



**Christian Response to Restitution in the redeemed college of missions,
Ede, Osun State**

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Abstract

This paper assesses Christian response on restitution in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, Osun State. It addresses the fact that the practice of restitution is stated clearly in the Bible; both the old and New Testaments emphasized it, and it is equally one of the beliefs in many Pentecostal Churches. Many contemporary preachers and scholars have also said much about restitution in their sermons and books. However, scholarly attention has not focused thoroughly on why some Christians do not like to hear restitution teaching and why some people see it as a difficult issue. The study employed a survey method to collect detailed information that described the study. The participants are selected trainers and students of the Redeemed College of Missions. The study revealed that most of the respondents have an adequate understanding of restitution. However, many have not restituted because of fear and embarrassment that follows restitution. The study concluded that many Christians do not like to hear restitution teaching or have not made their restitution because of fear and embarrassment. Hence, it was recommended that the Church must not remain silent on the issue of restitution and those who have difficult restitution should be refer to pastoral counselors because an unsettled restitution can leads to lifetime guilt and condemnation

Keywords: Christian, Response, Restitution, Christian Response. Preparedness, Human development, Post COVID.



Introduction

When God gave the Law to Moses in Leviticus chapters five to seven, He added some laws that dealt with making the wrong thing right, popularly known as restitution. It was so serious that if a man or woman sins unintentionally, he/she will pay for it. Also, Zacchaeus in the New Testament restored in four-fold everything he had dubiously taken from people, and Jesus was pleased with his action. It is an indication that restitution is regarded as an essential practice in both the Old and New Testaments.

Restitution has a unique sense in moral theology. Moral theology can be regarded as Christian ethics, a Christianly ecclesiastical discipline concerned with identifying and explaining the principles that determine the quality of human behaviour in the light of Christian revelation. It can furthermore be restricted in its scope to a consideration of those thoughts, works, and performances that are viewed as offensive to God and spiritually harmful to human beings¹. It signifies an act of commutative fairness by which faultless reparation as far as possible is made for an injury done to someone. An offence may be done to someone by holding up what is known to belong to him in strict justice and by deliberately doing him damage to his belonging or name. As fairness between man and man requires that what belongs to another should be rendered to him, fairness is violated by keeping from someone against his will what belongs to him and by willfully doing him damage in property or reputation. Therefore, commutative justice requires that restitution be made whenever that virtue has been infringe.²

This duty is identical with that imposed by the seventh instruction, "You shall not steal." For the commitment not to dispossess someone of what appertain to him is similar with that of not keeping from someone what appertain to him. Just as theft is a deadly sin of its own nature, so is the refusal to make restitution for the injustice that has been committed.³

In addition, commutative justice requires that each one have what belongs to him, not something else; so what was taken away must be returned as soon as possible. If the belongings of another has been destroyed or damaged, the value of the damage done must be

¹<https://www.britannica.com/topic/moral-theology>.retrieved,May,26,2022

² T Slater . "Restitution." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 12. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. 26 May 2022

<<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12788a.htm>>.retrieved May 26,2022

³ T Slater . "Restitution." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 12. New York

restored. Reparation therefore, signifies reparation for an injury, and that reparation is made be restoring to the person injured what he had lost, thus, putting him in his past position. At times when an injury has been done it cannot be repaired in this way.⁴

A man who commits adultery with another man's wife cannot make restitution to him in the strict sense. He has done his neighbour an injury that in a certain sense is irreparable. Therefore confession could be a means of his restitution. In this and close cases it is a debated point among theologians if the adulterer is suppose to offer a money compensation for the damage. If he is convicted and asked to pay damages by lawful authority, he will undoubtedly be bound to do so in conscience. However, apart from such a sentence, he cannot be asked to pay the offended man in money, since there is no common measure between such damages and compensation in goods of another order.⁵

More so, Commutative justice looks at objective equality and prescribes that it be preserved. Because of this, Aristotle called this species of justice corrective, in as much as it rectifies and remedies the inequality an act of fairness generate between the harmer and the party wounded. The one has less than he suppose to have because someone has taken it away, and they will not be quits until reparation is made. In a situation where an injury cannot be repaired, the harmer will be bound to do what he can so that the wounded party may be content. This is called making satisfaction. We are consequently bound to make satisfaction to God for the injury which the repercussion of our sins inflict on Him; we cannot make Him retribute, nor did He suffer damage on account of our sins.⁶ Pastor E.A. Adeboye viewed that, except you retribute your way that which you did is waiting for you in your future. If you think that what you have done, the evil you have done, the monies you have stolen, the things you got by wrong means because nobody saw you, is gone and gone forever, think again!⁷

