List on newspaper the feelings described in Chapter 2.
6. Study of Chapter 3	Pastoral care of victims	None	To understand victimization and what unique contribution the church can make.	Invite a minister or counselor. Have one extra copy of each of the "Typical Stories."
7.* Bible study on Philippian jailer and on forgiveness	Pastoral care of victims	Acts 16:16-34; Romans 12	To illustrate from the Bible the ideas about pastoral care found in Chapter 3.	Have Bibles, paper, and pencils ready. Have copies ready of questions on Romans 12.
8. Study of Chapter 4, first two sections, pages 19-21	Actions by individuals and congregations	None	To lead the participants into a consideration of possible action alone or as a group.	Have copies of the self-test on page 41. Invite persons on congregational committees with responsibility for pastoral care, fellowship, and outreach or witness.
9. Study of Chapter IV, last two sections, pages 21-27	Actions in community, state, nation	None	To lead the group into a consideration of possible action with those beyond the congregation.	Invite ecumenical and community leaders. Research ahead of time on local, state, national action in progress (see Session 9, activity #2, page 42).
10.* Bible study on Esther, a fortune teller, and Philemon	Action with and for victims	Esther 2:16-8:17; Acts 16:16-24; Philemon	To illustrate from the Bible some action ideas as studied in Chapter 4.	Provide paper, pencils, Bibles. Prepare newspaper sheets as described in Session 10, activity #1, pages 42-43.
11. Study of Chapter 5	A broad perspective on victims	None	To see victimization alongside our beliefs, a look at our systems, and our responsibilities.	Have on hand paper, pencils, newspaper, markers, tape, and copies of "How I Feel about Criminal Justice." (Save these sheets for next session.) List on newspaper the "Maintaining our perspective" from pages 29-31.
12.* Bible study on Daniel, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Stephen	Victimization because of beliefs	Dan. Chap. 1, 3:1-7; Ch. 6; Jer. 7:1-7; 11:1-13; 20:1-6; Chap. 26; 32:1-15; Matt. 14:3-12; Acts 7:1-8:1.	To illustrate from the Bible how beliefs and responsibilities studied in Chapter 5 can make victims of believers.	Have Bibles ready. List questions on newspaper for Session 12, activity #2. Have on hand the sheets, "How I Feel about Criminal Justice" from Session 11.
13. Summary and conclusion	Review of group's experiences in: • awareness • analysis • action • reflection	Matt. 21:23-46; 22:15-46; 23:23-28; 27:33-43; 28:1-8; Luke 10:25-37	To summarize learnings and end the experience with worship.	Make copies of "Litany on Being a Neighbor" from page 47.
Later session, several months after beginning some action.	Reflection on action planned during study sessions	None	To let the group think together about what the participants have learned from their action.	Have on hand a copy of the group's plans made back in Sessions 8 and 9.

\*For seven rather than thirteen sessions, these might be omitted.

## SESSIONS

### Session 1

#### Bible Study: The Samaritan Story

To introduce the story of one victim in the Bible, you might consider some of the following steps:

#### 1. Research

After reading the Scripture, Luke 10:25-37, aloud together, ask questions without giving answers to create a need for more information, e.g., questions such as:

- what kind of terrain was the road from Jerusalem to Jericho?
- who were Samaritans, priests, Levites?
- how much was a denarius (plural, denarii)?

Have on hand some Bible study helps in which members of the group might do some research:

- In a Bible Atlas, look up the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.
- In a Bible commentary, look up the scripture reference to see what new information you find.
- In a Bible Dictionary, look up: Samaritans, priests, Levites, denarii.
- In other Bible translations, compare the wording to find differences that clarify meaning.

#### 2. Report

Let each pair or small group report on findings. They can teach each other by telling what they learned.

#### 3. Express the story

To help participants get into the story and the feeling of its characters, work on it from the victim's viewpoint. Call your creations, "The Day I Was Mugged and Robbed." Ask participants to express the story through different media:

- Role play. Assign characters, plan scenes, make up lines for each character.
- Graffiti. Put up newsprint with the title on it: "The Day I Was Mugged and Robbed, I felt like \_\_\_\_\_." Encourage group members to draw or write completions of the sentence.
- Music. Write words to a familiar hymn tune. Tell the story of the victim. Put the words on newsprint so later everyone can sing together.
- Paraphrase. Rewrite the Scripture in terms of today. Where is a dangerous road today? Who would probably be mugged; who would stop?

#### 4. Hear or view creations

See the role play, join in the graffiti with additions from the whole group, sing the hymn, and hear the paraphrase.

### Session 2

#### Introduction and Chapter 1:

##### Who Are Victims?

This session will provide an overview of the book and deal with who are victims today.

#### 1. Discuss

Have you been a victim? When? Anyone in your family? Among your friends, neighbors, members of your church? What happened?

#### 2. Introduce the whole book

Use drawings enlarged from the Introduction to explain the perspective idea. Talk about the need to look at the problem in the light of what Christian faith has to say to us in this situation.

#### 3. Take the test

Give participants time to take the test which you can duplicate from page 2. Discuss answers giving correct ones with explanations.

### Session 3

#### Bible Study: Victim of Family and Acquaintances

The story of Joseph can illustrate the truth today that most victims are victims of crimes by family members, friends, or at least acquaintances. Review this fact as you start the session.

