

It was interesting to receive a call from a person employed by the Criminal Justice System who asked about the possibility of VORP working with his son who was involved with some other guys in a burglary. He said, "I've been aware of VORP for several years now but haven't supported it because I considered it soft." "The difference here is that I know my son is basically a good boy and what he needs is something that will help him take responsibility and make things right so he can get on with more important things." He was saying that punishment (imposing pain) for violating a law won't help his son and in fact it might make things worse. He is a good observer.

Punishment works short term in the sense that the undesired activity stops momentarily or perhaps as long as the punishment lasts. Our friend's fear is that the long term consequences might be very negative and he doesn't want this for his son, someone he cares about. Jane Nelsen writes in POSITIVE DISCIPLINE (a book directed to teachers and parents) that what is needed is positive discipline, firmness with dignity and respect. When the rules are broken there should be logical consequences and these must always meet all of the following criteria: 1. Related 2. Respectful and 3. Reasonable. She has observed that if one of these criteria is missing the one receiving the consequence will experience at least one of the following: 1. Resentment - This is unfair. I can't trust adults (Criminal Justice System Officials). 2. Revenge - They are winning now, but I'll get even. and/or 3. Retreat/Rebellion - I won't get caught next time. or Retreat/Reduced Self Esteem - I am a bad person.

VORP is one form of logical consequence that meets all of the criteria. Isolation may be needed when one is not cooperative or where public safety is a concern, but the goal that we should keep in mind is our desire for the offending person to become a cooperative, contributing member of society, not just to stop the undesirable activity for a short period of time.

## Seminary Student Shares Case Still in Progress

Brent Pries, a student from Ontario Canada at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, agreed to share a case which is still in progress. Names and some details have been changed to protect identities. He and Elaine Enns (our case manager) worked on this case as co-mediators. I thought it might be interesting for you to think with Brent and Elaine and enter into the mediators world for a moment. How do you feel toward each of the parties? Would you be able to talk with each of them in ways that are respectful? Is the process being conducted in a respectful way? Will they be able to come up with an agreement that is reasonable? Is the consequence related to the offense? How do you think each of the parties would answer these questions?

This story does not have an ending yet. It all began when Tracy (14) and Melissa (13) were walking home from an evening of skating and happened upon a car with an open window and a purse on the seat. Disregarding her better judgement, Tracy snatched the purse and the two of them were off to inspect and divide its contents. In the purse were 12 rings, a wallet, one gold earring, a cigarette case, a make up kit, and some assorted papers.

Some days later Tracy was visiting her acquaintance Rachel (15) who asked Tracy if she could borrow her make-up. Much to her surprise Tracy handed her her very own make up kit. Unbeknownst to Tracy and Melissa, they had stolen the purse of Rachel, their common acquaintance.

After returning to the Police whatever of the stolen goods left in their possession, Tracy and Melissa

### Volunteer Mediator Training Scheduled for June

The next VOLUNTEER MEDIATOR TRAINING is scheduled for June 25 and 27. Dave Augsburg said at our gathering that if pastors all really understood the value of the VORP training, they would be trying to get all of their congregation to become VORP Mediators. The VORP training is valuable in families, at work, and at church. The training is from 6-10pm each night. The cost is \$7.50 for materials only for those taking at least one VORP case and \$75 for those just interested in the training. Call Elaine or Beth at 291-1120 to register.

were still \$1,200 short of the worth of what was stolen. The bulk of this was two expensive rings which have apparently been lost.

In the individual meetings with the two offenders and the victim we found them all to be very cooperative and willing to participate in making things right. In the joint meeting, however, intense feelings and strained lines of communication emerged. Rachel and her mother were feeling that Tracy was not yet telling the full truth. Tracy was saying that the missing rings were lost and she doesn't have a clue as to where they could be. Melissa thought Tracy had thrown one ring into a bush.

Our first meeting ended with a large dose of frustration but mixed with a fair amount of hope. All agreed that it would be good if they could agree on a settlement rather

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than having to have the court tell them what to do but they also all had a lot of difficulty at this point visualizing how that might look.

Our first meeting also ended with a signed agreement stating that: 1. All will return for a second joint meeting. 2. Tracy and Melissa will make every effort to recover the missing merchandise. 3. Rachel will bring a detailed, itemized appraisal of the missing items to help with a realistic determination of appropriate amount of restitution. and 4. Elaine will bring the original police report to the meeting.

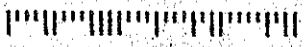
At this point I have some sense that we haven't yet heard the full story. I also have a confidence that we will be able to reach some agreement.

Thanks Brent! (We'll look forward to hearing the rest of the story.)

### A Point of Celebration...

VORP relies entirely on your contributions. Please have a good vacation but don't forget to send your contribution in before you leave. If you haven't yet contributed, consider starting this month. Regular contributions provide VORP a stable, ongoing financial support so that the criminal justice officials have a Restorative Justice option available. A point of celebration: For the first time since our beginning in 1983, we have paid all of our bills and met all payroll on time during the first five months of the year. Thanks!

Shalom  
Ron Claassen, Director



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