More and more, biblically-aware Christians are consulting their Old Testaments to help them navigate contemporary social justice issues

⁴ T Slater "Restitution." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 12. New York

⁵ T. Slater . "Restitution." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 12. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12788a.htm>>. Retrieved May,26,2022

⁶ T Slater . "Restitution." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 12. New York

⁷Restitute your ways: Adeboye tells corrupt Christians.from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/08/if-you-love-yourself-before-weekend-restitute-your-ways-adeboye-tells-corrupt-christians>.Retrieved July,9 2022



and biblical law. Perhaps, as communication over racial reuniting shoot up in the church, the notion of reparation has come to the front, and many are questioning as to what extent it may overlay with the concept of restitution in the Bible.⁸

What is often missed in discussions of law in the Bible is that although the legal code played a serious role in the civil polity of the nation of Israel, the law was given for reasons intense and more important to redemptive history than the mere initiation of a monarchical state. The law in its upright, judicial, and ceremonial aspects doesn't merely bring a general-equity blueprint for Christian cultural engagement; it also be to point to a new and better accord. Therefore, when we consider the Old Testament, we must make sure not only to implement it to our social instruction but to see all the way through to Jesus Christ in the text.⁹

Also, remuneration In the circumstance of criminal law, state programs under which an lawbreaker is required, as a condition of their sentence, to repay money or donate services to the victim or society; concerning maritime law, the fixing of articles lost by jettison, done when the rest of the cargo has been saved, at the general charge of the owners of the cargo; in the law of TORTS, or civil wrongs, a measure of damages; regarding contract law, the restoration of a party harmed by a breach of contract to the position that party occupied before she or he entered the agreement.¹⁰

The general word restitution describes the act of restoration; the term is normally used in unlike areas of the law but have the same meaning throughout. The purpose of restitution is to achieve fairness and hinder the unjust enrichment of a group. Restitution is used in agreement situations where one party has vested an interest on another party but cannot collect payment because the contract is defective or no contract exists. For instance, assume that a person builds a barn on the property of another person. Assume further that the structure is not erected pursuant to a contract or agreement and that the owner of the property on which the barn sits refuses to pay the builder for the

⁸ A Kocman, 5 principles of biblical restitution from [https:// founder.org](https://founder.org) Retrieved January 16, 2022

⁹ A Kocman, 5 principles of biblical restitution from [https:// founder.org](https://founder.org) Retrieved January 16, 2022

¹⁰ West's Encyclopedia of American Law, edition 2. S.v. "restitution." from <https://legal.dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/restitution>. Retrieved January 17 2022

barn. Despite the absence of a contract, a court can order the owner to pay the builder the cost of the labor and materials under the doctrine of restitution.¹¹

More so, the term "restitution" was used in the earlier usual law to denote the return or restoration of a certain thing or condition. In contemporary legal usage, its meaning has constantly been expanded to include not only the restoration or giving back of something to its owner and returning to the status quo but also compensation, reimbursement, indemnification, or reparation for benefits derived from, or for loss or injury caused to, another. Therefore, the word "restitution" means the relinquishment of a benefit or the return of money or other property obtained through an improper means to the person from whom the property was taken.¹² It therefore means that there is a similarity between the concept of restitution in the law and in the Bible.

The practice of restitution is clearly stated in the Bible. Both the old and New Testaments emphasized it. It is also one of the beliefs in the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Zacchaeus is a good example of a man that performed restitution in the New Testament. Previous studies also emphasized the concept of restitution. For example, Randy E. Barnett opined that, the idea of restitution is actually quite simple. It views crime as an offense by individual against the rights of another. The sufferer has suffered loss as a result of the offense committed against the person. Justice consists of the culpable offender making good the loss he has caused.¹³

However, scholarly attention has not focused thoroughly on why some Christians do not like to hear restitution teaching and why some Christians have abandoned it in their lives. In the light of these realities, the research seeks to study responses on restitution in the RCM. This is the gap this research intends to fill.

