

The Dehumanising Effects of Sexual Abuse

'I always felt that I was like a sort of Martian-I wasn't from this planet. I was never meant for this earth. And I was waiting to die, basically, just waiting for the day ... I was just waiting to die. And I couldn't relate to anybody. I felt so inferior and all the negative things, you know, so unworthy, or not worthwhile-without value. And nobody would want to know me anyway and things like this.'¹



Figure 1 Woman caught in adultery by David Hayward

This is based on the famous story of the woman caught in adultery in John 8 in the bible. I wanted to contrast the ugly black and white of the hard stones, rocks, faces and hearts of the religious system wanting to put her to death and the woman's beauty, colour, softness and vulnerability. She's looking off to her right. Jesus is saying something.²

The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken... There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal...

And our charity must be a real and costly love.³

¹ Peter Dale, John Allen and Lynda Measor, 'Counselling adults who were abused as children: Clients' perceptions of efficacy, client-counsellor communication and dissatisfaction', *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 26(2): (1998), 146.

² David Hayward, 'Woman caught in adultery' Naked Pastor www.nakedpastor.com. (accessed 26/7/2010)

³ C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*. (New York: HarperOne, 2001, 46.)

From the Trauma of Sexual Abuse

In the News ...

Gary John Duffin was already known to the New Zealand public as being the father of raped and murdered Lower Hutt schoolgirl Karla Cardno. He became even better known in November 2009 when he and his partner Sharyn Lee Hills were jailed for eight and six years respectively for a rape that occurred in 1991. The former brothel keepers had given the 14 year old girl cannabis and stupefied her with Valium in a central Wellington hotel. Duffin then had intercourse with her while Hills watched, held her in place and encouraged him. The young girl lost her virginity and was then lured into their prostitution business. The Crown prosecutor stated that Hills and Duffin had abused the girl to 'meet their own needs'.⁴

In TV3's 60 Minutes documentary, 'Somebody's daughter', an interview was conducted with Rebecca Thompson, another victim of Duffin and Hills. In it she related her feelings about Duffin and Hills.

They are sick human beings, they have no conscience, no remorse, they know damn well what they did to us, and they don't care, I wasn't the only one. They were driven by drugs and greed.⁵

In December 2009 rapist Maka Renata was on the run after breaching conditions of his release from prison. As a child he had been in and out of foster homes until at age 14 social workers put him into the care of Mongrel Mob member and serial rapist Dean Hiroki. Renata went on to join Hiroki in raping and robbing a 26-year-old

⁴ Matt Claman. - Brothel pair jailed for rape of 14-year-old - The Dominion Post
<http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/3216787/Brothel-pair-jailed-for-rape-of-14-year-old> (accessed 12/1/10)

⁵ Rebecca Thompson. - Somebody's Daughter (Reporter Amanda Miller) TV3
<http://www.3news.co.nz/Somebodys-Daughter/tabid/371/articleID/126683/Default.aspx> (accessed 20/11/09)

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woman at knifepoint. Renata was sentenced to seven and half years in prison in September 1999. About 16 months into his term, he was given three more years for the rape of his 15-year-old cellmate and best friend.⁶

Two cases both involving sexual abuse of vulnerable young people. The Duffin and Hills case using the innocence of youth for sordid gain. Maka Renata being placed into the care of a serial rapist and going on to rape himself.

In the Meaning ...

Sexual abuse involves elements of exploitation and the abuse of power. Helfer and Kempe define sexual abuse in children and adolescents in this way

The involvement of dependent and developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, are unable to give their informed consent to and that violate social taboos or family roles.⁷

Dan Allender defines sexual abuse in this way.

Sexual abuse is any contact or interaction (visual, verbal, or psychological) between a child/ adolescent and an adult when the child/ adolescent is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or any other person.⁸

Sexual abuse also happens to adults. Date rape, gang rape, even rape within marriage occurs all too frequently. The most abusive I believe, is against those with some form of impaired capacity such as an intellectual disability or the young.

⁶ Jarrod Booker - Police on edge after freed rapist does runner - http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10619042&pnum=0 (accessed Jan 8, 2010)

⁷ Cited (Ray E. Helfer, C. Henry Kempe (eds), *Child Abuse and Neglect: The Family and the Community* (1976) 127-142. in S v S (1993) *New Zealand Family Law Reports* 657. 666.

⁸ Dan B Allender, *The Wounded Heart*. (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1995, 48.)

In the Numbers ...

In the general population the prevalence of sexual abuse in girls is estimated at being between 20% - 30% while the rate for boys is estimated at around half of these figures.⁹

In New Zealand, the Otago Women's Health Survey¹⁰ found that:

- 25 % of women reported experiencing sexual abuse that included physical contact before the age of 16 years, and 16 % before the age of 12.
- The greatest risk for Child Sexual Abuse to start was when the child was 8 to 12 years old.
- The abuse was often severe, with 70 % of Child Sexual Abuse experiences involving some genital contact, attempted intercourse or actual intercourse.
- Intrafamilial abuse was more likely to be chronic than non-familial abuse.
- Of all Child Sexual Abuse experiences, 20 % persisted for more than a year, with 10 % more than three years.

In the Scars ...

The effects of sexual abuse are wide ranging and long lasting, particularly in the abuse of a child. Childhood is a critical period when the child is developing physiologically, psychologically and psychosocially. The core of the person is being shaped. Coping and interpersonal skills are being developed. Belief structures about the self, others and the world are being formed.

⁹ David Finkelhor, Gerald Hotaling, I.A Lewis, Christine Smith. 'Sexual abuse in national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics, and risk factors', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14(1) (1990): 19.

¹⁰ Jessie. C Anderson, Judy. L. Martin, Paul. E. Mullen, Sarah Romans, and Peter Herbison. 'The prevalence of childhood sexual abuse experiences in a community sample of women'. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 32(5): (1993), 911-919.

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Physiologically the brain is being formed and synaptic pathways are being laid down. A traumatic experience such as sexual abuse can transform a child's world. The human brain processes and internalises all experiences (traumatic and therapeutic). In the brain over 100 billion neurons are organized to sense, process, store, perceive and act on external and internal information.¹¹ The more often a pattern of information is experienced the more lasting the impression it will make. These experiences create a "processing template" through which all new information is filtered.¹² Essentially the child's brain is being hardwired to react and respond in certain ways according to different stimuli. Over time the child's fear response becomes sensitized so that stressors that previously would not have elicited a response now bring forth exaggerated reactivity. The fear state is becoming a 'trait'.¹³

Psychologically the child may well be affected by sexual abuse in at least four ways.¹⁴

1. It disrupts a child's development by altering their early attachment dynamics.
2. It distorts a child's cognitive understanding of themselves, others and the future.
3. The child is forced to develop primitive coping strategies.
4. There are effects from early posttraumatic stress on the child's development such as disassociation, difficulties with identity, boundary, and affect-regulation.

