



VIOLENCE AND THE FAMILY



Photo: HKSJKH Welfare Council

Picture of family violence drawn by a child being helped by Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council with art therapy. It shows a Chinese character “罪人” “Sinful person”, expressing the guilty feeling of a child in a violent family – usually he would think that he is responsible for provoking the anger of the parent.

EDITORIAL

Violence in the home is a “violation of God’s wish for humanity”. That statement comes from a report to the recent General Assembly of the Church of Scotland – a Presbyterian Church and the national church here in Scotland. Later in this newsletter, you can read about the letter on Gender Violence addressed by the recent Primates’ Meeting in Dublin to the Churches of the Anglican Communion. The Primates describe Gender Violence as, ‘a global phenomenon and all but a small percentage of such violence is perpetrated by men against women, with devastating effects on individuals, families and societies.’

Across the world and among the family of churches everywhere, gender violence is now recognised as an issue which demands attention.

As I read this newsletter, I reflect on my own experience of this issue when I was a priest and pastor. Much of that time was spent in Northern Ireland during the years of sectarian violence. It seemed to me that, once violence was allowed to become endemic in a society, it would find expression in all kinds of ways – not just in the inter-community violence which made headlines across the world but in gender-based and family violence which brought fear and desolation to those who were its victims.

Most of all, I reflect on the silence which often accompanies domestic violence. The young mother arrives in distress on our doorstep seeking safety and compassion. We attempt to give comfort and support. We

speaking of the need for safety for her and her children. But she is gripped by fear – fear such that she will not speak of all that has happened – fear such that she is afraid not to return to the violence from which she flees.

The new awareness and focus on Gender Violence begins by doing what is most necessary as a starting point. It breaks the taboo of silence. It highlights and describes the nature and the scale of the problem so that those who are victims need no longer feel that they are the only ones. Nor do they need to feel that this is somehow acceptable within the Church family with love at its centre.

But exhortation and challenge are not enough. My experience is that much of the potential for violence arises from incoherent rage – from people who experience change or challenge and are unable to articulate their feelings and their concerns. So there is a long journey ahead in which people – particularly men – must be helped to express their feelings and to engage in open dialogue within family and community.

At the end of this journey, there is one other prize. My experience has been that, where the status of women in a society changes, then that society changes and develops. I have seen it in Ireland. I saw it recently on a visit to India. I am sure it is true across the world and it is a promise of hope.

The Most Revd David Chillingworth, Bishop of St Andrew’s, Dunkeld and Dunblane and Primus of Scottish Episcopal Church.

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE OCEANIA CONSULTATION

Oceania Consultation

A Consultation of delegates from the Oceania region was held in October 2010 in Aotearoa New Zealand. They produced an Action Plan to combat violence within the family, involving theological reflection, separate and joint discussions between men and women to name problems and recognise achievements, and plan for future action. This Action Plan was published as an IAFN newsletter, see www.iafn.net. The first section of this newsletter reports on the action taken by the delegates as a follow-up to the Consultation and shows their on-going commitment to the belief that “the way violence ruins the lives of women and children is too pressing to be ignored”.

DIOCESE OF POLYNESIA

Pacific ‘No’ to violence

Fiji

Archbishop Winston Halapua, who leads the Anglican Church in the vast Diocese of Polynesia, has proven he’s as good as his word. At the Oceania Consultation he had publicly proclaimed he’d do whatever he could to end violence against women and children in his diocese – which includes Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and American Samoa.

And on Sunday, February 20 he used his cathedral – Holy Trinity Cathedral in Suva – the traditional teaching seat of a bishop, to deliver on that promise, and to say publicly:

- We’ll start with ourselves.
- As the Diocese of Polynesia, we’ll begin the work of cleaning house.
- We’ll end the violence in our own families and in the structures and processes of our Church – and then we’ll take this message further afield.

This is an issue that has to be talked about, and preached about, in all our parishes.

Before the Gospel was read, the Cathedral Men’s Group processed from the back of the cathedral down the centre aisle, where they unveiled a new banner that declares their commitment to ending violence.

The banner stands, unfurled, for all to see, on the mezzanine which overlooks the altar.

The banner’s message was reinforced in the sermon by the Rev Dr Feleterika Nokise, the Principal of Pacific Theological College, who spoke of the impossibility of the Christian being able to help others and reflect Christ if he “is not a safe person”.

Senior figures from Fiji’s police and social welfare departments had already made private approaches to Archbishop Halapua about the problem – and those same officials and their co-workers were on hand in the cathedral to watch the diocese’s *Elimination of Violence* programme being unveiled.