The Concept of Restitution in the Bible

¹¹West's Encyclopedia of American

Law, edition 2.S.v."restitution."from <https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/restitution>. Retrieved January 17 2022

¹²<https://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Restitution>>Restitution.Retrieved January 17, 2022

¹³ Randy E. Barnett, Restitution: A New Paradigm for Criminal Justice, 87 Ethics 279 (1977) from <https://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/facpub/1558>.Retrieved July 9,2022 pg.287



The term restitution is from the Latin word *rēstitūtiō* from *rēstituere* to rebuild, from RE + *stature* to set up¹⁴. It is the repairing of wrongs done, and restoring what one has wrongfully taken from another are strictly enjoined in the scripture and are necessary evidence of true repentance.¹⁵

The Dictionary of the Bible Encyclopaedia defined restitution" as the practice ordered by God of making good an act of evil, such as theft.¹⁶ This view is stated in both the Old and New Testaments. The Israelites were under the law in the Old Testament, which specified restitution in various circumstances. If a man theft an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he must pay back 5 head of cattle for the ox and 4 sheep for the sheep. A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft. He must pay back dual if the stolen animal is found alive in his possession, whether ox, donkey, or sheep. If a man grazes his herd in a field or vineyard and lets them stray, he must make reparation from the best of his field or vineyard. If a fire get out and spreads into thorn bushes so that it burns standing grain, stocks of grain, or the whole field, the person who began the fire must make reparation. If a man take for temporary use, an animal from his neighbour and is injured or dies ..., he must make restitution. (Exodus. 22:1, vs 3-6, vs14).

Leviticus 6:2 - 5 covers other situations in which the stolen property is restored plus one-fifth of the value/usefulness. Also, the restitution was made to the property owner (not to the government or any other third group and the compensation was to be accompanied by a guilt offering to the Lord. The Mosaic law protected victims of theft, extortion, fraud, and negligence by requiring the offending parties to make restitution.¹⁷ The remuneration amount varied from 100 to 500 percent of the loss. The reimbursement was to be made on the same day the guilty one brought his sacrifice before the Lord.

This implies making amends with one's neighbour is just essential as making peace with God. In the New Testament, we have the outstanding example of Zacchaeus in Luke 19. Jesus visited Zacchaeus's home, and the people who know the chief publican to be a wicked and oppressive began to murmur about his association with a sinner (v. 7). Zacchaeus arose and said to Jesus, "Look, Jesus!

¹⁴ Collins English Dictionary completed and unabridged, London, Harper Collins Publishers, 2003

¹⁵ J. I. Packer, Marshall's Bible Handbook, London, Marshall, 1980, p. 436.

¹⁶ W. R.F Brownings, A Dictionary of the Bible Encyclopaedia. com, from <http://www. Encyclopaedia.>

¹⁷ W.R F Brownings, A Dictionary of the Bible encyclopaedia.



Here and now, I give fifty fifty of my belongings to the poor and will return four times the amount if I have cheated anybody out of anything. Jesus said to Zacchaeus, today salvation has come to this house because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. From Zacchaeus's words, we gather that he had been guilty of defrauding people, was remorseful over his past actions, and was committed to making restitution. The aforementioned explain things to restore both in the Old and the New Testament period. However, it needs to be mentioned here that in the case of Zacchaeus, he did it by initiative. Jesus did not ask him to refund the money he falsely took from people.

Principles of Biblical Restitution

Believers are now checking their Old Testaments bible to help them sail current social justice issues and bible law. Unsurprisingly, as communication over racial agreement escalate within the church, the idea of reparations has come to the front, and many are inquiring as to what extent it may overlap with the biblical concept of restitution. What is missed in discussions of biblical law is that although the legal code played an important role in the civil polity of the Israelite nation, the law was given for reasons deeper and more relevant to redemptive history than the mere establishment of a theocratic state.

