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INST 150-2
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Persuasive paper

The Injustice of Sexual Abuse

Injustice is a worldwide problem that has been occurring since the beginning of humankind. For the past semester, I have been serving at The Peacemaker Center. I have been helping with building renovations so the organization can branch out and serve more clients. I challenge everyone at Eastern University to spend a few hours of their time serving at The Peacemaker Center. If time is an issue, donations are accepted and of great need. Before everyone jumps out of their seat to serve, I am going to explain The Peacemaker Center's purpose and why everyone should help serve.

The Peacemaker center is a Christian counseling and conciliation organization. Its mission is to help people to find peace with God, themselves, and others. Currently, there are nine highly skilled therapists on staff. All together, these therapists help approximately one hundred clients every week. The organization strives to reach this mission by helping clients to break down barriers that prevent them from obtaining peace in their lives. Two major injustices that The Peacemaker Center serves include sexual abuse and poverty.

One of the ways that The Peacemaker center addresses the injustice of sexual abuse is through the Job 17 Project. The purpose of this project is to educate people about abuse awareness, healing, recovery, and prevention. Recovery and life coaching classes are provided to help the abused to move from being a victim to a survivor. Furthermore, training is provided for those who have been abused. The Peacemaker Center also makes an effort to help those stricken by poverty. Rate of pay varies according to the client's income. Therefore, even those in poverty can afford to receive counseling. The Peacemaker Center would not exist if people

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did not volunteer and make donations. Likewise, it can not grow unless more and more people help. I encourage Eastern students to volunteer even just an hour of their time to help The Peacemaker Center finish badly needed building renovations. One can also learn a great deal from volunteering their time for a useful cause.

Working at The Peacemaker Center has taught me that service can be fun and rewarding. When I first arrived at the site, I thought it would take years to finish the necessary renovations. The interior of the building was horrific. All of the walls and flooring badly needed to be replaced. My first task was to tear down as much drywall as possible. I proceeded with a sludge hammer and spent hours knocking away at drywall. This was probably my favorite part of the job. I had fun tearing down the drywall and was happy that I was helping to create a place suitable to help those in need. In addition to tearing down drywall, I also helped tear up the flooring. This was difficult and very exhausting. However, by the end of my third work day, I could really see a noticeable difference. Working at The Peacemaker Center has shown me that my individual effort does indeed make a difference. One of the most rewarding aspects of my service learning was all of the new relationships that I made during the course of my service. I had the privilege of being able to work along side several people who have received help from The Peacemaker Center. Many of them have experienced injustice firsthand; however, the therapists at The Peacemaker Center have helped them to heal and live normal lives. One of the ways that The Peacemaker Center helps people is through biblical justice.

Gary A. Haugen, in his book Good News About Injustice, describes how the Bible speaks about injustice. Haugen explains four truths about God's character. These four truths include:

- “God loves justice and, conversely, hates injustice.

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- God has compassion for those who suffer injustice-everywhere around the world, without distinction or favor.
- God judges and condemns those who perpetrate injustice.
- God seeks active rescue for the victims of injustice” (69-70).

If people follow God and conform to His standards, they will have the desire to create justice. As stated earlier, God does condemn those who take part in injustice. However, perpetrators of injustice should also be punished on earth. For the issue of sexual abuse, justice demands that the perpetrator is punished. This is important so that the person who committed sexual abuse is stopped from committing further abuse. It is also important to exercise justice properly. Haugen describes the proper way to enforce justice by saying, “God is the ultimate power and authority in the universe, so justice occurs when power and authority is exercised in conformity with his standards” (71).

Biblical justice is demonstrated in many ways when people come to The Peacemaker Center. “Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! (Isaiah 30:18). The previous verse is both preached and praised at The Peacemaker Center Three main areas of justice that are addressed include retributive, restorative, and distributive justice. Typically, people who have been sexually abused have had their voice silenced by people who have more power than they do. Haugen exemplifies this issue by saying,

This is injustice: the strong preying on the weak. These officers used the authority of their position to obtain her young trust. They used the power of their coercive strength to rob

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her of what God had given her, her dignity as a child made in the image of God, the inviolability of her body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and her freedom to be known only by the soul mate chosen by her heart. (73)

One of the functions of the therapists at The Peacemaker Center is to help rebalance power inequities. One of the ways this is done is through helping people have a voice. Sometimes this voice initiates retributive justice in the form of sexual abuse being reported as a crime. Then, justice is handled, in part, through the judicial system. Another way therapists work to restore power is by treating people respectfully and teaching them to treat themselves with respect. Sometimes people need to learn that they are allowed to say no. Often times they feel guilty for what has been done to them. The therapists help people to place guilt where it belongs. They also help remove guilt and shame from those who carry it unfairly. This is distributive justice. The hope when anyone comes to The Peacemaker Center is that relationships are restored. This includes relationships with God, others, and with themselves. When a perpetrator of injustice is willing to acknowledge their own sin, ask for forgiveness, and change their ways, relationships may be resorted.

Injustice comes in many forms. However, The Peacemaker Center mainly deals with sexual abuse. I feel that sexual abuse is one of the more serious and damaging injustices. Therefore, I encourage Eastern students to get involved and help out at The Peacemaker Center. All time spent at The Peacemaker Center is time spent creating a place where people can go who have experienced the horrors of injustice. In closing, I challenge Eastern students to make an effort to promote and encourage justice in everyday life.