Archbishop Halapua announced that the Dean of Suva, the Very Revd Fereimi Cama, one of the delegates at the

Oceania Consultation, had agreed to take up the challenge of rolling out *Elimination of Violence* training throughout the four countries of the Diocese of Polynesia.

Dean Cama says violence “is a significant problem in most areas of the Pacific. Most of the NGOs have been talking about it for a long, long time. And the question that I’ve been asking is: ‘What has the Church been doing about this? What has the Church been saying?’ This is an issue that has to be talked about, and preached about, in all our parishes.”

The preaching started with Dr Nokise’s Sunday sermon.

“For the diocese to embark on this project,” he said, “we need to begin with ourselves. We need to look at our own lives and check whether we are violence-free and whether we are safe people to help others. We have been given a promise in the Scriptures that we belong to Christ. Our identity is that we are children of God, made in God’s image – and therefore we are called to reflect God’s ways, which are based on righteousness, justice and love.”

Dr Nokise said many people have violent tendencies within their characters, and it can be “a huge challenge and painful struggle” to examine and address those traits in the light of the gospel message.

He said Pacific Island culture had often emphasised a harsh view of discipline and this had become tangled up with men’s view of themselves. This view was wrapped up with concepts of power, control and authority.

“But often, these things are not in line with the gospels. If we are to produce life, and to give life to others, we need to look at these concepts and what they mean to us. The oft-quoted Old Testament justification for smacking children, ‘Those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent to discipline them’, was not an excuse for violence against children. Often you don’t realise the force of a so-called ‘slap’ on a child” he said.

“I’m not sure whether the child learns any lesson from that – except how to be afraid.”

Lloyd Ashton

Contact Person: Dean Fereimi Cama, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Suva, FIJI

Samoa

The Samoan delegate at the Oceania Consultation, Mrs Quandolita Reid Enari, has been attending local meetings, reporting on the Consultation and initiating discussion about violence in the family. She reports on “a healthy discussion and also a healing session for some” and that mothers and young people have put up their hands to support the initiatives to deal with the issue. They also spoke of the importance of having a mother figure within the church whom the young people look up to for guidance and to assist their youth work.

Tonga

Mr Sitaleki Paula Moa works voluntarily with young men, helping to turn them away from violence to a more creative life. He says that the cultural tendency in Tonga is to fight first and talk later. He tackles this by taking young men to a different environment and teaching them to talk it through. There are no organised forums in the Church to discuss this but the Church has status in the community and people look up to the clergy.



The opening of the Chapel of Tarore at Ngatiawa.

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Faith in Action – a Commitment to Work for Non-Violence.

I have taken my faith seriously since growing up in the Anglican parish of St James, Lower Hutt New Zealand. The St James parish coat of arms says: 'Doers of the Word' and that is what I have tried to do. It was a faith decision to train as a Clinical Psychologist, as I wanted to help make a difference to people's lives, their families and communities. I joined the Family Centre team, Anglican Social Services – where the recent Oceania Consultation took place – in the mid-1980s. At that time, the Family Centre team was pioneering the work in New Zealand in responding to domestic violence. All three cultural sections, Pakeha (European), Maori and Pacific Island, initiated the first groups to help men take responsibility for their violent behaviour and develop more respectful and loving relationships with their partners and families.

I have been in clinical practice for over 25 years assisting individuals, families and communities to resolve their hurts, struggles and conflicts, and develop more respectful relationships. After working at the Family Centre, I joined the Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission (Central) which provided counselling and workshops to workers and workplaces throughout New Zealand. Much violence happens

Much violence happens at home, but much is generated through pressures and challenges in workplaces.

at home, but much is generated through pressures and challenges in workplaces. Bullying and discrimination can cause pressures that get brought home to the family and can result in violence. We delivered programmes to expose, challenge and change unhealthy workplaces and develop cultures of respect to help workers to take responsibility and change their own bullying and abusive behaviour.

There are many reasons why family violence occurs. We need a holistic approach that addresses broadly its causes and its solutions. Social conditions and crises in communities such as natural disasters can cause considerable pressure in families that often lead to increased rates of domestic violence. We need to help families heal from these devastating natural events and facilitate healing, resilience and reconnection.

After the devastating tsunami in Samoa in 2009, I assisted the Family Centre Psychosocial Unit supporting and training a local initiative to provide counselling to affected families and communities. Western psychological practice takes little account of both faith and indigenous cultural dimensions of healing. It was a privilege to be part of a team that developed effective ways to assist families and communities

that were inclusive of people's faith and cultural contexts. I am now assisting the Family Centre in the aftermath of the devastating Christchurch earthquake, providing workshops to train and support frontline workers, NGOs, church staff and communities.