The law, in its moral, judicial, and ceremonial aspects, doesn't merely provide a general-equity blueprint for Christian cultural engagement; it also exists to point to a new and better covenant. Therefore, when we consult the Old Testament, we must seek not only to apply it to our social order but to see all the way through to Christ in the text. Leviticus 6:1-7 offers five truths to teach us about biblical restitution, culminating in a dramatic preview of the gospel thus:¹⁸

- a. Crimes Requiring Restitution are not only Horizontal but Vertical: The types of crimes that demand reparation, in accordance to the Levitical code, include one "deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or... oppressing his neighbor...finding something lost and lying about it, swearing falsely in any of all the things that people do " (vv. 2-3). But we must note how the text distinguishes all¹⁹
- b. Crimes Requiring Restitution are Direct and Measurable: Note the complete lack of ambiguity regarding what behaviors are legally

¹⁸ A Kocman.5 principles of biblical restitution from [https:// founder.org](https://founder.org). Retrieved October, 19, 2021

¹⁹ A Kocman.5 principles of biblical restitution

proscribed. The crimes mentioned in the text involve tangible theft or property hidden or held back by fraud (vv. 2-4). Further, these crimes must be objectively measurable because one-fifth of the value of the lost goods or wealth was to be calculated and added to the repayment (v. 5).²⁰

Restitution Cannot Replace Repentance: The text continues: "...if he has sinned and has realized his guilt and will restore what he took..." (v. 4). Bound up with the practice of restitution is a recognition of genuine guilt. A repentant heart alone, of course, is no excuse to withhold repayment; however, neither should financial recompense ever replace what must be a matter of the heart.²¹

Restitution Assumes Personal Property Exists: At the risk of stating the painfully obvious, the entire logic of Leviticus 6:1-7 assumes that personal property rights exist. Reimbursement is paid directly to the individual whose property has been lost or stolen.

Restitution doesn't Replace Atonement: Finally, what is most often missed in the biblical discussion of restitution is that financial repayment alone wasn't sufficient to atone for the sin itself; the crime was addressed at the social level, but the breach of faith required a different solution. After making 120 percent repayment, the repentant thief was instructed: "And he shall bring to the priest as compensation to the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent, for a guilt offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and he shall be forgiven for any of the things that one may do and thereby become guilty".²²

Difficult Issues on Restitution

The example of stealing money and paying it back as restitution would be somewhat straightforward, but we can all agree that many difficult issues are not as easy to resolve. For instance, consider these

examples:

- a. Suppose a person has had a habit of driving his car recklessly—and then has a severe car wreck. In the accident, he injures another driver so seriously that the person can't work for a year or even a lifetime! Can anything be done

²⁰ A Kocman.5 principles of biblical restitution

²¹ A Kocman.5 principles of biblical restitution from [https:// founder.org](https://founder.org). Retrieved October, 19, 2021

²² A Kocman.5 principles of biblical restitution from [https:// founder.org](https://founder.org). Retrieved October, 19, 2021

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- about this that would manifest restitution to the injured person?
- b. Imagine an adolescent taking unlawful drugs and offers this to his friend. That friend drives home and is involved in a terrible car accident that results in an injury or even death. What can the irresponsible teen do about his involvement in this wreck?
 - c. If a student has consistently cheated on his tests for several years and finally graduates. How can a young man or woman do anything about the sin of cheating that has been carried out for a long while?
 - d. If a middle-aged man or woman has gambled and either won or lost at the game, then comes to repentance, how would restitution be made in this case? If the amount won is to be paid back—perhaps \$5,000 or \$40,000—to whom should it be paid back?
 - e. If a teacher has taught the false and evil theory of evolution to tenth, eleventh, or twelfth graders, then they repent, how can they make restitution for the many hearts and minds perverted and lives changed over a career of ten, twenty, or thirty years
 - f. Perhaps a father has sent his children to the secular, worldly state schools. If he does this for 14 years for three children, how can he make restitution when he comes to himself and recognizes the damage he has done to the mind and hearts of those children?²³

Christian Response to Restitution

If we agree that restitution is a crucial Christian issue in this contemporary world, it is worth acting upon; what ought our response to be? Zacchaeus made restitution not because he was court-martialed, or found out, or ordered to by a decree of Caesar – but simply because he had been with Jesus. Because he had received Jesus into his home, his heart – because Jesus had sought him out and looked deeply into his eyes. Zacchaeus' restitution was a heart response of gratitude to Jesus before it was an act of contrition towards people. Just like apartheid was an offense against God before it was a wrong against human beings. Zacchaeus' restitution was not prescribed. He came to it himself. But it was generous, and it was costly.²⁴

²³ Richard Hollerman. Practical Problems that Come in Restitution! from <https://true-discipleship.com>. Retrieved on January,21,2022.