¹¹ Bruce D. Perry, Ronnie A. Pollard, Toi L. Blakley, William L. Baker and Domenico Vigilante. 'Childhood trauma, the neurobiology of adaptation, and 'use-dependant' development of the brain: how 'states' become 'traits'.' *Infant Mental Health Journal*, **16**(4): (1995), 278.

¹² Perry, et al, 1995, 275.

¹³ Perry, et al, 1995, 278.

¹⁴ Kim McGregor. 'Abuse - focused therapy for adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse: A review of the literature'. *Injury Prevention Research Centre Te Puu Taki Aukati Whara Department of Community Health University of Auckland*. (2000): 63. www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/soph/centres/ipic/_docs/cr51.pdf

Psychosocially the child can be affected in four different areas.¹⁵

1. Traumatic sexualisation. This refers to the effects of the inappropriate conditioning gained through the abuse. The child may develop into an adult and see sexual behaviour as a method of manipulation to get what they want. This may lead to compulsive sexual behaviour or being drawn into sex work. Alternately, an aversion to sexuality and a negative attitude to their bodies may develop. Confusion may arise over sexual identity.
2. Betrayal. This is a result of when a child's trust and belief in someone close to them is shattered. Those who were to be the protectors from abuse may well be the perpetrators. Consequentially a level of distrust may exist that expresses itself in avoidance of interpersonal relationships and isolation. It can also result in an over dependence and clinginess to people, even relationships that may well be abusive in nature.
3. Powerlessness. Being trapped in an abusive relationship the person develops a sense of loss of control over adverse events or their life in general. Powerlessness can lead onto learning difficulties, employment difficulties, despair, depression, self destructive behaviour, suicidal behaviour and future revictimisation.
4. Stigmatization. Attitudes from others that imply a level of blame, shame or guilt build in the person a stigma of being the scapegoat that they may be at fault. This compounds feelings of low self esteem and isolation.

The consequences on a person's mental health are profound. They include, but are not limited to; depression, susceptibility to suicide, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, sexual dysfunction, dissociative disorders, personality disorders,

¹⁵ McGregor 'Abuse - focused therapy for adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse: A review of the literature', 69.

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posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse.¹⁶ There is also a growing body of evidence linking psychosis with Child Sexual Abuse.¹⁷

In a study looking at the relationship between childhood sexual abuse and subsequent suicidality, it was found that former sexual abuse victims were considerably more likely to have made at least one suicide attempt in the past (55%) than were non-abused clients (23%), and they were more likely to report suicidal ideation.¹⁸ Compounding on this the Mental Health system frequently misdiagnoses traumatised people, leading to treatment that is often fragmented and incomplete due to the complexity of the symptoms.¹⁹

In the Soul ...

Professor Lynne Henderson, a victim of rape herself, describes rape as a form of soul murder.²⁰ She states

I had never confronted the utter helplessness of rape, of knowing that it just did not matter that I existed; that I did not want this; that I was a human being; not a thing to be invaded, punched, or possibly killed. Rape denies that you are a person, that you exist. In contrast, lovemaking affirms your existence.²¹

There is nothing more harmful to the core of a person's existence than to be used as an object for others gratification. To be treated as something less than fully human. To be dehumanised is to be deprived of human characteristics or attributes, to be made inanimate, to be treated as an object.

¹⁶ Joseph H Beitchman., Kenneth J Zucker., Jane E Hood., Granville A daCosta., Donna Ackman., and Erika Cassavia. 'A review of the long-term effects of child sexual abuse.' *Child Abuse and Neglect*, **16**(1): (1992), 101.

¹⁷ John Read. 'Child Abuse and Psychosis: A Literature Review and Implications for Professional Practice'. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*. **28**(5): (1997), 448–456.

¹⁸ John Briere, & Marsha Runtz. 'Suicidal thoughts and behaviors in former sexual abuse victims.' *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*. **18**(4): (1986), 413-423.

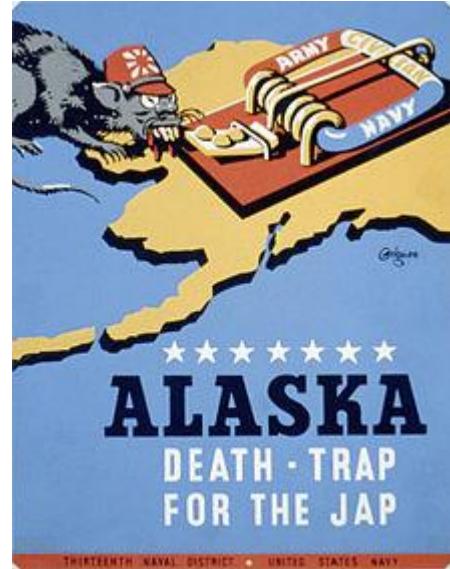
¹⁹ Judith L Herman, *Trauma and recovery: The after math of violence - from domestic abuse to political terror*. (New York: Basic Books, 1992, 123.)

²⁰ Lynne Henderson. 'Rape and Responsibility'. *Law and Philosophy*, **11**(1/2): (1992), 175.

²¹ Lynne Henderson, 'What Makes Rape a Crime', *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* **3**: (1988), 226.

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The term 'dehumanisation' has traditionally been understood as an extreme form of prejudice that enables violence and cruelty, such as in a time of war.²² This is illustrated in a US government poster from World War II depicting a Japanese soldier as a rat with blood dripping from its teeth.²³ The abuse and cruelty of one human against another is made more tolerable when the victim is seen as less than human. As Haslam states 'If *they* are barbarians, then *we* may act barbarously toward them, and if *they* are just distant abstractions then *we* may inflict harm on them without being troubled by pangs of conscience or fellow feeling.'²⁴



When persons are reduced to being sexual objects, the humanity of both the abused and the abuser is diminished. When we dehumanise others we dehumanise ourselves.²⁵

In interviews with convicted rapists, Diane Scull found that rape allowed them to control rather than care. For example, one man explained, 'rape gave me the power to do what I wanted to do without feeling. I felt in control, dominant. Rape was the ability to have sex without caring'.²⁶

²² Nick Haslam, Stephen Loughnan, Catherine Reynolds and Samuel Wilson. 'Dehumanization: A New Perspective'. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 1(1): (2007), 409.

²³WPA Art Project (U.S. government) 'Alaska death trap' Library of Congress Reproduction number: LC-USZC2-985 (color film copy slide) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Alaskadeathtrapa.jpg>

²⁴ Nick Haslam. Ibid. 409.

²⁵ Philip J. Wogaman, *Moral Dilemmas: An Introduction to Christian Ethics*. (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2009, 85.)