Currently I live at Ngatiawa, a modern monastic community in a rural setting east of Waikanae, with my wife Diana and our four children. It is a community of hospitality and prayer with a particular ministry to those on the margins who live in local urban Wellington communities. We have a daily rhythm of prayer in the chapel of Tarore, named after a young Maori girl who was martyred for the Gospel and the way of peace during the early colonisation of New Zealand. We have guests who have come to Ngatiawa to heal from violence. We also have

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guests who have come to take up responsibility for their violence and walk the way of peace. Some of the work is with men who have abused members of their family. We assist the man to take responsibility for the abuse, explore his experience, discuss the possible effects of the abuse on those who experienced it, develop appropriate apology and commit to mend what could be mended.

It is a privilege to live here and support people, walking alongside our guests for some of the way on their journey towards life-giving relationships, reconciliation and healing.

Contact Person: Richard Sawrey, Ngatiawa, 82 Terrace Road RD 1 Waikanae 5391, NEW ZEALAND



Various Anglican Church organisations, departments and institutions, including prominent members of the clergy and religious communities, took to the streets of Honiara in a parade from the headquarters of the Anglican Church of Melanesia to the St Barnabus Provincial Cathedral for a special service to mark the campaign against all forms of violence. Photo: ACOM.



PROVINCE OF MELANESIA

In November, the following statement was approved by the Executive Council of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

The Anglican Church of Melanesia recognises that violence is a sin and the bad effects of violence in the home on family life and vulnerable members of the family.

We encourage all parishes to pray and reflect deeply and develop parish study groups on this issue of violence in the family. We encourage our various dioceses and institutions to develop programmes to address the issue.

Provincial Secretary George Kiriau, one of the Consultation delegates, was asked to work with the Melanesian Board of Mission to put together such programmes.

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On Advent Sunday 2010, 152 members of the four religious communities (the Sisters of Melanesia, the Society of St Francis, the Community of Sisters of the Church, and the Melanesian Brotherhood) came together in an unprecedented gathering and – after biblical reflection – issued a joint statement on social justice and human rights. Foremost was a condemnation of family violence, particularly against women and children, which “remains a widespread practice in Solomon Islands”. Rejecting any cultural defence of this abuse, they promise to address this issue, for example teaching against family violence in mission programmes. They also urge the better training of the police so they will no longer dismiss alleged situations of family violence as “domestic disputes” and refuse to intervene.

Solomon Islands

Mr Kiriau also facilitated a men’s group at St Barnabus, the Provincial Cathedral. Some 25 men discussed the questions:

1. Can violence be justified in the home? What does the Bible say about violence?

2. Can we remain silent and not do anything about violence in the family? What does the Bible say about our role as Christians on this issue?

There was a lively discussion and some concerns were raised that the emphasis on human rights might be at the expense of the family. But by thinking deeply and sharing, he believes most were convinced in the end that violence in the home must stop.

Mr Kiriau attended a Mothers’ Union consultation on their Positive Parenting Programme and was delighted to learn about the excellent MU resource material available (see www.themothersunion.org/parenting_programme_worldwide.a.spx). He noted that “This is where work should start with parents to stop violence and abuse in the family and the future families that will form when the children grow up.”

Vanuatu

Mrs Ethel George, another delegate, wrote to the chairman of her Parish Council, of which she is a member, and asked if *Violence and Family* could be included on the agenda at the last



MU discussion group, Mango Parish. Photo: E George.

Council meeting of 2010. She praises God that all members

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(mostly male) discussed the issue freely and it was fully agreed that it is about time the Church started to address this issue. She has subsequently held two awareness sessions, and more are planned for this year. They were well attended and included children as well as men and women. The concerns raised by the children were particularly interesting. Meeting in separate groups, the boys said they were sometimes chased out of the house when their fathers found there was no food after returning from kava bars. Young children described their parents

talking harshly to them, smacking and even chasing them away. "While understanding they are trying to teach us, we feel that most of the time they are just turning their anger over other things or other people on us and this really hurts."

The following recommendations were made by the different groups:

- Mothers/Wives – Enforce Church rules/stand against kava consumption and the Church to organise workshops on Christian family life and sharing responsibilities in the home.



- Fathers/husbands – Women to stop gossiping and change their attitudes to each other – uncontrolled tongues can be a cause of disunity and violence
- Clergy – More preaching and visitation to prevent drunkenness and help solve disputes between couples. Church leaders to hold Bible Studies through men's fellowships and teach on good communication and respect for the wife. More training on positive parenting to be organised by the Church.

A main recommendation was that the Church must take the topic of *Family and Violence* on board as a new policy initiative to be discussed and recommended to the Diocesan Synod.