²⁴ Sharlene Swartz. Restitution: A contemporary theology for young people: University of Cambridge the Journal of Youth and Theology Vol 6, Number 2. April 2007.



If we treat restitution as a response to God – a sacrifice for him, we won't be satisfied with giving 'anything that costs us nothing' – as David does in 1 Chronicles 21:24 when God instructs him to build an altar and the landowner offers to give it to him for nothing. 'No! I want to pay you what it's worth. I can't just take something from you and then offer the LORD a sacrifice that cost me nothing' is David's response.

We don't know if Zacchaeus' restitution was public or private. We don't know if all the other tax collectors were convicted by Zacchaeus' actions and also made restitution. Zacchaeus could easily have said he was merely a pawn in a system of corrupt tax collectors – he was no different from anyone else. It was accepted practice. But he didn't. When Jesus Christ of Nazareth called him out and looked into his eyes – and said, 'Zacchaeus, I want to come to your house today' (for tea or otherwise) – Zacchaeus said, 'Lord, I will repay everything I have taken. No excuses.' I also have a heavy persuasion that if Luke 19 was a story about Zach's daughter rather than Zach himself – that if it was Sarah in that tree and Jesus walked up to her – and looked into his eyes – she would have said, 'Lord you know it wasn't me it was my father, but what he did stinks, Lord, and I have benefited for the last 37 years. I am so sorry that people have gone hungry, and have starved while I have enjoyed my father's stolen wealth. Today I will restore and repay – half of what I own and four times what my father stole.'

The topic itself is challenging and filled with emotion and pain. Doing sorry is difficult for adults, how much more so for young people. Those who have been wronged are asked to forgive, forget what lies behind, and move on, but there is no escaping from the fact that without restitution, how can we say we've repented? I have met incredible people who have experienced the worst injustice at the hands of largely 'white' people, who have forgiven and now try with all their might to eke out an existence.

But we are not talking about those who have been wronged. We are talking about those of us who have done the wronging, the beneficiaries of injustice, and the receipt of stolen goods. How surprising and refreshing would it be if a group of Christian people decided, not because the government demanded it or because those who have been wronged demanded it – but simply because it was the right thing to do – to begin a substantial voluntary restitution movement. It would be a fragrance in South Africa (and the world)

that might permanently displace the stench of injustice.²⁵ The above explanation shows that the Holy Spirit has a way of guiding Christians to respond to restitution acceptably.

Beliefs of the RCCG on Restitution

According to the Believers' course manual of the RCCG,²⁶ Restitution involves restoring all things taken by falsehood to the owner, confessing all lies told, and bringing all those we have deceived into the true pictures of things. Proverbs 6:30-31, 28:13, Acts 24:16, Ezek. 33 :14-16, 2 Sam. 12:1-6, Phil.1, Lev. 6:1-7. It is willing to let the Lord expose and heal painful areas of our past. God commands that restitution be made.

Restitution is a sign of true repentance. This is payment for what is damaged – Ex. 22:3. Whatever cannot give us a clear conscience before man, and God should be restituted without delay – Lev. 6:1-7; Luke 19:8; Prov. 28:13; Acts 24:16.²⁷ Restitution leaves behind an indelible testimony with the one for whom reimbursement is made, which becomes a means of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ when an unbeliever is involved. When delicate restitution is to be made involving a non-Christian, undoing wrongs done against organizations, or those that affect marriage relationships, etc., much prayer and counseling from men of God may be required.²⁸

The Concept of Restitution in Law

In law, a court often orders restitution to achieve fairness, preventing the unjust enrichment of one party to a civil lawsuit. In addition, repayment is often ordered in criminal sentencing, requiring the defendant to make monetary amends or perform some act that benefits the crime's victim or the general public. Restitution in a criminal setting is usually made in addition to fines and/or jail time. To explore this concept, consider the following restitution definition.²⁹

²⁵Sharlene Swartz. Restitution: A contemporary theology for young people: University of Cambridge the Journal of Youth and Theology Vol 6, Number 2. April 2007.