#### 1. Do pencil and paper listening

Ask participants to put two columns on a piece of paper:

*By whom was Joseph victimized? What was the crime?*

Ask them to write answers as you read the Scripture references: Gen. 37:1-28 and Gen. 39:1-20. The answers: Joseph was victimized by his brothers. The crime: assault and selling into slavery. He was also victimized by Potiphar's wife. The crime: imprisoned without trial and on false testimony.

#### 2. Discuss

- answers written down in #1.
- motivation:
  - Why did the brothers victimize Joseph?*
  - Why did Potiphar's wife victimize Joseph?*

#### 3. Study

How did Joseph react to being a victim?

- In prison. Gen. 39:21-23; chapter 40.
- When freed. Gen. chapter 41.
- When his brothers arrived. Gen. chapters 42, 43, 45:1-8.

Number off the participants by a-b-c. Ask each person to read one set of references. Then ask those who read references to tell how Joseph reacted to his victimization experiences.

#### 4. Talk about Joseph's feelings

This discussion will prepare the way for the next chapter on feelings. Ask the question: when Joseph was victimized, did you notice any of these feelings being expressed: fear, anger, guilt, helplessness, love, compassion? Try to empathize with Joseph in the pit as he waited, not knowing what his brothers would do and overhearing suggestions that the brothers kill him. Try to think how Joseph must have felt when he was first thrown into prison. When he was reunited with his brothers.

### Session 4

#### Chapter 2: The Feelings of Victims

For this session, to understand how victims feel, invite some victims of crime in your community or congregation, or members of the family of victims. Be sure these persons do not mind talking about how they felt at the time of the crime and weeks later.

Interview a member of the police force ahead of time. Ask:

- Who are the victims most frequently in our community?
- What are local annual figures on kinds of crime involving victims?
- How do you as police feel as a human being when you deal with victims and their families?
- Do you feel victims and the public appreciate you and your work?

In this session:

#### 1. Review

Refer back to your last discussion on Joseph's feelings when he was victimized.

#### 2. Interview some victims on:

- Tell us your experience.
- How did you feel:
  - toward the offender?
  - toward the police?
  - toward the courts?

- about your security?

- about your faith?

- did your religious beliefs seem shaken? how? at what points?
- or, did you not see any connection?

#### 3. Report

Give a report on the interview with the police (see above).

#### 4. Tell this story

This is a true story about a detective who was also a sincere Christian and an officer in his church. He dealt with experienced criminals. Many times he knew they needed to be captured and that the public needed protecting from further crime by these people.

Whenever he apprehended a person, he made sure he knew the address of the offender's family. The next day he would visit that family, and find out their situation. He wanted to be sure there was no problem about income; whether or not the children could eat because the breadwinner was in prison. He would then take time to get the needy family in touch with the appropriate agencies. Sometimes, when red tape prevented community help, he turned to his church for emergency relief. He always was sure the family understood why the family member had to be taken into custody.

#### 5. Discuss the feelings described in Chapter 2

Summarize each feeling in Chapter 2 for the group, then let members name things they heard in the interviews (above) which illustrated this feeling.

### Session 5

#### Bible Study on Feelings of Victims

To illustrate from the Bible what Chapter 2 tells about victims:

#### 1. Hear the Bible stories

Ask participants to concentrate on the feelings of the victims or potential victims as these passages are read aloud (use several readers):

- In David's early years
  - I Samuel 16:14-23—David played for Saul
  - I Samuel 18:5-11—Saul tried to kill David
  - I Samuel 26—David refused to kill Saul
- In David's later years
  - II Samuel 11:2-5, 14-18, 22-27—Uriah killed by David's command
  - II Samuel 12:1-14—Nathan came to David
  - Psalm 51—A psalm of confession, possibly written by David

2. *Do a little imagining on feelings*
  - a. Feelings of a near-victim, Saul, when David spared his life.
  - b. Feelings of the wife of a victim, Bathsheba.
  - c. Feelings of an offender, David.

3. *Discuss in three groups or in pairs* (Have the questions on newsprint or on a chalkboard)
  - Which of the feelings of victims in Chapter 2 did you hear in these stories?
  - Who was afraid? (Saul, Bathsheba, David)
  - Who was angry? (Nathan)
  - Who felt guilty? (David, Psalm 51)
  - Who felt helpless? (Bathsheba)
  - Who showed love, compassion? (David toward Saul) or a sense of justice? (Nathan)

4. *Discuss*  
In the total group, if there is time, summarize thoughts from #3.

5. *Illustrate each feeling*  
Work in pairs or trios on an illustration of a crime in which each of the feelings in Chapter 2 might result. These illustrations could be based on actual victims known by the participants or on imaginary events involving victims. After work time, display the newsprint drawings, let each group explain the significance of the drawing.

6. *Plan ahead*  
Announce that in the next session the discussion will be on pastoral care of victims, how to help them deal with these feelings.

### Session 6

#### Chapter 3: Pastoral Care of Victims

The purpose of this session is to create an understanding of victimization and the unique contribution the church can make to victims. To help accomplish this purpose, invite a minister or a counselor to be present in this session, taking part as indicated below in activity #3.

1. *Illustrate the stages of victimization*  
Tell the story of some local crime if you know of one that illustrates the stages named in Chapter 3. Or, use this story:  
In 1979 and 1980 the city of Atlanta experienced a series of 28 murders of black children or young people. The whole community, and the nation as a whole, was shocked by these senseless victimizations.  
The families of these victims, often quoted in the media, expressed at first a sense of being in a daze.