²⁶ Diana Scully, Joseph Marolla. 'Two Views of Rape: Riding the Bull at Gilley's: Convicted Rapists Describe the Rewards of Rape'. *Social Problems* 32(3): (1985), 259.

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Anderson believes that rape is best understood not only as the denial of sexual autonomy, but as 'sexually invasive dehumanisation.'²⁷

Sexual abuse leaves a taint on the very core of a person's personality, even to the extent where the person may consider themselves to be less than human. In discussions with some victims of sexual abuse they described themselves as scum and that they had never been allowed to gain any sense of what it means to be human.

To looking through the Biblical - Theological (Christological) Lens

The Full of Delight Good

In the beginning was God. This eternal community was bent on the serious business of joy.²⁸ This perichoretic²⁹ three member family is alive and purposeful. C.S. Lewis describes this as 'a kind of dance'.³⁰

God creates and describes his creation as good. Special recognition is awarded to the creation of mankind as being 'very good' (Gen. 1:31). As God's image *bearers*, people hold within themselves the same ability to have relationships of what Volf calls 'mutual interiority'.³¹

²⁷ Michelle J Anderson. 'All-American Rape', *St. John's Law Review* 79: (2005a), 643.

²⁸ C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*. (San Diego: Harvest, 1964, 92-93.)

²⁹ Larry Crabb. *New Way Ministries School of Spiritual Direction Training Manual*. (n.pl.; n.p.; n.d.). 37.

'Perichoresis: the nature of relationship within the Trinity characterized by: a. interpenetration- the free pouring of one's essence of one's person's into another ; b. interanimation: the enlivening effect that renders another who he would not be without interpenetration'

³⁰ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. (London: Harper Collins, 2002, 175.) "God is not a static thing- not even a person - but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance."

³¹ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*. (Abingdon Press, 1994, 128.)

Tom Smail puts it this way:

As human beings made in the image of God, we are so fashioned that in our relationships with other people, we also initiate, respond, and fulfil, and so mirror the distinctive functioning of the divine persons. In that way *imago Dei* is, indeed, *imago Trinitatis*.³²

We are also image *carriers* bringing Gods goodness to the world (Gen. 1:28).

Moving into it, discovering beauty, enjoying the bountiful provision for us. Man and

Woman walk in unity, with a freedom to choose relationship with God (Gen. 2:9)

and each other. This relationship is typified by a stroll through the Garden when it was cool (Gen. 3:8). The relationship between the man and woman was perfect.

There was a profound curiosity to deeply know, explore, discover, and touch each other in ways that enlivened the other. There was no fear or shame or guilt.

Humanity was naked, but not ashamed (Gen. 2:25). Here was a picture of complete openness and trust. There was no hint of exploitation or self centeredness. Mankind was fully alive.³³ They had bodies but the body did not determine their value or worth. Their true identity was discovered and established through the matrix of relations surrounding them.³⁴

It was through Jesus, the Son, that all of creation was made (Col. 1:16; John 1:1-3, 10). The direct agent of creation is the Father who created through the Son.³⁵ In Proverbs 8, wisdom is personified as a master worker; working and rejoicing with God as creation is brought forth. This section of scripture describes the creative dance.

³² Tom Smail, *Like Father, like Son: The Trinity imaged in our humanity*. (Bletchley, Bucks.: Paternoster, 2005, 158.)

³³ Eric Francis, *Irenaeus of Lyons*. (Osborn Cambridge University Press, 2001, 251.) 'The Glory of God is man fully alive'

³⁴ Derek Tidball, ed. David Hilborn, ed.: Justin Thacker, ed. *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*. (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Zondervan, 2008, 195.)

³⁵ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994, 137.)

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then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race. Proverbs 8:30, 31

Wisdom is the principle through which God fashioned the universe.³⁶

There is a delight in Christ with us and our capacity to choose. Relationships that are mutually beneficial to each other must involve a choice by both parties to pour life into each other. God provides man with the freedom to choose to relate to Him and to each other. What sort of relationship would it be, if one of the parties in the relationship was to be like a puppet to the other? Abuse however strips a person of the freedom to choose.³⁷

The Bad Decision

Through the deceptions of Satan, Adam and Eve choose to not see God as the fulfilment of all they need (Gen. 3:6). They don't trust that he has their best interests in mind. They choose to make life work for themselves. They partake of what they have been warned against and they gain a knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 4:1-7). In both a corporate sense and as individuals we now 'stand stark naked and embarrassed before God'.³⁸ Man lives in rebellious denial that God is the only source of life and throws fig leaves of self justification over their naked state. The *imago dei* is now marred and distorted as it reflects off broken cracks.

³⁶ . *ibid.*, 135.

³⁷ Allender, *The Wounded Heart*, 114

³⁸ John R. W Stott, *The Cross of Christ*. (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006, 192.)

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The pristine fellowship with the Creator is broken.³⁹ Relationship with each other now involves shame, guilt and fear. The husband rules over his wife (Gen. 3:16) and there is a disconnection with creation (Gen. 3: 14 – 19).

We now have a self centred bankrupt spirituality.⁴⁰ We are born *homo incurvatus in se*, curved in upon ourselves. We still bear the image of our creator (Gen. 1:27), but now choose to be image creators (Gen. 11:3, 4). To make life work and to find some level of happiness and fulfilment, we strategise that “If I do this and that, my life will work out” (Gen. 4:1 – 8). We look to broken cisterns, not living waters (Jer. 2:13) to meet our needs. Good things such as marriage, children, and careers become our mission statements, goals and idols. These ‘second place’⁴¹ things take ‘first place’ in our hearts, replacing God as the true source of life.

We do whatever it takes to meet our self centred needs, even at the expense of others. The effects of this abusive use of power taints our very understanding of God.

Mankind now asks questions about the very character of God. Does he love me? Can I trust Him? If I can, what am I to trust him for? Allender states that ‘Abuse provides the raw data that seems to prove that God is not good,’⁴² the ‘devilishness of abuse is that it does Satan’s work of deceiving children about God’s true nature and encouraging them to mistrust Him.’⁴³

³⁹ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 248.

⁴⁰ Brennan Manning. *The Signature of Jesus*. (Multnomah Books, 2004, 99.) "Any spirituality that does not lead from a self- centered existence to an other-centred mode of existence is bankrupt."

⁴¹ C.S. Lewis. *God in the Dock*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1970, 278.) "Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first and we lose both first and second things"

⁴² Allender, *The Wounded Heart*, 25.

⁴³ . *ibid.*, 26.

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We are people that are 'dispossessed, expelled, and displaced'.⁴⁴ Christ looks and weeps at the loss of relationship and desires to gather us to Him (Matt. 23:37). His image bearers are no longer looking to Him for life but now turn their gaze in the wrong direction.⁴⁵ God desires wholeness and declares to Satan that Christ will indeed crush His head through suffering (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20; Rev. 12:9-10).