PRIMATES' LETTER ON GENDER VIOLENCE

http://www.aco.org/communion/primates/resources/downloads/prim_gbv.pdf

This letter from the Primates to the Churches of the Anglican Communion, issued after their meeting in Dublin, Ireland in January 2011, acknowledged with grief that violence is a global phenomenon and all but a small percentage of such violence is perpetrated by men against women, with devastating effects on individuals, families and society. It called for a range of measures to work towards a change of attitudes and further action by the churches such as Bible study, the development of local and accessible resources, and the training of pastors and clergy. The Action Plan that emerged from the Oceania Consultation (see <http://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/newsletters/2011/march/index/cfm>), together with the work of other Anglican Networks, the Anglican Consultative Council and meetings of Bishops in Africa and at the Lambeth Conference, all fed into the reflection at the Dublin meeting which led to this important statement.

AUSTRALIA

The IAFN Oceania Consultation delegates from the Anglican Church of Australia gave a brief report to the Standing Committee of their General Synod and are now working on the Primates' letter to the Churches on gender-based violence and its implications. The newly-formed General Synod Women's Network, with Bishop Kay Goldsworthy as Coordinator, has been asked by their Primate to take responsibility for further action required to address these issues. The Network will take into account the National Plan to reduce violence against women and children recently released by the Australian government.

Commitments made at the Oceania Consultation will also be taken up by the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) working with Consultation delegates. IAWN has, for many years, been highlighting the issue of gender violence.

The Revd Dr Jonathan Inkpin, a delegate at the Consultation, provided invaluable resources for White Ribbon Day which were distributed across the Communion by IAWN for the 16 Days of Activism 2010. Work will continue on plans to use the lead-up time to White Ribbon Day 2011 to further encourage Anglican churches in Australia to significantly extend their involvement in 2011.

Extracts from the Australian Government's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2009-21)

- One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15.
- Almost one in five has experienced sexual violence.
- The National Plan is underpinned by the belief that involving all governments and the wider community is necessary to reducing violence in the short and longer terms. No government or group can tackle this problem alone.
- While living free from violence is everyone's right, reducing violence is everyone's responsibility.

For the full version of the National Plan, see www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/np_time_for_action/national_plan/Documents/The_Plan.pdf

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Hawaii

Rev Thomas Van Culin, delegate for the Diocese of Hawaii at the Oceania Consultation, notes that he has ministered to people who have suffered violence from "upstanding and well-known"

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lay and clerical members of the Anglican Church and this experience was echoed by that of other delegates at the meeting. He strongly believes it is appropriate and timely for The Episcopal Church to provide training for clergy and lay persons to recognise such abuse and provide safety and permission to speak out about it. This is the first step to the necessary transformation required by the Gospel. His hope is that The Episcopal Church will have several representatives taking part in the Anglican Communion Safe Church Conference being held in Canada in June 2011.

EXAMPLES OF WORK BEING DONE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COMMUNION

NIGERIA



Well-attended workshop on breaking the silence about violence against women.

Photo: Diocese of Ife, Nigeria.

Diocese of Ife Workshop: Violence against Women – Breaking the Silence

This workshop was organised for women and young mothers in the Cathedral Church of St Philip, Ayetoro, Osun State. Issues of violence against women, its causes and consequences were ably tackled. It was affirmed that:

- Violence against women affects women and girls in every country, regardless of their age, race, education, etc.
- At least one out of every five women will experience violence against her during her lifetime.

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- It is most common within cultures where gender roles are strictly defined and enforced, where masculinity is closely associated with male honour or dominance, where punishment of women is accepted and where violence is the standard way to resolve conflicts.
- Violence against women has broken bodies, shattered dreams and broken many hearts.
- We must join hands to break this long silence.

The case of a queen in Nigeria who was severely beaten and bathed in acid by her husband the king was shown with the aid of a projector and screen. The queen had complained of the king's extra-marital affairs with her friend and moved back into her father's house. The king went there, beat up his wife and finally bathed her in acid.

Another instance is that of widows who are made to drink concoctions of the bath water that has bathed their husband's corpse to prove their innocence of his death.

The discussion session was interesting as some of the young women thought that sometimes women's actions could warrant their being beaten by men. So some women perpetuate these acts and see them as normal. The examples they gave were of

women who engage in extra-marital affairs, women who are extremely stubborn and women who abandon their wifely and motherly duties and come home late at night.

However, other women described such acts as barbaric and inhuman. A man who beats his wife is likened to one who is insane; Ephesians 5:28-29 shows that the man is actually beating himself – something only a mad fellow would do. The consequences of such acts – infant and child mortality, low birth weight, poor physical health, injuries, chronic pain, sexually transmitted infections, unsafe abortions, stress, depression, suicide – were critically examined.