The crimes had been so traumatic in the family that the reality of it still could not be comprehended. Then, in a few days, these same family members or friends would be quoted expressing feelings of horror, rage, and a desire for revenge.

After some murders and weeks of searching for the offender, some of the parents of the murdered children decided to form a group to raise money to help find the offender, to console other parents of murdered children, to educate children about the dangers of going anywhere with strangers, and to work for the safety of children in the afternoons after school and in the summertime.

This story illustrated over and over again the stages of victimization: shock and disbelief, recoil, and resolution.

2. *Shift the discussion to the church amid victims*  
Ask participants to think about the nature of an ideal congregation. Write up characteristics as named by the group. If these are not suggested, add below their contributions:
  - the church is a community of believers
  - the church shows love for one another; supports each other especially in times of adversity
  - the church is engaged in good work beyond the congregation
  - ministers are trained and experienced in counseling but need the help of lay persons in the task of pastoral care.

3. *Consider what the church can do for victims*  
Ask the minister or counselor to review for the group what Chapter 3 teaches. It might be helpful to have the outline written on newsprint, or ask them to follow in the book:
  - We can learn the stages
  - We can listen
  - We can understand
  - We can locate resources
  - We can encourage awareness of needs
  - We can face our own finality

4. *Use case studies*  
Give one case study from the next page to each small group. Ask the participants to read the study, and then to discuss:

  - In these true stories written by pastors, how could church members help the victim or the family most?
  - How would the advice in Chapter 3 become real in this situation?

### TYPICAL STORIES

*As told by pastors of congregations*

1

A highlight for some of the elderly of a retirement home near my church is their daily walk to the post office. They include time for sitting on an outside bench, their place in the sun.

Three weeks ago two of these ladies had their pattern ruined by two youths who pushed them down and grabbed their pocketbooks. One lady was treated for bruises and released. The other was admitted to the hospital for treatment of broken bones.

The victims in this situation, rather than two, were more like two hundred. For the residents now have a heightened sense of fear and suspicion. They walk in groups, not so much looking for pleasant smiles and young children, but rather looking out for suspicious persons who might hurt them. They feel a sense of loss, not of the few dollars they carry, but the loss of freedom to walk the streets in safety and to smile. They expressed to me their reactions of outrage, disgust, and anger. Most of these residents live on limited incomes. They are the elderly poor who have just inherited a new measure of fear, intimidation, and suspicion.

The young men have not yet been caught.

2

It was late on a Sunday in February when the family pulled into the carport. The youngest son ran to open the door, only to find that it was already open. He stepped into the house, immediately running back out and exclaiming, "Somebody broke into the house!" What the family found was a house in disarray, windows opened, and dresser drawers dumped. The house appeared as if a localized tornado had visited it.

Their first reaction had been one of caution on entering the house, for the persons responsible might still be there. Other reactions followed quickly: anger because their privacy and security had been violated, anger because precious memories that are connected to items of non-intrinsic value were treated as trash, frustration that is derived from the fact that the intruder had gained a knowledge of personal lives that were very private matters. The anger persists even though nothing of real value was taken.

Four years later the memory of that event still lingers. The family continues to feel the fear that a break-in will happen again, even though they have installed storm windows, dead bolt locks, and security devices. The family senses an increased uneasiness when the husband is out of town for a few days, for they are aware that a burglary can happen to them again.

3

Sue had to work late. Ordinarily she left the office when the others did at 5 o'clock, but today she just had to finish. Tomorrow she was flying home for Christmas with her family! So, at 5:45 she left, exhausted from rushing. The night watchman was somewhere in the building, but she could not wait for him. So much to do before morning!

It was about dark when she got to her locked car

in the almost-empty parking lot. As she turned the key in the door a man jumped from the other side of the car. Unlocking the back door, he forced her in and raped her.

Twenty minutes later, when the night watchman found her on his rounds, she was still sitting in the back seat with the car door open, shivering from the cold and from the shock. The night watchman took her inside, gave her a warm drink, found a couch for her, and talked.

They called the police. "What did the man look like?"

"I don't know. It was dark and so terrifying."

"I wish we had known immediately. Now he has had time to get away."

"I know. I was too tired and shocked to think what to do."

"Well, please come down to the police station anyway and let's fill out the papers for a report. Then we'll put you in touch with the Rape Crisis Center."

*Why*, she wondered? Could she go home tomorrow as planned? What could she tell her parents? If she did not tell them, how could she act normally? If she did tell them, they would worry more than they do now about her living alone in a city!

As she lay on the couch, she thought: How could I have been so careless? Where do I turn for help? Do I need to go to a hospital emergency room to be checked? Questions, questions, and a clouded, whirling mind and an aching body. Will I ever get over this experience? Will I always be completely afraid so I will never go anywhere at night again? Where was God?

Four months later, a man was caught for the rape of a waitress getting into her car to go home after work. After months of delay, he was sentenced. From the pictures, Sue was sure this was the same man.

4

It was to be a red letter day! The young pharmacist had just signed the papers to buy a drug store. He was preparing to leave the store to join his wife, children, and friends at a restaurant for the celebration of a birthday when it happened. Two young men, both out of jail on bond, came in to rob the store of money and drugs. Though the druggist was told not to move, he did and was shot and killed.

When his wife called to find out why he was running late, a policeman answered the phone. Her immediate reaction was one of shock and disbelief, of emptiness and tears. Then came the emotion of anger—anger directed at two young men who were caught and later sentenced, anger directed at the system that had put them back on the streets. The children were in a state of confusion. They could not comprehend what was happening, trying to understand what it meant when told their daddy was not coming back.