The New through Descent

Through sacrificial love, God's grace is shown to us. Christ's incarnation is 'God's supreme self-communication'.⁴⁶ St Irenaeus says that Christ became 'what we are that He might make us what He is Himself'.⁴⁷ In the incarnation we see God's desire for his creation to be complete. Christ steps down from His Glory.⁴⁸ He emptied Himself (kenosis) and took on the nature of a suffering servant (Phil. 2:7). Not content to be fully human, He allowed Himself to be dehumanised.

The prophet Isaiah describes Him as a person of stunted growth, physically unattractive, and ostracized by people (Isa. 53:1-4). One who knew the pain of being despised, rejected and of having no worth.⁴⁹

His dehumanisation was made absolute in crucifixion, an intentionally degrading way to die, depriving the victim of any honour.⁵⁰ This infliction of pain by Father upon Son is not mandated abuse. As an adult, Jesus chose to cooperate with the

⁴⁴ Karl Barth, Geoffrey W Bromiley, Thomas F Torrance. *Church Dogmatics, Volume 4, Part 1* (T&T Clark International, 2004, 232.)

⁴⁵ Simone Weil. *Waiting for God*. (London: Harper & Row, 1973, 124.) 'Sin is not a distance, it is a turning of our gaze in the wrong direction. From the beginning, we are told, humanity turned its gaze away from God and walked in the wrong direction for as far as it could go.'

⁴⁶ Gerald O'Collins. *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic study of Jesus Christ*. (Oxford: OUP, 1995, 203.)

⁴⁷ Saint Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* (Book V, Preface)' www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103500.htm accessed 15/6/10

⁴⁸ Millard J Erickson. *Christian Theology: Volume 2*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984, 769.)

⁴⁹ Tidball, *The Atonement Debate*, 100.

⁵⁰ David A DeSilva. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. (IVP Academic, 2000, 51.)

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Father. He was a child in the sense that He was a Son, but not in the sense that He was a minor.⁵¹ Christ has the power but embraces the powerlessness of abuse. His life is one of deep intimacy (John 10:30) but now He feels absolute abandonment (Matthew 27:46). The victim sees the victory (Heb. 12:2).

Volf asserts that

‘On the cross the dancing circle of self-giving and mutually indwelling divine persons opens up for the enemy; in the agony of the passion the movement stops for a brief moment and a fissure appears so that sinful humanity can join in. We, the others – we the enemies - are embraced by the divine persons who love us with the same love with which they love each other and therefore make space for us within their own eternal embrace.’⁵²

Shame was absent in Christ but our shame was placed upon Him. Stott affirms that ‘The divine substitute wears our filthy rags instead of us, and He invites us to be clothed with His own righteousness. The substitute bears the penalty that we sinners may receive the pardon’.⁵³ We are no longer cowering with guilt and shame, condemned by our sins, not even sexual sins, since God offers us forgiveness.

The incarnation grants a welcoming embrace to those who are on the outside. Jesus is a notorious friend of tax collectors and sinners.⁵⁴ He welcomes the prostitutes (Matt.31, 32), defends the adulterer (John 8:1 -10), and welcomes the one with a bleeding problem (Luke 8:43 – 48). All done in a public setting, affirming them as humans with value. He unites Himself with every human being.⁵⁵

We now have the opportunity to have a new standing before God as adopted Sons and Daughters (Rom. 8:12- 23; Gal. 4:1-7; Eph. 1:1-6). We are now Brothers and

⁵¹ Tidball, *The Atonement Debate*, 185.

⁵² Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 129.

⁵³ Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 187.

⁵⁴ Mark 2:15-17; Luke 5:27- 32; Matt. 11:19; Luke 15:1-2; 19:1-10.

⁵⁵ O’Collins, *Christology*, 302.

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Sisters of Christ (Mark 3:31-35). We are wanted and have a place of belonging. We are welcomed home to a Fathers embrace (Luke 15:11-32), able to re-enter an eternal relationship with the Trinitarian family. He is 'radically and totally for us, in our place'.⁵⁶

It maybe 'New', but it is not 'Perfect', yet! Our memory, designed to recall the goodness of God, recalls the haunting pain of past experiences. C.S. Lewis describes this well.

Out of the wound we pluck the shrapnel.
Thorns we squeeze out of the hand.
Even poison forth we suck, and after the pain we ease.

But images that grow within the soul have life
Like cancer often cut, live on below the deepest of the knife
Waiting their time to shoot at some defenseless hour
Their poison, unimpaired, at the heart's rot,

And, like a golden shower, unanswerably sweet,
Bright with returning guilt, fatally in a moment's time
Defeat our brazen towers long-built;

And all our former pain and all our surgeon's care
Is lost, and all the unbearable (in vain borne once) is still to bear.⁵⁷

Into these memory images Christ comes as the bearer of the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). He promises to never leave us abandoned to the *bright returning guilt*. He sends a comforter to remind us of all that He is (John 14:16 – 18). He is not only the Word incarnate – *logos* (John 1:1) but also, the life giving Word – *rhema* (John 6:63). He welcomes us as little children to sit on His lap (Mark 10:13 - 16), but will we receive the gift of His love?

⁵⁶ Barth, Church Dogmatics, 232.

⁵⁷ Cited C.S. Lewis, "Relapse," *Poems*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1964, 103-104.) in Norman H Wright. *The new guide to crisis & trauma counselling*. (Ventura, California: Regal, 2003, 213.)

Nouwen relates that

One of the greatest challenges of the spiritual life is to receive God's forgiveness. There is something in us humans that keeps us clinging to our sins and prevents us from letting God erase our past and offer us a completely new beginning. Sometimes it even seems as though I want to prove to God that my darkness is too great to overcome.⁵⁸

The Spirit woos and allures (Hosea 2:14 – 23) us to leave the things of the Old Nature (Col. 3:5) and to leave 'the little dark prison we are all born in'.⁵⁹

It's a narrow crushing path, but it's the path that leads to life (Matt. 7:13, 14). A heart of flesh replaces a heart of stone (Ezek. 36:25 – 27). The Holy Spirit dwells within us, we no longer hate God but yearn to please him and dance.

The Perfect Dance

From a place of struggle we come to a time of eternal communion, rest and dance with God (1 John 3:1-3). We will once again be able to see God face to face as we did in the Garden. We will no longer need to hide. There will be no more tears to cry (Rev. 20:3-4), no more needing to hide from the abuser, no longer feeling abandoned and unlovable, and no longer needing to control our relationships to feel safe. We will have new transformed bodies devoid of any impediments (Philippians 3:21). Yong states that our 'resurrected bodies will be free from its earthly imperfection, weakness, and brokenness'.⁶⁰ We will experience a complete

⁵⁸ Henri Nouwen. *Return of the Prodigal*. (Image Books Doubleday Publishing Group, 1994, 53.)