All the participants had their views and understanding changed: namely that though we are women, we are all humans and deeply affected. We therefore deserve right interventions.

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The group was then given four different scenarios that could exist in a relationship to discuss, and solutions were offered. The women were asked to seek counsel over unfavourable and unsafe relationships. They should make necessary investigations about the person they want to be married to – his parental background, his church, his pastor – and they should also inform their pastor.

The young women were counselled not to be silent any more about any act of violence towards them. They were made to

They were made to understand that violence against women is a violation of their basic human rights and there is a need for us all to break the silence.

understand that violence against women is a violation of their basic human rights and there is a need for us all to break the silence.

God has promised us a goodly heritage and has set his standards for husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:21-29. Wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord and not be maltreated. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for her. Violence against women must be eliminated.

Contact Person: The Ven Olanji Falowo, Archdeacon for Special Duties, Diocese of Ife, Bishopscourt, PO Box 312, Ile-Ife, Osun State, NIGERIA

INDIA

Women Workers' Training Centre

The Women Workers' Training Centre (WWTC) functions under Thoothukudi-Nazareth Diocese. A Bible and Vocational School from its start in 1960, it is now involved in Evangelistic and Community Development Work, working in Nagalapuram and 67 villages around it. I would like to write about a family in one of these villages.

Alcoholism led to violence within the family

Mr K. Duraisamy lives in Vedapatti and goes for daily wages to cut thorny trees to make charcoal. He is married and has three children. His wife also works for daily wages. From the age of 14, Mr Duraisamy started to drink alcohol regularly, becoming a drunkard over the last years. Whatever money he earned, he used to buy alcohol. Moreover, he asked his wife to give him her income. If she refused, he fought and tortured her. There was no peace or happiness in the family. The family became poorer every year, sometimes even struggling to get their daily food.

Mr Duraisamy's villagers are astonished to see the change in him. He is proud of himself that he is living a peaceful life with his family.

Two of the children are studying in our Child Development Centre where they get educational help through the *Compassion International Project*. This project also helped us to finance the son's three hip-replacement operations. There the children got to know about Jesus Christ and tried to comfort their mother. When the Project started a De-Addiction Camp against alcoholism, we suggested Mr Duraisamy attend such a camp. At first, he heavily refused to go, although men from the same village who have attended such a camp had already succeeded in quitting drinking.

When his wife and mother, desperate because they could not control him anymore, insisted that he should attend such a

camp, he got angry and beat them. The household was like a war zone. One day, he drank so much that he fell from his motorbike and was admitted to hospital. On his return home, his family cried and told him that this would not have happened if he had been attending the camp. When our staff asked him a third time whether he would attend, even though he did not want to, he agreed to go for the sake of his family. He finally gave up drinking and brings his daily wages home.

The whole family is very happy and they benefited economically, physically and emotionally. He loves his family; they sit together to eat and talk. They have a peaceful life now. He also does not quarrel with other villagers anymore. Every Friday he attends a meeting at our project for people who gave up drinking. His wife happily told us: "After 22 years we celebrated the first Deepavali (Hindu Festival) on November 5th 2010 without beating, kicking, fighting or crying. My husband himself bought new dresses for the children, crackers and chicken." During all this time, our Church of South India Order of Sisters, Sr Suthanthirakani and staff of the Child Development Centre, visited the family regularly, first to comfort the wife and children and later to give counselling. Now he is a witness for others of his village. Also another child counsellor, a Christian converted from a Hindu family, is visiting this family and gives counselling to the wife. The wife joined a self-help group which is providing financial support to her when needed.

Mr Duraisamy's villagers are astonished to see the change in him. He is proud of himself that he is living a peaceful life with his family. We praise God for the happy life which Mr Duraisamy has received.

Contact Person: Sr Kasthuri Manickam, Superintendent, Women Workers' Training Centre, Thoothukudi-Nazareth Diocese, Nagalapuram 628 904, Vilathikam Taluk, Thoothukudi District, Tamil Nadu, INDIA

PAKISTAN – RAIWIND DIOCESE



Women development and service society.

Photo: Diocese of Raiwind – Church of Pakistan.

Early marriage is a great cause of violence. The reason could be poverty or ignorance, but the violent broken family is its consequence.

The young girl is considered an economic burden, so expenditure on her education would be waste of money. These girls go to workplaces with their mothers. Sometimes, brokers

pay the money to poor parents, make false promise and then sell these girls. Some parents sell their young daughters into marriage for money, although this sale is illegal.