It has been two years since that frightful night and the young widow still feels anger. She feels loneliness and a heavy sense of responsibility for being both a mother and a father. There is a lingering question, "Oh, God, *why?*"

5. *Look ahead* to Session 9.

Take time to make assignments for fact-finding for Session 9. If tasks are given now, participants will have time to work.

**Session 7**

**Bible Study on Pastoral Care of Victims**

The purpose of this session is to illustrate from the Bible what was learned about pastoral care in the last session.

1. Victims give pastoral care to a jailer.  
a. *Read aloud* Acts 16:16-34 on the Philippian jailer.

b. *Ask the group*: who were the victims? Their possible answers might be that Paul and Silas were victims of oppression concerning religious beliefs. The jailer was a potential victim of his system, though he had been very diligent in his duty.

c. *Hold imaginary interviews*

Have one person be a reporter, with the questions in hand.

- (1). Interview Paul and Silas:
- Tell us the story of how you happened to be in prison.
  - In prison, what were your chief needs?
  - Who had the resources to meet those needs?
  - Who cared for you and how?

- (2). Interview the jailer:
- Tell us from your point of view the story of what happened.
  - When did you realize that your prisoners saw you had needs too?
  - What information did you need that they had?
  - What resources did they call on to meet your needs?
  - How did they show care for you and make you feel part of a group?

2. Pastoral care helps victims forgive and love

a. In pairs, *answer these questions* (available to participants) on Romans 12, written by a pastor to a first century congregation:

Vs. 2 — How can God transform and renew the mind of a victim?

Vs. 3 — Can a victim think about how life would be for an offender? Can a victim imagine what life would have been like if he or she had grown up in circumstances like that of the offender?

Vs. 9 — How can a victim forgive and show love for an offender?

Vs. 12 — What does it mean for a victim to be "patient in tribulation"? Should a Christian

victim be "constant in prayer" for the offender?

Vss. 8, 13, 15 — What do these verses say about help the church can give victims? About the spirit in which help is to be given?

Vss. 14-17, 19-21 — What do these verses say about forgiveness? About how Christians are to view and to treat those who are mistreating them?

b. Now, in the whole group, *read aloud each of the THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS* found in Chapter 2. Ask the group to answer. Read the answer from the book only if the group has not come up with an adequate answer.

c. Close with a prayer for victims, for forgiveness for hatred in your own heart, and for forgiveness toward any who have wronged you.

**Session 8**

**Chapter 4: Actions by Individuals and Congregations**

This session will lead the participants into a consideration of possible action alone or as a group.

Invite for this session persons on church committees which deal with pastoral care and fellowship among members and those who work on outreach.

1. *Think about action by individuals*

a. Take the self-test on reactions to victims of crime. (See the next page.)

b. Compare and discuss answers to the self-test.  
c. Look at suggestions for individuals found in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 4 (pages 19-20). Encourage each participant to choose one action as a personal commitment.

2. *Think about action as a congregation*

a. Look at the suggestions for action as a congregation to express concern for victims. (In Chapter 3, and in Chapter 4, pages 20-21).

b. Plan with visiting members from committees for one action by the congregation. Write down:

- what you hope to accomplish
- when
- who will take responsibilities
- plans for reflection, drawing up of learnings, and evaluation of your action after a year.

**Session 9**

**Chapter 4: Actions in Community, State, Nation**

This session will lead the group into considering plans for action with others beyond the congregation.

Since any broad actions or legislative attempts are strengthened by people acting together, invite

## Self-Test On Reaction To Victims of Crime

Answer the following questions as honestly as you can. Then be ready to discuss your answers with others.

1. *On contacting victims*

a. Who do you know who has been a victim in the last year?

b. Did you contact that person?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

How? (phone, visit, note, take food, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

c. Did you feel adequate to know what to say? Did you:

- \_\_\_ extend sympathy?
- \_\_\_ join in frustration and fear feelings?
- \_\_\_ agree with feelings of retaliation?
- \_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Did you offer:

- \_\_\_ to stay with the person for a few days?
- \_\_\_ to take the person to court?
- \_\_\_ to baby sit while the person was serving as witness?
- \_\_\_ to go with the victim for a while on necessary night trips or help arrange for company?
- \_\_\_ to enter the empty house or apartment with the victim when going home? or, at least watch until the person was inside?
- \_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. *On personal precautions*

- \_\_\_ I always lock my house, even in the daytime and when I am home.
- \_\_\_ I always take the car keys out and lock my car.
- \_\_\_ I park my car at home near my door and in a lighted area.

\_\_\_ I know my neighbors, talk with them about our habits and hours, and agree to watch each other's property.

\_\_\_ I have agreed to call one elderly or alone person in our congregation daily to check on safety.

\_\_\_ I have looked at my possessions and disposed of what I do not need and have not used in the last year or two.

\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. *On willingness to help*

a. *As a volunteer*  
Have you volunteered, or would you consider volunteering, for work in a:

- \_\_\_ rape crisis center?
- \_\_\_ shelter for abused and battered spouses?
- \_\_\_ victim service center?
- \_\_\_ victim restitution center?
- \_\_\_ program of foster parents for non-violent teen-agers or for children removed from an abusive home?

b. *As an initiator*  
If your community does not have one of the above programs, would you be willing to help start it?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

c. *As a victim*  
If you become a victim, would you be willing to:

- \_\_\_ meet with the offender and a trained counselor to arrange for restitution?
- \_\_\_ let the offender work for you as part of the restitution?

d. *As an office seeker*  
Would you be willing to run for public office to influence the treatment of victims of crime in your community or state?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

other ecumenical or community leaders to this session. You may find some action already in progress that you want to join.

