

POLICE DAY 29 January 2012

How can we as church be part of the struggle to reduce crime?

Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of the mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

What is Crime?

It is any act that is against the law such as homicide, rape, domestic violence and assault, kidnapping, robbery, hijacking, assault, child molestation, white collar crime (corruption and fraud)

Defining crime prevention

These are strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime.

What are the causes of Crime?

- Inequality – In South Africa the income gap between the rich and the poor is increasing, the richest 10 per cent of households in South Africa earned nearly 40 times more than the poorest 50 per cent.
- High levels of unemployment and poverty alongside this high level of inequality provoke crime.
- Young men invest in a criminal identity and lifestyle.
- In South Africa, a culture of violence is strong, reflecting norms and beliefs which see violence as a necessary and justified means of resolving conflict or other difficulties.
- The use of alcohol and drugs increases the occurrences of crime.
- People have easy access to guns.
- Children are exposed to many of the 'risk factors' which enhance chances of becoming involved in criminal activities and violence.
- Reliance on correctional institutions (imprisonment) without addressing the causes of crime.

What can we as church do to reduce Crime?

- Start church groups to address crime.
- Be vocal against:
 - Crime against women and children
 - Drugs – preach against drugs, invest in programmes
 - Police killings
 - Violence
- Build moral fibre of our communities through promotion of a spirituality of respect and non-violence.
- Work against the culture of violence by using non-violent means to resolve conflict.
- Promote family life where children are exposed to love and care.
- Create more engagement with the Police including inviting them to address congregations during Sunday Mass.
- Help communities to take responsibility for community institutions such as schools, hospitals and police stations (through community policing).
- Support police in prayer.
- Assist released offenders, by identifying what motivates them, helping their rehabilitation and promoting reconciliation between them and their victims.
- Provide support for the unemployed through income generating projects.
- Change youth behaviour by investing in more community-based programmes to fight against drugs, alcohol and violence against women and children.
- Provide alternatives for youth (recreation, sport, role models).