⁵⁹ Cited (C.S. Lewis. Private letter Lewis to Mr Masson, March 6, 1956) in Richard L Purtil. *C.S. Lewis 'Case for the Christian faith'*. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981,133.) 'After all, the main work of life is to come out of our selves, out of the little, dark prison we are all born in. The danger is that of coming to love the prison'

⁶⁰ Amos Yong. *Theology and Down syndrome: reimagining disability in late modernity*. (Baylor University Press, 2007, 272.)

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humanness.⁶¹ Grenz states, 'the goal of the resurrection will be a fellowship of persons.'⁶²

Marva Dawn, being disabled herself, writes about the eschatological friendship she is looking forward to having with a disabled friend of hers.

What an exciting thought! At last we will have enough time to do all the talking for which we yearn. At last we won't struggle anymore with low blood pressures' that make us dizzy and deficiencies that debilitate our bones and nerves. Most important, at last we will know Jesus face to face! How thrilling to look forward to heaven where all is beautiful to the extreme!⁶³

To Crossing the Road in Pastoral Response

Jesus loves the little children, but does He trouble our theology? A 'domesticated Jesus who sounds like us, makes us comfortable, and commends our opinions is no Jesus at all'.⁶⁴

To humanise those who have been dehumanised will challenge our comfortable view of life and faith. Jesus tells the story of a man dehumanised, not just by robbery and violence, but also by neighbourly neglect and avoidance. In the story of the 'Dehumanised Man' (Luke 10:25-37), normally known as 'The Good Samaritan', we find the story of a man dehumanised through physical violence, psychologically humiliated through the stripping of his clothes, socially isolated as he was left alone, and experiencing vulnerability as neighbours walked by. This parable is about a

⁶¹ N. T. (Tom) Wright. *New Heavens and New Earth: The Biblical Perspective of Christian Hope*. (Grove Biblical Booklets 11, 1999, 23.)

⁶² Grenz, *Theology for the community of God*, 763.

⁶³ Marva J. Dawn. *Joy in our Weakness* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002, 199.)

⁶⁴ Dale C. Allison. *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009, 89.)

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victim, the way he received help in his vulnerability was 'to be discovered helpless'.⁶⁵ The parable invites us to understand our own dehumanisation, and that we also, lie in a ditch needing help. Jesus turns our world upside down and shocks us into thinking about who really is our neighbour, and what a true neighbour would look like.

It's your eyes I want to see

It's your eyes I want to see
Looking into mine
Got you live on my mind
All the time⁶⁶

In our story of the 'Dehumanised Man', we find two responses to his plight. Remembering that this man was half dead, it is quite feasible that he was able to observe the response of those coming down the road. Both the Levite and the Priest saw him with their eyes but passed by on the other side of the road. The Samaritan saw him, and in a glance⁶⁷ engaged emotionally, and embraced his neighbour. In the split second of eye contact and thought/ feeling/ action engagement, a life was either further dehumanised or humanised.

Perhaps the best perspective of this interaction between the two is that of the victim, the primary character of this story and the primary focus of this essay. By looking through the eyes of the victim we might be able to identify what is needed

⁶⁵ Robert W. Funk, *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a new millennium*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996, 179.)

⁶⁶ Bruce Cockburn. 'Live on my Mind' - *The Charity of Night* (Rykodisc 1997)
<http://cockburnproject.net/songs&music/lomm.html> (accessed 6/4/10)

⁶⁷ Weil, *Waiting for God*, 151. 'In true love it is not we who love the afflicted in God; it is God in us who loves them. When we are in affliction, it is God in us who loves those who wish us well. Compassion and gratitude come down from God, and when they are exchanged in a glance, God is present at the point where the eyes of sufferer and the other love each other, starting from God, through God, but not for the love of God; they love each other for the love of the one for the other. This is an impossibility. That is why it comes about only through the agency of God.'

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for all of us to become fully human and especially for those who have been dehumanised through sexual abuse.

1. He saw himself. He was vulnerable and helpless. There was nothing he could do for himself. He was vulnerable to the choices of others. Feeling the primal pain and terror of abandonment as supposed neighbours walked by. He now lies stark naked in a world that he has little control over. His future is in the hands of others.

2. He saw compassion, not pity.

The Greek word '*splanchnizomai*'⁶⁸ is used here to describe the emotional response of the Samaritan. It comes from the Greek word (*splanchna*), for entrails, the vital inner organs of a person—the stomach, heart, lungs, spleen, liver, and kidneys. It means to say that he had a feeling deep in his gut, the deepest of all human emotions. The kind of feeling that is physical as much as intellectual. The man observed a compassion in the Samaritan that prompted him to taking action. In contrast he would have seen revulsion in the eyes of the Levite and Priest. There must have been confusion in his mind, why would his enemy have compassion whereas his neighbours revulsion? To receive love from unexpected places unsettles us.

3. He saw acceptance and respect in the Samaritans actions.

The Samaritan risked religious impurity to help this battered man. For the Samaritan there were no rules, no boundaries, and no cultural taboos that inhibited him from helping. Perhaps the Samaritan saw the naked humanity of the man and recognised that when all is stripped away, we are all the same, naked and needy. Here was a man, willing to step across cultural boundaries and stigmas, one who didn't stick

⁶⁸ W. E Vine. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. (Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Mc Lean, 1940, 220.)

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with convention. Like Jesus, he would eat with the prostitutes, outcasts etc. This was love not at arm's length but love with full embrace.

4. He saw love in action.

He would have felt the Samaritan bandaging his wounds, oil and wine soothing the pain, and being placed on the animal and taken to an Inn. The Samaritan took the situation seriously and took appropriate action (James 2:14 – 17). The Samaritan didn't formulate a mission statement, program, or strategic plan, he just went and did it. The person in the ditch was not a project to complete or a box to be ticked. The standard observed was not that of 'feeling care for the needy, but of doing care'.⁶⁹ Our actions often speak values and beliefs that are louder than any words. Crabb states, 'therapists accomplish good results because they are lovers, in the personal sense of that word, and not experts. Only genuine, unpurchaseable love does what needs to be done in the human soul.'⁷⁰

5. He saw his own fear.

Under fear lurks many questions. Why was he doing this? What was he after? Can I fully trust him? Do I have an option not to trust him? When will he abandon me? Confusion would have been racing through his mind. The Apostle John states that perfect love drives out fear (1 John 4:8). John doesn't give a time frame for the fear to be driven out. It takes time for victims of dehumanisation to fully trust. The Samaritan's embrace welcomes the questions, even if there aren't adequate answers. Right throughout the whole recovery journey of this story, the victim would still have been cautious and flinched every time he was touched. He would have remained on guard, ever watchful, and suspicious of the Samaritans motive's. All the time wondering 'what does this man want from me?'⁷¹

⁶⁹ Christopher D Marshall. 'Christian Care for the Victims of Crime' Stimulus **11**(3): (2003), 12.