Probably the most appropriate persons to invite would be religious leaders from Council of Churches, Ministerial Association, Church Women United, Jewish women's organization (especially on juvenile justice). The most appropriate persons to invite from a secular organization would be leaders from the League of Women Voters, a member of the city council, county administration, or a state legislator.

### 1. Choose an issue

Chapter 4 gives you much too much, but is included to give you choices about action within the community. Focus in on one line of thought. Possibilities might be restitution or compensation. You might change the list of persons you invite depending on your choice, if made ahead of time.

### 2. Find facts

Interview leaders either before or during the session. Find out what kind of center is most needed locally: dispute mediation, victim service, rape crisis, battered spouse shelter, counseling centers, help for child victims, or restitution and compensation arrangements. Ask what is going on in your community, in state or nation, especially concerning the issue you decide to emphasize.

For example, if you choose restitution, learn:

- How does restitution work now? Or, is there provision for it?
- Are there any local success stories, especially in the field of first-time juvenile offenders?
- How much has been paid back to victims by offenders in the last year?
- How much has been paid in probation/restitution centers for room and board, thus saving the state money?
- How much has been saved through restitution on the average cost of court suits and prison use?
- What use has been made for offenders of other community services such as alcohol and drug rehabilitation, counseling?
- Are there any legislative bills on restitution now under consideration?
- What actions are most needed by interested individuals and organizations?

### 3. Seek partners in action

Either before or during the session, talk to representatives of local or regional organizations interested in the issue of victims. (Look at a list of possible partners listed at the beginning of this session plan.) Find common points of concern.

### 4. Plan together

a. Plan for study of your present state or national laws. You will not have time in these sessions to complete plans for any joint action, but only to decide how to follow-through. If, for example, you decide to push for laws on compensation, find out where these laws exist. Get lawyers in your congregation or community to review the laws with you.

Evaluate your state's provisions for compensation against "Desirable elements of compensation laws" on page 25. If you have no such law, look at those of other states to see features that meet your ideas for a law.

Find a sympathetic state representative or senator to introduce the bill and to work with your group.

b. Plan for action together on one most-needed project.

After you learn, you will need time for careful planning of action together with community or ecumenical groups. During this session, simply decide when, where, who will take the initiative, and other such necessary details.

c. Plan for reflection on your experience in action.

Never consider a project complete without asking yourself: as we acted, what did we learn? This step may come months later, but be sure to include it in your plans.

## Session 10

### Bible Study on Action with Victims

In this session, the group will have a chance to look at action on behalf of three victims or potential victims in the Bible.

#### 1. Study the passage and write a newspaper account

In three small groups (or six, if your group is large), ask participants to read the Bible passage aloud together. Then imagine an account of the event written for a newspaper article. Make notes, then write the article to read to the other small groups.

Have ready for the small groups newsprint sheets with the title of the paper, date, and headline:

For Group 1:

<b>JERUSALEM TIMES</b>	
475 B.C.	Vol. 2, No. 4
Queen Risks Life to Save Jewish People	

(Group 1 read Esther 2:16-8:17; notice especially 4:4-17; 8:3-6)

For Group 2:

<b>JERUSALEM TIMES</b>	
61 A.D.	Vol. 60, No. 7
Church Leaders Free Victim of Economic Exploitation	

(Group 2 read Acts 16:16-24)

For Group 3:

<b>JERUSALEM TIMES</b>	
62 A.D.	Vol. 68, No. 10
Church Leader Challenges Slave Laws	

(Group 3 read the book of Philemon)

In addition to the newsprint, give each group a list of questions (or have them on newsprint). Ask groups to be sure to cover the answers in the article:

- Who was the victim or potential victim in the story?
- Of what was the person a victim? Or, of what could the persons be a victim?
- Who took action on behalf of the victim?
- What was the action taken?
- Was the action effective? What were the results?

### 2. Report

After a long study and preparation time, each group will share what it learned and will read its newspaper account of action on behalf of a victim.

## Session 11

### Chapter 5: A Broader Perspective

No consideration of victims would be complete without placing this concern alongside our beliefs, our systems, and our responsibilities. Gaining this broader view is the purpose of this session.

#### 1. Look together at Chapter 5 on "Maintaining our perspective."

Ask each person to choose three concerns mentioned in the section that he or she thinks is most important. Put the numbers 1 through 8 on newsprint. Take a count on individual votes, putting totals on newsprint. Discuss the degree of agreement or disagreement in the choices made by members of the group. What can you learn from the way people voted?

#### 2. Look together at the section of Chapter 5 on "Our system of criminal justice."

Give each person the worksheet, "How I Feel About Criminal Justice" (see page 44) for scoring. Ask someone to collect and tally responses while the group continues its work.

### 3. Tell this true story.

A staff member was busily working on resources for the denominational emphasis on Criminal Justice Sunday for 1982. Since the day that year fell on Valentine's Day, the theme chosen was "Outrageous Love." She was typing a message for a bulletin insert, quoted from a sermon by a woman minister in her twenties:

Jesus said, "Love your enemies." Why couldn't these verses be left out? . . . How can I even think about loving my enemies? The love Christ calls us to have . . . is not really an act of the heart but of the will.