Early marriage deprives the girls from getting education and personal development and makes them unable to contribute to the family and society. The interaction between the number of years of a girl's schooling and the later age of marriage is firmly established by demographic and fertility studies. A girl with seven or more years of education will marry four years later and have 2.2 fewer children than one with no education.

The parents fear that their daughters may become involved in premarital sexual relations. The removal from school limits her opportunities to develop her intellect and socialise. She loses her own identity and grows up with no sense of the right to assert her own point of view. Unskilled and illiterate women who are abandoned, widowed, divorced, or are victims of growing urban poverty, must work to earn a living. So they are forced into commercialised versions of their work as wives – cleaning or cooking. They may even enter the commercial sex trade. The question of appropriate marriage-age is part of a wider picture of interaction between economic advance and increased participation of women in education.



"She looks for wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight". Proverbs 31/13.

Photo: Diocese of Raiwind – Church of Pakistan.

The forced sexual relationship has negative health consequences, as the girl is not psychologically, physically and sexually mature. They become pregnant at an early age and there is strong correlation between the age of a mother and maternal mortality and morbidity. Teenage girls are also particularly susceptible to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS. Such young girls are isolated and have no nearby support, and the children of young and illiterate women tend to face the same cycle of deprivation and damage experienced by their mothers.

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A family with resources helps to reduce the number of early marriages. The resources are used for the girl's education and the parents don't depend upon the daughter's income. Opportunities of employment for women in non-servile occupations also help to promote girls' education and postpone marriage. The development of community structures for managing basic services like health and education help to erode traditional practices related to them.

Here is a true story about a poor Christian girl, aged 16, in our targeted community, who was sold by her father for a few thousand rupees to supply his addiction. Though she protested, there was no help. She had to go away as the legal wife of a 50-year-old man. Some months later, she rushed back to her old master's house where she had worked with her mother. But

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later she was found dead there and no one knew the cause of her death. Her paternal family did not want to receive her body, because of family ego. According to the medical report, she died through a non-medical abortion.

The Women Development and Service Society (WDSS) brings a message of justice and equality to women. Its chairman is the Diocesan Bishop, Rt Revd Samuel R. Azariah, and it is actively supported by the Diocese.

The Society provides services such as:

- **Earning Hands:** Projects to empower the women socially and economically through an opportunity of respectable employment, especially in rural and marginal areas. This includes medical and professional training as well as traditional skills such as needlework. The number of students training as midwives increases every year, with 93 young women taking part in 2010 – girls like Shazia,

With the help of WDDS she was able to complete her education and enrol as a student midwife. She will soon start work on the labour wards at the local hospital.

who came with her grandmother to Baath Health Unit to help with the cleaning. Although keen to learn, she could not go to school as her father was sick. But with the help of WDDS she was able to complete her education and enrol as a student midwife. She will soon start work on the labour wards at the local hospital.

- **Health Training and Services:** by running medical clinics and camps. Pregnant women are checked and motivated to attend regularly for ante-natal care. In 2010, over 7,000 daily clinics were held and 3,000 camps.

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Check-up services and medicine free of cost are also provided to female sex workers, the majority of whom are forced into prostitution through their poverty.

- **Child Protection Project:** this runs different activities such as children's literacy classes. In 2010-11, five vocational centres and ten literacy centres will be established for vulnerable young females and street children. These provide opportunities for skills training and mutual support for those at risk of involvement in the sex trade.

Contact Person: Alice Garrick, Executive Director, Women Development & Service Society, Diocese of Raiwind, 17, Warris Rd, PO Box 2319, Lahore 3, PAKISTAN

BANGLADESH



Youth groups learning about the harmful impact of domestic violence.

Photo: Church of Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, most families have been controlled by the male and are maintained through private and public patriarchy. Because of economic power, males are the governor of the family and the female is treated as an instrument of the family. Educated or illiterate, housewife or job-holder, rural or urban, many women suffer from domestic violence. According to an international research study on health, 60% of women reported being physically or sexually abused during their lives. Their husbands were the most common perpetrator. Two-thirds of the abused women have never talked about their experience of violence and almost none accessed formal services for support. Females are stigmatised, and it is considered shameful for women to speak out about the violence, whether it is physical, mental or sexual.

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There is not any one significant cause of domestic violence. Traditional patriarchy, gender-discrimination and social culture all create it. Dowry is often a monetary deal between two men: the bride's father and the groom. Such cultural arrangements completely violate the dignity of women. Although dowry is illegal in Bangladesh, it is culturally accepted and still widely practised in rural areas.