²⁶Believers' course manual. The Redeemed Christian Church of God. From <https://www.rccglp63.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/RCCG-BELIEVERS-MANUAL.pdf>. Retrieved January 28 2022

²⁷ Our Beliefs. from <https://www.rccg.org>. retrieved on January 28, 2022

²⁸ Believers' course manual. The Redeemed Christian Church of God

²⁹ Legal Dictionary. Restitution, Definition, Examples, Cases. From <https://legaldictionary.com>. Retrieved January, 22, 2022



Furthermore, ³⁰Restitution definition law refers to a monetary payment imposed as a penalty to restore a loss. Usually, financial charges are included in the judgment in negligence or contract cases. Restitution may require the stolen goods to be returned to the victim. In other instances, restitution requires the victim to receive payment for the harm they endured. Regarding criminal law, restitution refers to the state programs that require an offender to donate services or repay money to the victim or society as a whole as a condition of their sentence. As a general term, restitution is the act of restoration. This term is used in various areas of the law. However, no matter the area of law, the word retains the same meaning.

Achieving fairness is the primary purpose of restitution. Another goal of repayment is to avoid the unjust enrichment of any of the parties, namely the offender. Repayment requires that the offender give up any gains that they obtained unlawfully and return these gains to the plaintiff. Restitution is used most frequently in contracts law. In contracts law, restitution is designed to ensure the injured party is restored to the position they enjoyed before the contract's formation, if possible. Parties who are seeking restitution are unable to seek lost earnings or profits caused by the breach of the contract. The plaintiff needs to include a claim in the initial complaint to get restitution. The plaintiff will not receive an award if the amount cannot be determined with certainty.

³¹Ann O'Connor & Reece L. Peterson in their write up "Restitution, Strategy Brief" stated that, in the field of criminal justice restitution is defined as an act that is done to correct an error or to make amends to a person or community who has been injured in some way by the person.³²Restitution is a counseling-based approach to help students learn to manage themselves when applied to schools.³³ Restitution seeks to help students fix their mistakes so they can return to the classroom better than when they left.³⁴

³⁰Up Counsel. Restitution Definition Law: Everything You Need to Know. from www.upcounsel.com. Retrieved on January 22, 2022

³¹ Ann O'Connor & Reece L. Peterson Restitution, Strategy Brief. University of Nebraska-Lincoln. from <https://k12engagement.unl.edu>. Retrieved on 26/01/2022

³² B. A. Fields . *Restitution and restorative justice*. Youth Studies Australia, 44-51. 2003

³³ W. Brown. *Building a learning community through restitution*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (Accession Order No. NR06191). 2004

³⁴ C. Penner. (2008). *Restitution and home visits: Behaviour management initiatives*. Education Canada, 48(4). 61-64. 2008

Gossen³⁵ defines restitution as a tool that teachers can use to gain control of the classroom without "sacrificing the self-esteem of the individual" so that students will admit when they make mistakes and try to correct them, which leaves the student feeling stronger. The focus is not on punishing students, instead, the focus is on helping students to become better people by encouraging them to come up with a plan to fix their mistakes so that they become the person they want to become.³⁶

Theoretical Framework

The most well-developed presentation of the theory of restitution is probably that presented by Barnett and Hagel.³⁷ This approach to criminal justice is based on an explicit conception of individual rights. In their view, a crime has been committed only when "the rights of an individual, rights that each of us possesses, have been violated in some way." These rights are defined by and based on "the fundamental right of all individuals to be free in their person and property from the initiated use of force by other.

This focus on individual rights leads the restitutionary system to diverge from the current system in several important respects. First, crime is defined as any act which violates or threatens to violate the rights of one or more individuals rather than as any action that has been prohibited by statute (the latter being the standard definition under the prevailing positivist approaches to crime). Second, it becomes clear that crimes are committed against individuals with resulting damage to those individuals, rather than against the state as under the current concept. Third, this insight leads to the conclusion that there are two parties to any criminal proceeding, the aggressor and the victim, rather than the aggressor and the state, as is currently the case in criminal law.