Considering the staggering crime rate in our country, it is most likely that every person has been a victim or is acquainted with a victim of crime. And so a call for prison reform is really a call to love our enemies. . . . Christian love isn't as "sweet" when it means trying to love our enemies, but in doing so we are claiming part of our true nature as children of God.

In the middle of this typing, the phone rang. It was the staff member's husband calling. He wanted to say that while he took an elderly member of the family to the doctor, the house had been robbed. The silver service was taken, and some family rings that were precious. The drawers had all been emptied onto the floor. He thought he frightened the thieves out the front door as he came in the back door. The police had come, listed the missing items, taken fingerprints, but not given much hope of finding the missing things or the culprits.

How would you have reacted?

Later the staff person was discussing with the minister some letters received about the bulletin insert, saying it was too idealistic. The minister said, "I wish you would let me answer! That sermon came out of my personal struggle. You see, I was raped when I was a teen-ager."

How would you have reacted?

#### 4. Ask participants to listen to a denominational statement.

One denomination declared that work in criminal justice, including work for victims, is rooted in the very nature of God:

We go straight to the heart of the matter if we talk about the relation between justice and love. It is no accident that in popular discussions of criminal justice people tend to choose up sides precisely on this issue. Some emphasize humane—that is, compassionate, merciful, loving—treatment of social offenders; and they are accused of being too-permissive, sentimental, bleeding hearts who want to pamper criminals both at the expense of the welfare and safety of society and at the expense of what is good for criminals

## How I Feel About Criminal Justice

Do you agree or disagree that we should have:	(circle one number for each item)			
	Agree		Disagree	
1. Fewer prisons	1	2	3	4
2. Shorter prison terms for some crimes.	1	2	3	4
3. Alternative punishments other than incarceration, for example: restitution, drug counseling, community service, or supervised probation.	1	2	3	4
4. Long term imprisonment rather than the death penalty.	1	2	3	4
5. Reform of present penal system and buildings.	1	2	3	4
6. Emphasis on juvenile justice to stop crime as it starts.	1	2	3	4
7. More attention to victims of crime.	1	2	3	4

themselves. Others argue not for more compassionate but for stricter treatment of social offenders—more convictions, longer and tougher sentences, fewer paroles, all reinforced by the reinstatement of capital punishment. And they are accused of being vindictive, heartless legalists who want to “get tough” with criminals both at the expense of the human dignity of the criminals themselves and at the expense of the humanity of a society which treats them thus. Both sides are right and both sides are wrong. It is a question of justice and love or compassion. But it is so difficult to achieve both at the same time that in practice we seem to have to choose between love without justice or justice without love. . . .

Authentic Christian faith says: there is a *God* in whom justice and love are not opposed but united. He is the God who is not sometimes, with some people, only loving; and sometimes, with other people, only just. Always, with all people, he is both loving and just, just and loving. His love is his justice, and his justice is his love. He is the God of loving justice and just love. And true human justice and true human love can only be a reflection of the unity of justice and love in him.<sup>1</sup>

Allow the group to react to this statement. Ask them to discuss how to make the ideal practical. Refer back to the story in Activity #3. How could the victims, if the thieves had been caught, have demonstrated both justice and love?

### 5. Write personal statements

Ask people to write statements of 2 or 3 sentences on “The challenge of Christian theology for me as a victim or potential victim.” Let those who wish to do so share their statements.

### 6. Report on the voting in Activity #2 above.

Discuss the results. How do they reflect a combination of justice and love? Is the group strongly on one side or the other? Keep these individual sheets for use in the next session.

## Session 12

### Bible Study on Victimization Because of Beliefs

The purpose of this session is to illustrate from the Bible how beliefs and responsibilities studied in Chapter 5 can make victims of believers.

#### 1. Begin by discussing

a. Have your beliefs ever got you into trouble? What about your ideas on public education? on race? on abortion? on the role of women? on other issues?

b. Look again at the sheets from Session 11, Activity #2. Pass out copies, not necessarily to the

person who marked that sheet last week. Ask people to look at the list of seven emphases in criminal justice. Then ask them: which of these, if you agreed with it and advocated it actively, might cause you to be out of step among your friends? in your church? in your voting on legislation? Then discuss: Under what circumstances could these opinions cause you to be ostracized? or even persecuted for your convictions? If participants think this question is extreme, tell them this true story:

In Alabama a group of Christian women became concerned because the jail on the two top floors of a new courthouse building was not air conditioned, nor could the windows be opened, so the temperature in the summer often went as high as 110°. They went to the county government, wrote letters to the editor, talked in churches. The American Nazi Party began throwing its newspaper into their driveways. Friends were incredulous: “Air condition the jail? Are you kidding?”

c. Ask next: if religious convictions do not get us into difficulty with the status quo, are we taking our theological beliefs seriously enough?

#### 2. Study Bible victims

Look at four persons who became victims because of their beliefs and actions based on their faith:

a. Daniel (See Dan. chapter 1, 3:1-7; chapter 6)  
b. Jeremiah (See Jer. 7:1-7; 11:1-13; 20:1-6; chapter 26; 32:1-15)

c. John the Baptist (See Matt. 14:3-12)

d. Stephen (See Acts 7:1-8:1)

In four groups or pairs, study one person's experience. Answer these questions (listed on newsprint):

a. What did this man believe that got him into trouble?

b. Who took action against him? What action? Why?

c. What was the final outcome?