⁷⁰ Larry Crabb. *The Safest Place on Earth*. (Thomas Nelson, 1999, 48.)

⁷¹ Frank E Tupper. *A scandalous providence: the Jesus story of the compassion of God*. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1995, 166.)

6. He saw the door of the Inn.

While at the Inn, consuming the money of the Samaritan, he would have been looking and wondering if the Samaritan would return. Would he really return and cover the expenses that had accumulated, or would he be indebted to the Innkeeper? The Samaritan's commitment was open ended. He was committed to the core issues of this man's recovery and it was a long term commitment. The man's recovery was not immediate with the oil and wine being poured on, but was lengthy. The man had to yield to his humanness and sickness in order for others to fully help him. Having a victim mentality of blaming others would have only driven others away and led to bitterness and further alienation. Recovery from dehumanisation is a dance with grief, anger, forgiveness and self awareness. Others cannot vicariously recover on behalf of the victim. It is the victim's journey but they don't have to take it alone.

It's your heart I want to touch

Essentially, the Samaritan treated the victim in ways that met every need. We often say that we treat others the way we wish to be treated ourselves. This is very self referencing and assumes that we know our self well enough to know the standard of care we would want for ourselves. But are our expectations of self care adequate for the one who has been dehumanised through sexual abuse? C.S. Lewis describes the stance of one involved in the humanising of others as one of 'humility and brokenness'.⁷²

Interestingly, research has found that the most helpful interventions to adult incest survivors were when 1) the client felt believed, 2) the client received support, compassion, empathy, and caring 3) the client did not feel blamed for the abuse, 4) the professional was not shocked or disgusted, 5) the client did not feel odd or

⁷² Lewis, The Weight of Glory, 46.

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alone, and 6) the therapist helped to stop the abuse.⁷³ All qualities we find in the response of the Samaritan.

‘Empathy and Mutual Identification’ are weaved into both parable and research; rehumanisation occurs when people treat other people with a level of respect as fellow human beings, regardless of what makes them different.⁷⁴

Empathy is a process in which one person seeks the particular perspective of another person. This involves being genuinely curious about the other, and ‘being open emotionally and cognitively to them and tolerating any ambivalence that might arise’.⁷⁵

To show empathy and mutual identification brings us to a place of vulnerability. Lewis states ‘to love at all is to be vulnerable’.⁷⁶ Henri Nouwen believes, ‘what makes a human being human is the heart with which they can give and receive love’.⁷⁷ It’s the heart of someone being in the ditch weeping with those who weep (Romans 12:15).

From this place of vulnerability we can choose a ‘power with’ or ‘power over’ relationship.⁷⁸ A ‘power with’ relationship is one from which we learn from one

⁷³ McGregor, ‘Abuse - focused therapy for adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse: A review of the literature’, 239.

⁷⁴ The Re-Humanization Act, ‘What is Re-humanization’ www.rehumanization.org/home/about (accessed 6/5/10)

⁷⁵ Jodi. Halpern, Harvey M Weinstein. Rehumanizing the Other: Empathy and Reconciliation. *Human Rights Quarterly* **26** (3): (2004), 568 – 569.

⁷⁶ C.S. Lewis. *The Four Loves*. (New York: Walker & Co., 1986, 180.) ‘There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung, and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.’

⁷⁷ Henri Nouwen. "Journey to L'Arche" http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/nouwen_3301.htm (accessed 4/6/10)

⁷⁸ Linda E Daniel. Vulnerability as a Key to Authenticity, *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* **30**(2): (1998), 191.

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another how to be human by identifying ourselves with others or finding their dilemmas in ourselves. 'Power over' relationships ignore our own personal vulnerability and continue to perform dehumanising acts on the other. The question is, do we see the other as a 'mere mortal' or as a 'possible god or goddess'?⁷⁹ Do we see them as Christ Himself being hungry, thirsty, alone, naked, and sick in prison (Matt. 25:31-46)? Jesus asks us if we are willing to lay down our lives for our friends and our neighbours (John 15:13).

Celia Lashlie, challenges us to have an attitudinal shift. She asks us to think about whose face comes into our mind's eye when the word 'inmate' is used. Then, to replace the face of a 'Maka Renata' with the face of ...

'an 11-year-old girl who sleeps on the streets of Auckland, and sleeps in the pipes under those same streets; an 11-year-old girl who survives by agreeing to have sex with men who actively seek her out; an 11-year-old girl who has no expression on her face and who, when you look in her eyes, shows a knowing well beyond her years and a sorrow too deep to contemplate.'⁸⁰

This attitudinal shift is what needs to happen individually and corporately, as Christians and members of Faith communities where we are supposedly to be people of hospitality and support. The victims of sexual abuse and other crimes often bring a disconcerting challenge to the Church.

Marshall states that

'The stark reality of their victimisation raises profoundly unsettling questions about Christian faith – questions about the origins of evil and God's presumed control of the world, about the arbitrariness of suffering and the effectiveness of prayer, about the value of spiritual commitment when God seems to fail those who trust in him. The inadequacy of stock Christian answers to

⁷⁹ Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 46.

⁸⁰ Lashlie Celia. *The Journey to Prison*. (Harper Collins, 2003, 152-153.)

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such questions is threateningly exposed by the hard facts of the victim's experience.⁸¹

We are also uneasy with “the coarse, unedited feelings that spew from deep inside the one who has been victimised - the pain, anger, despair, grief, and desire for revenge”.⁸²

Howard Zehr states

The Church should be a place of refuge, but often we have not known how to listen, how to be present to victims. We have told them that their anger is wrong, that they need to move on, to forgive, to forget. We have denied them their right to mourn and instead have laid new burdens on them. All this is understandable – as part of our effort to distance ourselves from pain and vulnerability – but not at all helpful.⁸³

Instead of embracing the victim on the side of the road, we blame the victim for their predicament. Why didn't you ... take another route from Jerusalem to Jericho? Why did you travel alone? If we can explain the victim's experience in terms of their own foolishness, we reassure ourselves that it might never happen to us – so long as we avoid their mistakes.⁸⁴

We give out advice such as, live within these rules, these principles, and these conventions. Thereby, laying more burdens on already weary shoulders (Matthew 11:28-30; 23). When the person is unable to live up to the standards of the group they are either shunned, due to not trying hard enough, or they just give up and walk away. We have a 'mania for creeds and an anemia for deeds; an uptightness

⁸¹ Marshall. 'Christian Care for the Victims of Crime', 12.

⁸² Lampman Lisa Barnes & Shattuck Michelle D. "Finding God in the Wake of Crime: Answers to Hard Questions", in idem, *God and the Victim: Theological Reflections on Evil, Victimization, Justice, and Forgiveness* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1999, 6.)

⁸³ Howard Zehr. "Restoring Justice," in Lampman & Shattuck, *God and the Victim*, 151.