Thus, Barnett and Hagel wrote:

A restitution theory of justice begins with the principle that there are two parties to any criminal activity. They are not, as traditionally conceived, the state and the defendant(s) but are, instead, the victim

³⁵ D.C.Gossen. Restitution: A way back to learning and understanding through self-respect. *Aboriginal*. 21-23.2004

³⁶ C. Penner, (2008). *Restitution and home visits: Behaviour management initiatives*. Education Canada, . 61-64.2008

³⁷ Randy E. Barnett and John Hagel 111, "Assessing the Criminal: Restitution, Retribution, and the Legal Process," in Barnett and Hagel, *Assessing the Criminal*, pp. 1-31.

and the defendant. If it is to play any role, the state would be restricted to mediating the dispute and enforcing the judgment.³⁸

These points lead to the fourth key point of the restitution theory: namely, that the prime purpose of a proper criminal justice system is to force the criminal to compensate the victim for the damages caused by the criminal act. This is because the criminal act, in this view, creates an imbalance between the parties since the criminal has infringed upon the rights of the victim. Therefore, this imbalance must be corrected by forcing the criminal to retribute the victim for the loss caused by this violation of rights. Thus, the initial focus on individual rights in the restitution theory leads directly to the conclusion that the prime function of the criminal justice system is to make restitution to the victim rather than punish the criminal.

Conclusion

Considering the numerous explanation of restitution provided in the above review, we see that the word restitution has to do with rewriting wrongs done and restoring what was taken dubiously. We can also see from the study that the Old and New Testaments and the land law support restitution. For example, in law, a court often orders restitution to achieve fairness, preventing the unjust enrichment of one party to a civil lawsuit. In addition, reimbursement is often ordered in criminal sentencing, requiring the defendant to make monetary amends or perform some act that benefits the crime's victim or the general public. Restoration in a criminal setting is usually made in addition to fines and/or jail time.³⁹ This shows that restitution is not only discussed in the Bible but also in the law of the land. The difference is that the biblical restitution involves repentance and forgiveness' while that of the law doesn't always involve repentance and forgiveness .

Rothbard's theory of proportionality implies that someone who deliberately violates another person's property rights through theft or violence forfeits his property rights "to the extent that he deprives another of his rights.⁴⁰ If Christians follow the above theory, they will act contrary to the book of Mathew 6 vs14-15.In prayer, there is a

³⁸ Randy E. Barnett and John Hagel 111, "Assessing the Criminal: Restitution, Retribution, and the Legal Process," in Barnett and Hagel, *Assessing the Criminol*, pp. 26.

³⁹ Legal Dictionary. Restitution, Definition, Examples, Cases. From <https://legaldictionary.com>. Retrieved on 22/10/2022

⁴⁰ N. Murray Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press 1982, p. 85. from <https://mises.org>.retrieved on 26/01/2022



connection between what God does and what you do. You can't get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God's part.⁴¹ It means that Christians must be ready to forgive their offenders in all situations, unlike unbelievers.

Also, an article⁴² written by compellingtruth.org stated that as Christians, we should deal truthfully with the world. We should restore our debts and make restitution for the damage we have caused. However, we should also show love to others by forgiving what is owed to us. It is not wrong to receive restitution, or even to request it. Civil justice exists for a reason (Romans 13 vs1-7), and forgiveness does not necessarily imply a lack of consequences. However, our hearts should be one of forgiveness and gentleness. We never seek restitution as a means of vengeance (Romans 12:19-21). Instead, we should love our enemies and refrain from retaliation (Matthew 5:38-42).

Based on the findings in this study, it was concluded that the majority of the respondents have an adequate understanding of restitution and some of their responses on restitution are positive. However, from the results, it is clear that many people do not like to hear teaching on restitution for the following reasons: the teaching brings fear; restitution is perceived as a struggle; their past life is difficult to retrace; the teaching brings guilt and condemnation. More so, the results reveal reasons why some Christians have left restitution undone thus: the kind of embarrassment that follows reimbursement and fear of losing everything.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made for the church:

- a. The church must not keep quiet on the issue of restitution.
- b. The church should balance the teaching with confession and forgiveness.
- c. The preacher should teach the concept with an emphasis.
- d. The mature Christians should guide the younger ones on how to go about it.
- e. The positive effect of restitution in society should be emphasized by preachers.

⁴¹ The Holy Bible: The message. Bible in contemporary language. Eugene H. Peterson, 2002

⁴² Compelling Truth. World view and apologetic .from www.compellingtruth.org. Retrieved on 30/06/2021

Finally, the research endeavors in the mentioned areas as well as other areas of restitution with reliable findings, will certainly help the church and the church leaders to present the matter of restitution with wisdom.

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