Ask each small group also to prepare to give to the larger group either (a) a reading of some passage that expresses your character's primary message or (b) an imaginary speech your character might have made. (For example: read aloud Jer. 11:1-13 and Acts 7:1-8, 35-39, 51-53. Make up a speech that Daniel could have made to the king and that John the Baptist could have made to Herod.)

#### 3. Hear group reports

Let each group report on answers to the questions and on the passages or speech by the victim that group studied.

#### 4. Discuss conclusions

Discuss what you learned about the possibilities

for conflict when you take religious beliefs seriously. Talk about contemporary persons who are examples of such convictions. (Martin Luther King, Jr.; Mother Teresa).

5. *Close with a prayer*

Pray for faithfulness to beliefs in the face of possible victimization.

**Session 13**

**Summary and Conclusion**

The purpose of this session is to summarize learnings and end with the experience of worship.

1. *Review and reflect*

Engage in an unhurried discussion on:

- a. How your own *awareness* about victims has increased during these studies.
- b. How this group's study and work may have increased victim *awareness* in your congregation and community.
- c. What you have learned about victims that you did not know before. (*Analysis.*)
- d. How effective you felt any *action* was that you undertook as an individual, with your congregation or community, on any legislation. If the action is to be in the future, how much good do you think your plans will do in meeting the needs of victims?

e. How could you have *acted* more effectively? (*Reflection*)

f. What future *action* and continuation of this emphasis do you hope for?

g. How has this experience changed you? (*Reflection*)

2. *Plan together*

Decide on any desired follow-through the group needs to take.

3. *Study Jesus as a victim*

Look at Jesus as one who challenged the religious and secular leaders of his time.

Ask different participants to read a passage aloud, discussing briefly after each reading what that passage adds on Jesus as a victim:

Matt. 21:23-46      Matt. 23:23-28  
Matt. 22:15-46      Matt. 27:33-43  
Matt. 28:1-8

Point out the uniqueness of Jesus' experience: the resurrection.

4. *Read Luke 10:25-37.*

Read aloud again the story of the victim helped by the Samaritan.

5. *Pray together*

As a closing prayer, read aloud together the litany on the next page.

**LITANY ON BEING A NEIGHBOR**

*Leader:* O God of justice and love,  
We praise you for your compassion for all victims,  
and for your readily available forgiveness and restoration for all offenders.

*People:* May we, too, embody both justice and love.

*Leader:* We thank you for the Samaritan who stopped to help a victim.

*People:* May we, too, be willing to take the time, money, and effort required to help one whom we find a victim in need.

*Leader:* We thank you for persons like the Samaritan who act from a motivation of compassion and love, even for possibly undeserving strangers.

*People:* Teach us compassion and love like that of Jesus Christ.

*Leader:* We thank you for persons like the Samaritan who understand the feelings of those who are victims.

*People:* Teach us to be aware of others' fear, anger, guilt, and helplessness and to learn how to bring wholeness again.

*Leader:* We thank you for persons like the Samaritan who bind up wounds and help victims to become healed.

*People:* Help us to see what action is helpful and to persevere in that effort, so that we witness by deed as well as by word.

*Leader:* We thank you for persons who work with offenders, for prison chaplains, for others involved in the criminal justice system, for families of victims and of offenders.

*People:* Like the Samaritan, help us to be a neighbor.

*All:* Strengthen us to "Go and do likewise." Amen.

## NOTES

### Chapter 1—Perspective on Victims

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3. Charles E. Silberman, *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice* (Random House, N.Y., 1978) p. 4
4. Kathleen E. Madigan and William J. Sullivan, *Crime and Community in Biblical Perspective* (Judson Press, Valley Forge, PA, 1980) p. 67
5. DeWolf, *loc. cit.*
6. Nancy Loving and Lynn Olson, *Proceedings: National Conference on Women and Crime* (National League of Cities and U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1976) p. 46
7. *Ibid.*, p. 48
8. *Criminal Victimization in the U.S.*, *op. cit.*, p. 2
9. Mark Morris, editor, *Instead of Prisons* (Prison Research Education Action Project, Syracuse, N.Y., 1976) p. 137
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11. Beverly Jackson, "Denial Will Not Make Child Abuse Disappear," *engage/social action* (March 1982) pp. 37-39
12. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 155
13. Brenda G. McGowan and Karen L. Blumenthal, *Why Punish the Children?* (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Hackensack, N.J., 1978) pp. viii and ix
14. Herman Badillo and Milton Haynes, *A Bill of No Rights: Attica and the American Prison System* (Outerbridge and Lazard, Inc., N.Y., 1972) pp. 132-133
15. Madigan, *loc. cit.*
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18. DeWolf, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127
19. Madigan, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67
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21. Andrew Karmen, "Women as Crime Victims," *The Justice Reporter* (Clark Boardman Co., N.Y., Vol. 2, No. 1, Jan.-Feb., 1982) p. 2
22. Loving, *loc. cit.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 63
24. *Ibid.*, p. 109
25. *Ibid.*, p. 51
26. *Ibid.*, p. 46
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54
28. Madigan, *op. cit.*, p. 69
29. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 69
30. DeWolf, *op. cit.*, p. 8
31. Madigan, *op. cit.*, p. 67
32. "Loving Our Neighbors, Caring for Victims of Crime," *grapevine* (Vol. 9, No. 4, Nov., 1977) (Joint Strategy and Action Committee, N.Y.) p. 4
33. Madigan, *loc. cit.*
34. *The Church and Victims of Crime* (120th General Assembly, Presbyterian Church U.S., 1980) p. 1
35. Jeffrey H. Reiman, *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison* (John Wiley & Sons, N.Y., 1976) p. 57
36. *Ibid.*, p. 72
37. *Ibid.*, p. 51