Nowadays domestic violence changes its form. Adolescent and young women are the victims of different kinds of miserable violence. Acid-throwing and 'Eve-teasing' are new phenomena of

violence against women and young girls. Eve-teasing is a euphemism used in Bangladesh for public sexual harassment, street harassment or molestation of women by men. Both can cause depression – sometimes leading to suicide – and leave permanent scars. Incidents of Eve-teasing can permanently damage the psyche of the victims.

Sometimes this harassment has made parents keep their daughters at home away from school or even marrying them off at an early age. Paranoid parents concerned about the safety and honour of their daughters can literally ruin their future.

The Church of Bangladesh has prominent activities to prevent family violence not only among church members but also in the local community. It organises awareness workshops, skills-training for women on human rights, domestic violence, dowry, early marriage, etc. To generate economic empowerment among the women, small groups have been formed and

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encouraged to save and start small businesses through micro-credit. In church congregations, the priest and laymen are trained on the issues with awareness programmes which show the harmful impact on society – for example, the increasing number of divorced and broken families. Pre-marital education for the new couple and counselling for the broken family are other important initiatives of the Church of Bangladesh. Moreover, the Church organises youth groups to face the discrimination between male and female and also to decrease mixed marriage (Christian and non-Christian). The congregations celebrate Women's Day every year and provide the opportunity for women to preach and thereby grow female leadership in the Church congregation. Priests also present sermons on female characters from the Bible to inspire women and the contribution they make.

Contact person: Momota Bairagee, Project Officer, Church of Bangladesh, St Thomas Church, 54, Johnson Rd, Dhaka-1100, BANGLADESH

HONG KONG



Photo: HKSKH Welfare Council.

According to the statistics of reported incidents of domestic violence from the government of Hong Kong, the number of battered spouse cases decreased from 4,807 in 2009 to 3,163 in 2010, while child abuse cases slightly increased from 993 in 2009 to 1,001 in 2010. It seems that the outcome of publicity and education initiatives on domestic violence in recent years is satisfactory. However, social workers worry that incidence of

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Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council, the welfare agency of the Anglican Church, took an active role in co-ordinating the efforts of various government departments, non-governmental organisations, police and professionals to prevent and combat domestic violence in Hong Kong. The Council has adopted two approaches to prevent the cycle of domestic violence. One is to report it immediately when social workers notice its occurrence in order to prevent it from getting worse. The other is through education and prevention programmes.

The Council has a number of strategies, including the adoption of protocols for dealing with instances of suspected domestic violence, increased support for victims and training for frontline

social workers. Social workers who work with these victims develop safety plans with them, both at home and in the workplace. They empower the victims by providing them with information, resources and community-support services. Some are so intimidated by abuse, or anxious to conceal it from themselves and others, that they do not recognise what is happening to them. A list of screening questions is provided for people who wonder if they were the victims of any form of domestic abuse, for example:

- Do you feel anxious or afraid when you are around your spouse or partner?
- Does your spouse or partner's behaviour make you feel as if you are wrong?
- When you express your point of view to your spouse or partner, does the other party become angry and threatening or intimidating?

Partnership and collaboration has been well established between government departments, police and the Council.

We also pay attention to children who witness significant people in their family being abused; this would definitely influence their psychological development. Sometimes

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the voices of these children are not heard and their pain is unnoticed. Our social workers who work for these children use play therapy or art therapy to help them to express their stress and anxiety. Through counselling and therapy, the ramifications and negative consequences for their psychological development will be minimised. Prevention of domestic violence occurs through awareness and education. Our social workers deliver

Sometimes the voices of these children are not heard and their pain is unnoticed.

programmes to promote effective communication, parenting skill, stress and anger-control so as to enhance harmonious family relationships. Social workers also provide individual counselling to parents and adults in order to prevent domestic violence. The Council does not tolerate domestic violence and works to utilise different strategies and resources to protect the victims and prevent it from happening.

Contact Person: Phoebe Yau Suk Wah, Clinical Psychologist, Primary School Counselling Service, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council, 1A Lower Albert Rd, HONG KONG



Photo: Ian Montgomery



Photo: Rosario Saavedra

The Bethlehem Inn Advocacy Project Anglican Advocacy – ‘Woman:Mother – First Principles for Reducing Child Abuse’

The Anglican Church, through its ministry of advocacy for children, women and teenagers, has started a project to reduce child abuse. This travelling project 'La Posada de Belén' has gone through various districts and towns in Lima and Ica. Its objective is to empower parents so they can have more stable families – psychologically, emotionally and spiritually. The topics covered include:

- increasing the self-esteem of parents and children.
- how to argue without hurting others.
- how to correct children properly.
- how spouses can resolve differences.
- how to develop tolerance.
- personalised counselling by specialists in legal, psychological and spiritual matters.