⁸⁴ Marshall, 'Christian Care for the Victims of Crime', 11.

about orthodoxy and indifference to orthopraxy'.⁸⁵ There is no engagement with the heart. The victim continues to typically feel isolated, alone and vulnerable.

It's you I want to find

Lost and insecure
You found me, you found me
Lyn' on the floor
Surrounded, surrounded
Why'd you have to wait?
Where were you? Where were you?
Just a little late
You found me, you found me.⁸⁶

Who is the neighbour to the dehumanised?

1. One who has found themselves.

Self awareness is the starting point. Stepping out of the cancerous dance of blaming others, self, and God to an awareness of one's own helpless vulnerable state. What are we carrying into this embrace? What are our personal core beliefs, views, and opinions? We need to be conscious of what we carry and be disciplined in the use of the self, so that we don't further victimise the victim.⁸⁷

2. One who steps out of only being with people like themselves.

⁸⁵ Cited P.R. Jones in Glen Harold Stassen & David P Gushee. *Kingdom ethics: following Jesus in contemporary context*. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 337.)

⁸⁶ You found me – The Fray Sony 2009 <http://www.metrolyrics.com/you-found-me-lyrics-fray.html> (accessed 6/ 6/ 10)

⁸⁷ Swithun Bowers. 'The Application of Social Work in the Correctional Field'. *Crime & Delinquency* 5(16): (1959), 16.

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Anyone can love people who are like themselves (Luke 6:32-36). Love is perfected when we reach out to be with others who we might find difficult to understand or embrace. This is a missiology of discomfort where we love people we don't understand, the community we live in doesn't like, maybe even hates, disregards or writes off. The people who are the misfits and marginalised. The people who are the outsiders and on the fringe. 'Loving the neighbour is not about likenesses at all'.⁸⁸ We join Jesus and become a notorious friend of prostitutes and tax collectors.⁸⁹

3. One who embraces the pain of others.

The mind and emotions of the Samaritan embraced the pain of the victim. There was a double movement of opening and closing of the Samaritan's arms emotionally and physically around the victim. The Samaritan, 'created space in himself for the other'.⁹⁰

4. One who will risk personal conversion.

The life of the Samaritan would have not gone unchanged. When we mix with those unlike ourselves, we vulnerably put our presumptions about life at risk. We cannot confront their otherness and pain, and remain unchanged. 'True conversation

⁸⁸ Dave Gibbons. *The Monkey and the Fish: Liquid leadership for a third-culture church*. (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Zondervan, 2009, 74.)

⁸⁹ Becoming a friend of prostitutes etc for some may well mean literally that, but it also has a wider psychodynamic challenge for us to become friends of the part in others and ourselves that is like a tax collector, like a prostitute, like an adulterer.

⁹⁰ Judith M Gundry-Volf, Miroslav Volf. *A spacious heart: essays on identity and belonging*. (Trinity Press International, 1997, 58-59.) 'An embrace involves always a double movement of opening and closing. I open my arms to create space in myself for the other. The open arms are a sign of discontent at being myself only and of desire to include the other. They are an invitation to the others to come in and feel at home with me, to belong to me. In an embrace I also close my arms around the others - not tightly, so as to crush and assimilate them forcefully into myself, for that would not be an embrace but a concealed power-act of exclusion; but gently, so as to tell them that I do not want to be without them in their otherness. I want them in their openness. I want them to remain independent and true to their genuine selves, to maintain their identity and as such become part of me so that they can enrich me with what they have and I do not'.

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always puts the conversant's at risk, because you cannot truly converse without the risk of conversion'.⁹¹

5. One who has vision.

In vision we are not talking about tangible things such as, possessions or having a life that works according to normal standards. This vision is something much higher and often intangible. It is a vision that sees the person becoming fully alive, knowing depth of relationship with a few others, significance in their daily life, a beauty being unfurled. The facet of Christ within us all being brought fully out. There is a delight to see this in amongst the immediate and apparent pain.⁹²

6. One who seeks justice.

A key element in being human is the sense of justice. Frequently, what victims most need is for their abuser 'to hear of their pain, to answer their questions, to absorb their resentment, and to accept their dignity'.⁹³ This is not always possible, but needs to be pursued if possible. There is also the need of trying to prevent further injustices taking place. Martin Luther King desired that the whole Jericho road be transformed, so that men and women would not be constantly beaten and robbed, as they made their journey on life's highway.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Lee Bernard J., Cowan Michael A. *Gathered and sent: the mission of small church communities today*. (New York: Paulist Press, 2003, 12.)

⁹² Crabb. *The Safest Place on Earth*, 172. 'Spiritual friends see a facet of Christ in us and bring it out as no one else can. And they delight to do so. When they see what is unique about us, it causes them great delight; and then, giving away to the powers of daring imagination, they envision what we could become. The vision excites them – with Paul, they see us where we are and feel the pains of labor till Christ is formed in us (Gal. 4:19).'

⁹³ Marshall. 'Christian Care for the Victims of Crime', 13.

⁹⁴ Martin Luther King. 'Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence 4 April 1967' <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/058.html> (accessed 7/5/10)

Conclusion

'Our charity must be a real and costly love'.⁹⁵ From the scars formed, through the deep cuts within the soul, to the societal cost of suicide, depression etc., the cost of sexual abuse on the human condition is extreme. Shame, guilt, fear confine the dehumanised to a box of survivalist coping strategies. The abuse is often kept invisible, hidden and secret, yet 'Love sees what is invisible'.⁹⁶

Christ brings a message of loving solidarity. He is one who knows the affliction of abuse. He is the notorious friend to the person in the ditch, the one dehumanised. Christ calls us to join Him with humility and brokenness, and offer a gift of embracing openness. This will be costly. There are no quick fixes, no magic wands, and no self help courses that will fully humanise the other. The only hope is through the invitation to join the 'dancing circle of self-giving and mutually indwelling divine persons'.⁹⁷ A gap appears for all of us to enter the dance.

⁹⁵ Lewis. *The Weight of Glory*. 46.

⁹⁶ Weil. *Waiting for God*. 149.

⁹⁷ Volf. *Exclusion and Embrace*, 129.