### Chapter 2—Perspective on Feelings

1. Silberman, *op. cit.*, p. 3
2. Dorie Klein, "Violence against Women," in *Crime and Delinquency*, (Vol. 27, No. 1, January, 1981, National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Hackensack, N.J.) p. 71
3. Loving, *op. cit.*, p. 47
4. Richard A. Symes, "The Ultimate Goal: Alternatives to Imprisonment," (*Church & Society Magazine*, Vol. LXX, No. 3, March-April, 1980) p. 22
5. Biderman, *et al.*, "Report on a Pilot Study in the District of Columbia," (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1967) p. 160
6. Loving, *loc. cit.*
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8. Gerald E. Forshey, "Vulnerable in the City" (*Christian Century*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 25, August 12-19, 1981) pp. 813-814
9. Howard Zehr, *The Christian as Victim* (Mennonite Central Committee, Elkhart, IN) p. 8
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12. Marie Deans, "A Victim's Family Says No to Death," (*Life Lines*, Spring, 1981, National Coalition Against the Death Penalty, N.Y.) p. 6

### Chapter 3—Perspective on Pastoral Care

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### Chapter 4—An Action Perspective

1. *Update* (National Interreligious Task Force on Criminal Justice, Joint Strategy and Action Committee, N.Y., Vol. 3, No. 3, Summer, 1981) p. 6
2. *The Church and Victims of Crime*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2
3. For example, see in your local library the periodical, *Crime and Delinquency* (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Hackensack, N.J., July, 1981) pp. 405 ff.
4. *The Church and Victims of Crime*, *op. cit.*, p. 1
5. *Challenges to the Injustice of the Criminal Justice System: A Christian Call to Responsibility* (National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Nov. 10, 1979) p. 23
6. *The Church and Victims of Crime*, *loc. cit.*
7. *Prison Ministry: The Challenge to the Church* (National Interreligious Task Force on Criminal Justice, NY, January, 1980) p. 16
8. From proposal for Women's Birthday Offering funding from Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA, Feb. 22, 1979, to Presbyterian Church U.S.
9. *engage/social action* (Feb., 1982, Washington, D.C.) p. 43
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12. Madigan, *op. cit.*, p. 75
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18. *The Church and Victims of Crime*, *op. cit.*, p. 2
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20. *Ibid.*, p. 4
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22. *Ibid.*
23. "Probation and Restitution Centers" (Florida Department of Corrections) p. 1
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### Chapter 5—A Broader Perspective

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2. *Justice and the Imprisoned* (184th General Assembly, United Presbyterian Church U.S.A., 1972, New York) p. 6

3. *Prison Ministry: The Challenge to the Church*, *op. cit.*, p. 21
4. *Challenges to the Injustice of the Criminal Justice System*, *op. cit.*, p. 21
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6. *Challenges to the Injustice of the Criminal Justice System*, *op. cit.*, p. 26
7. *Ibid.*, p. 15
8. *The Church and Victims of Crime*, *op. cit.*, p. 2
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11. *Challenges to the Injustice of the Criminal Justice System*, *op. cit.*, p. 7
12. *Ibid.*, p. 22
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15. *Ibid.*, p. 5

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- Jackson, Dave. *Dial 911: Peaceful Christians and Urban Violence*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981. Advice growing out of the Reba Place Fellowship in metropolitan Chicago, including distinctions among kinds of crime, deterrents to burglary, and the Christian's attitudes of peace.
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#### AUDIO VISUALS

**Crime: the Broken Community**. 12-minute slide and cassette program. Looks at criminal justice from the view of the victim, offender, judge, and the Bible, and stresses the need for alternatives. Order from Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Criminal Justice, 220 West High St., Elkhart, IN 46516.

**Crime: Mediating the Conflict**, a slide/cassette program focusing on Victim Offender Reconciliation Program. From above Mennonite address.

**Cry of Pain**, 16mm., color, 15-minute film. Gives an overview

of child abuse and neglect in America. Suggests various support systems within the community designed to aid and comfort the children and to counsel those who abuse them. Order from: EcuFilm, 810 Twelfth Avenue S., Nashville, TN 37203.

**Seventy Times Seven** A Christian response to crime in our communities, including three short slide/cassette programs and related materials on the theology and actuality of forgiveness. Order from Seventy Times Seven, 229 South 8th Street, Kansas City, KS 66101, or check with a synod or presbytery resource center.

#### ORGANIZATIONS

Church of the Brethren, Washington Office, 110 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. Publishes *I Was in Prison*, brief newsletter for both victims of crime and criminal justice as tasks of the church. Gives book reviews and legislative updates.

International Association of Chiefs of Police, 13 First Field Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. (Victims Committee)

Mennonite Central Committee. Office of Criminal Justice, 220 West High Street, Elkhart, IN 46516. This denomination has done more than others in specific helps to churches on work with victims.

National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect, 1205 Oneida St., Denver, CO 80220.

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National Council on Crime and Delinquency. 2125 Center Avenue, Fort Lee, N.J. 07024.

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**END**