



Are these Our Neighbours ?

Young people living in a violent world

*They had slaughtered their children
for their idols Ezekiel 23 39*

Background

Youth violence is not confined to any one subgroup of the youth population; it cuts across all racial, religious, gender and socio-economic backgrounds. Some may say it has its origins in early societies who believed that physical punishment was the right of parents and those legislated to act on their behalf (examples teachers).

Violence against children, in addition to the definition above, includes neglect and exploitation for pleasure or profit. Enforced custody, such as in factories or brothels, is part of the violence.

Some of the prevalent forms of youth violence such as verbal humiliation are not in themselves criminal offences, while other forms such as school bullying are only now being exposed.

Every year about one in ten Canadian youth come into contact with the police for violations of the Criminal and other federal statutes. Federal statistics indicate some drop in charges in recent years, although youth gang violence is said to be increasing.

Problems

One of the main handicaps to dealing with this type of violence is where the young person is living. Youth suffering or seeing abuse in the home are more likely to abuse or to be abused than youth in a non abusive families. It may be the norm for habitual, and sometimes severe, physical punishment within a family. Besides parents and guardians, it may also be siblings and other family members. It may also occur in foster homes.



Suffering violence in early life will have effects for the rest of life.. Girls will tend to turn their pain inwards producing self destructive behaviour. Boys will tend to express their pain outward inflicting harm on themselves and others.

Males may be influenced by a belief in rigid, traditional gender roles, seeing themselves as the dominant person in any relationship. Thus they resort to violence, especially against females, when they feel their dominance is challenged.

Visible minorities, such as among emerging or immigrant groups are breeding grounds for violence. Basic to this is the belief that such young people, both male and female, see themselves discriminated against since they lack opportunities and income to be part of the main stream of society.

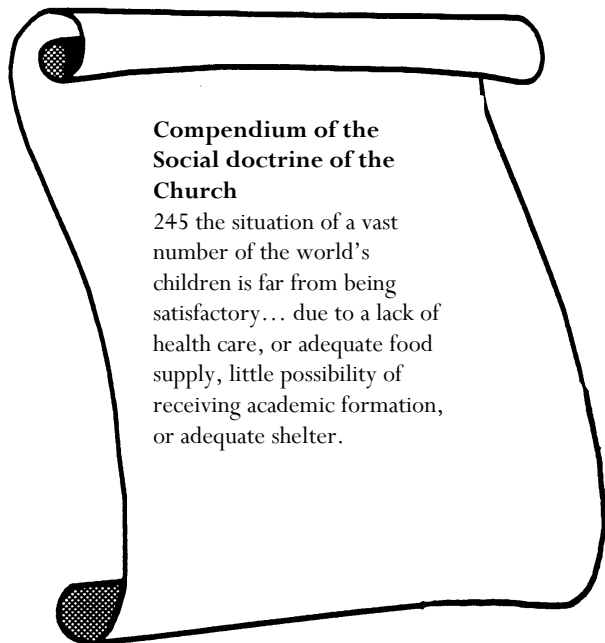
Recent developments such the emergence of gangs are seen as alarming. Initiation into gangs often involves rituals causing attacks on other often harmless individuals.

One issue is the influence of the media, particularly violent and war video games starting with the very young and also e mailing, bullying as early as eight years of age.

Definition:

Intentional physical, sexual or psychological assault on another person (or persons) by one or more young people usually between the ages of 12 and 19.





**Compendium of the
Social doctrine of the
Church**

245 the situation of a vast number of the world's children is far from being satisfactory... due to a lack of health care, or adequate food supply, little possibility of receiving academic formation, or adequate shelter.

Violence always provokes violence and irresistibly engenders new forms of oppression and enslavement.”

Paul VI

Reference Sources

Rerum Novarum 1891, Centismus Annus 1991 Papal letters
In Love and in Danger: A teen's guide to breaking free of abusive relationships, Barrie Levy
Calming the Family Storm, Gary McKay and Steven Maybell
National Clearing House on Family Violence
Department of Health and Human Services
Parent Abuse (by their teenage children) National Clearing House
Refer also to backgrounder in this series on Child Soldiers

Speaker Resource

Catholic Family Services
Saskatoon Family Service Bureau
Indian and Metis Friendship Centre
Saskatoon Tribal Council Family Centre
Saskatoon Interval House
Saskatoon YWCA (Crisis Shelter)

Discussion

1. What part should all people, adults to children, play in the particular safeguarding of children and youth they see around them?
2. What role should professionals, such as teachers, school nurses, as well as relatives, play in the protection and care of young people around them?
3. Are we living in a violent age? What do you attribute as the cause for this? Is the coming of visual media a contributing factor?
4. What place has censorship in what is appropriate for the media?
5. Discuss the influence of e mail, (chat rooms, blogs, face book) in the lives of both young and adults.
6. What is the role of society (i.e. governments) in protecting both the bodies and minds of its citizens?
7. Am I my brother's and sister's keeper?

Actions

1. The sources and resources above provide personnel and programs that can be part of group learning, in the home or in the neighbourhood.
2. Be aware of the resources available for emergency help in your area.
3. Actions speak louder than words. What can you do in teaching who, adult or child, about the method of settling conflict, the right way to live and to treat a neighbour, and the violence of language of body action.
4. Set standards in supporting your child's participation in sports, competitive or otherwise.
5. As always prayer can be a solution. In view of the foregoing discussion and actions, what are you to pray for?