Several groups – local authorities, a mission agency and a church in the UK – sponsor this project. The Director of Anglican Advocacy and the Project Co-ordinator work with dedicated volunteers to form a team to help build more united families and stronger communities.

A further objective of the project is to bring a community into contact with their local help agencies, so that in case of emergency they will know exactly where to go and what steps to take to receive fast and appropriate attention.

Workshop for Mothers and Fathers on how to reduce domestic violence

In March, more than 40 men and women attended the workshop organised by the Bethlehem Inn Advocacy Project. Participants were able to:

- talk to the police about the security needs of their neighbourhood.
- see how the community and the police could work together in combating crime, drug addiction and alcoholism.
- provide important guidelines to change aggressive or inappropriate behaviour in families.

Children’s Workshop

Over 50 children three to 12 years of age attended the workshop. They painted, played and talked about how to argue without hurting others. They also learnt about their rights.

Contact Person: Rosario Saavedra Placencia, Diocesan Administrator, Iglesia Anglicana del Peru, Apartado 18-1032, Lima 18, PERU

How does domestic violence affect teenagers? Official UK government figures only record incidents between adults, but recent research shows that teenage girls are also in abusive relationships. The Girl Guiding Movement UK has a great track record of listening to the opinions of girls, and towards the end of 2008 they published a report that said the most important issue for young women today is stopping domestic violence against women and children. I naively assumed that was because they saw their parents suffering, or they had watched too much television. But then research by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the University

However, boys who are hit will usually end the relationship, whereas girls are more likely to keep quiet about the abuse they suffer, feeling that it's somehow normal.

of Bristol published in 2009, found that one in three teenage girls in the UK suffer some form of sexual abuse in relationships with boyfriends, while a quarter suffer physical violence such as being slapped, punched or beaten. One in six has felt pressured to have intercourse, while one in 16 have been raped. Girls who are in relationships with older boyfriends are more at risk of abuse, with three-quarters of them reporting that they have been victims.

It is not just girls who suffer violence; a small minority of boys report having been pressurised into sexual activity – around one in 17 – and around 20 per cent have suffered physical violence from their girlfriends. However, boys who are hit will usually end the relationship, whereas girls are more likely to keep quiet about the abuse they suffer, feeling that it's somehow normal. It is alarming that so many think that abuse or violence is an acceptable part of what should be a loving relationship. This is a tragedy for both boys and girls – for girls because some are being physically and emotionally damaged and for boys



Girlguiding UK provides a safe, girl-only space for girls and young women where they can discuss sensitive issues at a formative time in their development.

Photo: Girlguiding UK.

because some have a vision of manhood that allows violence and exploitation.

The Sophia Network exists to connect women in youth work and ministry to access training, develop skills and grow as leaders. We have nearly 700 members who are connecting with thousands of young people every week in schools, churches and youth groups. Those young people won't be immune from these damaging patterns of relating, and we want to equip youth workers to respond to this reality. Our first step has been to raise awareness on our website, highlighting research and profiling those who are actively addressing the issue, giving ideas from experienced practitioners about running workshops in schools. We are members of Restored, Tearfund's new initiative to mobilise the Church to end violence against women, and are delighted that they have created a course called DAY to educate young people in schools about domestic abuse. The author is developing a version for use with Christian groups and we will promote both courses to Sophia Network members to equip them for the damaging relationships that sadly they will encounter.

Contact Person: Jenny Baker, Director of the Sophia Network, C/o Network office. See also: <http://blog.sophianetwork.org.uk/domestic-violence/>; Restored: www.restoredrelationships.org

PRAYER FOR THOSE SUFFERING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

O Saviour Christ

Your touch brought healing, comfort and hope ~ yet
You yourself knew pain, powerlessness and abandonment:

Hear the cry of those world-wide who suffer
domestic violence;

Remove the stones of terror and injury
and grant the grace of affection and respect;
Remove the stones of enforced deprivation and infidelity
and grant the grace of consideration and trust;

Remove the stones of aggression and loss of control
and grant the grace of security and peace;

From all things heartless and harmful

Save us and defend us, O Lord.

Amen

Revd John Bradford

IAFN is an Anglican forum for the exchange of information about challenges facing families in different countries and contexts, and the practical work being undertaken by churches and individual Christians. See website www.iafn.net for further information and how to receive the newsletters electronically or in the printed version.

IAFN ADDRESS

C/o Anglican Communion Office,
St Andrew's House, 16 Tavistock Crescent,
Westbourne Park, London W11 1AP, ENGLAND
email: mail@iafn.net
Tel: +44 (0)7948 332697