

Blame, finger pointing won't solve our problems



REV. ROBERT SCHADEN

MORAL PERSPECTIVES

As I begin to write this column, I feel a sense of sadness. I am aware that the family of Malice Green is still grieving the loss of a loved one. At the same time, the families of Walter Budzyn and Larry Nevora are grieving the inability to reach out and touch the men they love.

I am equally aware that two men who have been at the center of this sad story are attempting to acclimate to prison existence even as I watch these words flash onto my computer screen.

The talk shows and the editorials, the letter boxes and the bar chatter around this town have given center stage to the story for longer than many would like to think about. However, while

many of us would rather put the story to bed, the families of Malice Green, Walter Budzyn and Larry Nevora do not have that luxury.

Unfortunately, much of the print, to my nothing of the broadcast, editorializing, has had, at least as part of its agenda, the attraction of readers and listeners. That is simply a dimension of what they are about. But in the attraction process, much of the verbiage has attempted to address the question of blame. Who was right and who was wrong? Who was the hero or who were the heroes, the villain or the villains?

Focusing on who is to blame has really not done much of anything for anybody, except perhaps to raise the illusion of righteousness and polarize portions of a society that can ill afford it, a society that does not have much to feel good about in the midst of lives wasted and lives locked up, often dying violent deaths, drugs or no drugs, criminal

records or not, is something that should raise feelings of sadness and anger in civilized people. Men leaving loved ones behind, despite their reputation or previous behavior, should be enough to raise a degree of empathy in men and women anywhere. Men going off to prison while their families suffer for their own grief should be enough to raise a kind of grief in anyone of human origin who still claims membership in the species.

Yes, the day of sentencing was a sad day, and so was the day of judgment and so was the day of the beating. All of those sadnesses are what they are, far removed from the business of placing blame.

It is the place of the courts in this land to determine as best they can the issues of guilt and innocence. It falls to the rest of us to get off the blamemobile and begin

to address as a society what we might do to minimize the repetition of these sad kinds of events.

As long as we allow poverty to continue, as long as we are content to have our society defined by two sides of the tracks, so to speak, as long as we are more concerned with pointing fingers and determining who is the problem than we are with becoming a part of the solution, we will continue to breed further tragedy.

The names will change, but the chapter titles will remain the same. They will be called violence and killing. They will be called prison and loss. They will be called grief and pain.

The Rev. Robert Schaden is with the Newman House on the campus of Schoolcraft College in Livonia. If you have a question or comment, call him at 953-2047, mail box number 1876, a Touch-Tone phone.

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