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No Place for Abuse: Biblical & Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence

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The act of throwing acid on a woman's face to disfigure it is so popular in Bangladesh that it has its own section of the penal code. Abuse of women is a worldwide problem, and all too often Christians do not treat it with the urgency it deserves. The Worldwide Evangelical Fellowship formed a task force of women from around the globe to explore the problem, and this book is the culmination of its extensive research.

As members of this task force, the authors' goal is to present both sociological and theological insights that will dare the church to take a stand against abuse. Canadian Nason-Clark shares her experience as a sociologist who conducts both religious and secular workshops on this issue; Kroeger employs her years as a biblical scholar in the United States. They set the stage with personal stories and statistics, then move on to the deeper questions of how the Bible addresses this subject, and what the church should do about it.

One man woke his wife at two in the morning by beating her with a child's metal tricycle. When the terrified woman revealed her story to a popular speaker, she was told that according to I Peter 3:16, she should return to her husband in an effort to win him over to Christ with her gentleness and love.

The church has a history of citing this passage when sending women back to their abusers; it advises wives to submit to their husbands. However, according to the authors, the word hypotasse, which is translated as "submit" in most Bibles, actually has a much wider semantic range and implies a more equal alliance.

According to the World Health Organization, one in five women around the world is physically or sexually abused during her life. It is imperative that Christians know how to treat these situations. This book's appendices include intervention resources for pastors, Bible study discussion topics, and even a sample sermon condemning violence in the home.

As all people struggle with what they can do to help erase this problem, the authors offer a prayer: "May God grant us eyes to see the suffering of women and men around the world, ears to hear their sometimes silent cries for help, hearts that are moved to respond to their pain, and feet that are willing to accompany victims on their healing journey."

CHRISTINE CANFIELD (August 16, 2001)

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