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Appendix

Quotes to consider

Christ taught us that the supernatural love of our neighbour is the exchange of compassion and gratitude which happens in a flash between two beings, one possessing and the other deprived of human personality. One of the two is only a little piece of flesh, naked, inert, and bleeding beside a ditch; he is nameless; no one knows anything about him. Those who pass by this thing scarcely notice it, and a few minutes afterward do not even know they saw it. Only one stops and turns his attention towards it. The actions that follow are just the automatic effect of this moment of attention.⁹⁸

Both the scriptures and the history of the Church teach us that if the Holy Spirit is working, the whole man will be involved and there will be much cost to the Christian. The more the Holy Spirit works, the more there will be personal cost and tiredness. It is quite the opposite of what we might first think. People often cry for the work of the Holy Spirit and yet forget that when the Holy Spirit works, there is always a tremendous cost to the people of God, weariness, tears and battles. Francis Schaeffer⁹⁹

If the Christian community is to be more helpful, two things are needed. One is a recognition of how alienating to victims our natural coping mechanisms of detachment, blame and superficial pleasantries really are, and how detrimental the pat theological answers we give. The other requirement is a much fuller understanding of the distinctive needs and experiences of crime victims (including their need to lament, something alien to the blandness of so much contemporary worship).¹⁰⁰

The choice not to trust God is rebellion, but it will do no good to rail at the abuse victim about her sin and exhort her to more faith. More often than not she would give her right arm to be able to believe in a good God, but her largely ignored childhood choices will keep her from seeing God rightly and choosing to trust Him as an adult until she faces those choices and the reasons she made them.¹⁰¹

Change is possible and substantial, but not perfected until heaven. “Substantial healing”, a phrase used by Francis Schaeffer, underscores the possibility of deep and meaningful alteration, without blinding our eyes to the fact that permanent and final change awaits the transformation of the world through Christ’s return. The

⁹⁸ Simone Weil. *Waiting for God*. 146.

⁹⁹ Francis Schaeffer. *No Little People* (Downers Grove Illinois. InterVarsity Press 1974. 72)

¹⁰⁰ Marshall, ‘Christian Care for the Victims of Crime’, 12.

¹⁰¹ Allender. *The Wounded Heart*, 27.

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wounds of living in a fallen world with fallen people (including ourselves) make being damaged (internally and externally) a certainty.¹⁰²

Grief is neither a problem to be solved nor a problem to be overcome. It is a sacred expression of love ...a sacred sorrow¹⁰³

Beneath what our culture calls psychological disorder is a soul crying out for what only community can provide.¹⁰⁴

Nothing changes the human heart so deeply as to look bad in the presence of love, to be seen with all that is wickedly ugly about us and still be wanted, more to be delighted in. That's grace.¹⁰⁵

I see a healing community as a group of people who place connecting at the exact centre of their purpose and passion. Connecting with God (worship), others (loving service), and ourselves (personal wholeness). All else is either a route to or a result of connecting. Loving God and loving others lie at the core of God's intention for his people.¹⁰⁶

There's a lot of talk in this country about the federal deficit. But I think we should talk more about our empathy deficit - the ability to put ourselves in someone else's shoes; to see the world through those who are different from us - the child who's hungry, the laid-off steelworker, the immigrant woman cleaning your dorm room. As you go on in life, cultivating this quality of empathy will become harder, not easier. There's no community service requirement in the real world; no one forcing you to care. You'll be free to live in neighborhoods with people who are exactly like yourself, and send your kids to the same schools, and narrow your concerns to what's going in your own little circle.

Not only that - we live in a culture that discourages empathy. A culture that too often tells us our principle goal in life is to be rich, thin, young, famous, safe, and entertained. A culture where those in power too often encourage these selfish impulses.

They will tell you that the Americans who sleep in the streets and beg for food got there because they're all lazy or weak of spirit. That the inner-city children who are trapped in dilapidated schools can't learn and won't learn and so we should just give up on them entirely. That the innocent people being slaughtered and expelled from their homes half a world away are somebody else's problem to take care of.

¹⁰² Allender, *The Wounded Heart*, 159.

¹⁰³ Gerald May cited in Norman H Wright. *The New Guide to Crisis & Trauma Counselling*. (Ventura, California: Regal, 2003, 87.)

¹⁰⁴ Larry Crabb. *Connecting*, (W Publishing Group, 2005, xvi.)

¹⁰⁵ Larry Crabb, *The Papa Prayer* (Brentwood: Integrity Publishers, 2006), 116

¹⁰⁶ Crabb, *Connecting*, 206.

Barry Pearman

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I hope you don't listen to this. I hope you choose to broaden, and not contract, your ambit of concern. Not because you have an obligation to those who are less fortunate, although you do have that obligation. Not because you have a debt to all of those who helped you get to where you are, although you do have that debt. It's because you have an obligation to yourself. Because our individual salvation depends on collective salvation. And because it's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you will realize your true potential - and become full-grown.¹⁰⁷

A Soul was Travelling

Barry Pearman

A soul was travelling
From cradle to grave
When a band of abusers
Stole and depraved

Naked and beaten
Stripped of its worth
Vulnerable alone
No friend but a curse

Eyes half glazed
Scanning the crowd
Looks for a lover
A soul to be found

One walks toward
All pompous and proud
Degrees on the wall
No soul to be found

Don't taint me he says
I have a nice crown
Too busy today
To ever look down

¹⁰⁷ Barak Obama. http://www.barackobama.com/2006/06/16/northwestern_university_commen.php
accessed on 12/4/10

Barry Pearman

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A lawyer comes by
All knowing, all fine
I have all the words
Except 'I'll be kind'

To me you're a nobody
Legal Aid might just do
Up and till then
Justice is not for you

With a flurry of dust
Masport wheels spinning round
A child comes forth
On a trolley not sound

He pulls to halt
Looks to the ground
The trickle of blood
The deep moaning sound

He is only one
He will do what he can
He steps to the ground
Heart in his hand

The soul looks with fear
Wonders what good a boy can do
Yet he is hopeless and helpless
No neighbours that are true

The boy walks forward
Assesses the mess
He seen this before
It's Christ in distress

The eyes see each other
A glance with some fear
The child reaches forward
With love and much tear

The soul lies abused
Lost all it's worth
It's broken and battered

Barry Pearman

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A corpse without nerve
The boy gives embrace
Not knowing the toll
He strokes back the hair
Reviving the Soul

With much gentle care
He baths the deep wounds
Tender words broken heart
He gives a cocoon

Memories flood through
Of traumas past met
Abuse and self blame
Mix with doubt and regret

Why did they do this?
The questions do rise
The tears run down
Their cheeks never dry

The boy looks and wonders
What can he say
The questions go unanswered
An embrace the fears allay

With arms reaching out
He embraces the soul
He pulls it into him
A story to be told

Others walk by
Platitudes in their mouth
Just try harder
It will all work out

Paint a brave face
That's what we do
Everyone's watching
Boxed with a view

No time to stop
And lend a hand

Barry Pearman

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The people walk by
Head in the sand

It's really not that bad
Until its themselves
Left blooded and bleeding
Abused on the shelf

I like my life clean
No dirt on my hands
I'll stick with likeable
Secure and bland

Love sees the invisible
The talent in hand
For want of compassion
Someone to take a stand

The traumas now faced
The heart scars healed
A soul is restored
A future revealed

A glance an embrace
A soul reaching forth
Not a project they see
But love at full worth