



## CHURCH RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC ABUSE



Stop the Violence! Winning Provincial Poster by Brandy, young girl from Guyana.

Photo: Mothers' Union, Guyana.

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### MARY (Name changed)

Mary lost her parents during the civil war in Burundi. She came to a rural village to look for a job and met a man who promised to be hers for life. They were married and had a church blessing. What she thought was to be a happy time in her life was the start of a Calvary journey.

Her husband started to beat her and friends had to intervene to save her life. He fled to Tanzania and she and her children became homeless. She found a job and managed to buy land and build her own house. A gleam of hope started to shine for Mary and her children.

When the husband realised the progress she had made, he returned. He went to the family to seek reconciliation and even asked the Church to support him in his new life. Other Christians rejoiced, like the story of the prodigal son's return. The couple was mentored by the pastors and fellow Christians, especially members of the Mothers' Union. They had a third child.

But just after the birth, he forced her to name him as the land owner and again beat her seriously. When she would not leave, he burnt the house and everything inside and fled. Fellow Christians are again helping her to build a house. They are doing what they can to support her spiritually and materially. The case has been reported to the police and her family is now protected. When I met her she told me "Without the support of my pastor and fellow Christians, I would be dead with all my children. But now, their love and care give us hope to live and we see that God loves us."

Mary is just one case among so many we are meeting in our work to address gender-based violence. We encounter challenges like lack of material support but we also see blessings in the way Christians support their sisters in need, and give hope for a better future. We need your prayers to extend this work to the many who suffer.

**Contact: Claudette Kigemi, MU Coordinator, Anglican Church of Burundi, BP 2098, Bujumbura, BURUNDI**

### TERRI AND NICK (Names changed)

Something snapped inside Terri that afternoon – the cutting taunts; the forbidden personal toiletries – no loo paper today. What if Nick began to deny nappies for the baby? Warily she went to a friend and called the police. Just after they arrived, Nick appeared, all contrite: "Sorry, under a lot of work pressure... do love you. Come back." The police saw a domestic upset, not worth action.

Weakly, Terri returned home: intimidation continued – undermining her little self-confidence. More and more, she felt isolated, almost imprisoned and regretted returning. Three weeks later, the baby wouldn't stop crying. Nick grew angrier, blaming her. Terri shouted back at him, then saw the gun. She turned, shielding the baby. Moments later, she fell, dead. Nick said he hadn't meant to kill her – the four bullets were 'accidental'. The trial judge agreed that Nick had none nothing illegal until that night.

This story was told in a lecture by Dr Evan Stark which I attended to learn more about the extent and implications of domestic abuse. I am one of the Scottish Episcopal Church's representatives on a sister network of IAFN, the Women's Network. Dr Stark argues that viewing abuse, as here, just through the violent incidents, big enough to be criminal, trivialises domestic violence (for his book see Resources p12). If there is no injury, there is deemed to be no crime. He challenges us to re-define partner abuse as the 'mismanagement of everyday life'. It aims to intimidate, exploit and control by depriving basic rights and resources, with frequent low-level assaults becoming routine.

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## EDITORIAL

I have heard people say, "I accept Genesis 1:27 fully: God made man and woman in his own image. But it's our culture to discipline wives, so that's how it is."

Researching how Christian communities across the world consider spousal violence in their teaching, preaching, pastoral care, I am struck by two things, which recur in the personal accounts and discussions in this newsletter. Firstly, colluding silence is the most usual response of churches of whatever brand, and secondly, relating such offences to theology, let alone Jesus' practice, is a novel idea.

On paper, Church rules for Anglicans in England, Pentecostals in South India and Roman Catholics in Zimbabwe *might* forbid such behaviour in leaders, but sanctions are inconsistently or ineffectively applied. Seminaries *might* discuss spousal violence in terms of victim support, though with less concern than for child

protection, as failure in this leaves the Church open to being sued. Women who go to their leader for help – and the wise carefully avoid those known to be harsh, banal or themselves abusive – may hear only the mantras of prayer, patience and perseverance and worse, which confirm the subordinate status of wives, an abused husband never being told to suffer as Christ did. Church rules or practice which exclude a woman from Communion because she leaves a dangerous marriage are sinful; doubly so if the abuser is not excluded.

Silence over spousal abuse represents the theological failure to challenge deeply embedded cultural assumptions in much of the world, starting from EuroAmerica. Galatians 3:37's 'all one under God' has a hollow ring for the abused woman.

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## PROVINCIAL AND DIOCESAN PROGRAMMES

### EQUAL AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS – AUSTRALIA

Internationally, there is growing awareness that faith communities are well placed for reducing the likelihood of violence against women. Their focus on spiritual well-being and pastoral care creates a natural link to the goals of health promotion and primary prevention. But faith communities are also recognised as one of the many places where the move toward gender equity has been slow.

In Australia, one in three women will be the subject of violence in her lifetime. Those at greatest risk are women aged 15 to 44; in fact, they are more at risk from domestic violence than they are from smoking and obesity. Violence against women happens across lines of income, class and culture and, so long as it continues, we cannot say we are making real progress toward lasting peace.

### **Promoting equal and respectful attitudes are key strategies to prevent violence against women.**

Until recently, the faith response in Australia to the epidemic of violence against women has been learning how to respond to what is already happening, or how to work with men or women who know their circumstances and behaviours need to change. Such responses continue to play a crucial role in societies' overall response to violence but they do not tackle the deeper reasons why this violence occurs.

40 years of scholarship and practice have generated important insights regarding the root causes of violence towards women. These have been identified as unequal power relations between men and women, rigid gender stereotypes and the tolerance of violence in popular culture. Promoting equal and respectful attitudes are key strategies to prevent violence against women.

In October 2011, the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, Australia, endorsed its strategic policy to prevent violence against women. The Archbishop of Melbourne said, "The statistics regarding violence against women are staggering. This is in a real sense a symptom of a social, moral and spiritual

failure and we have an obligation to respond. Silence and indifference are not options in the midst of such pain and suffering. In the task to end violence against women and their children, Christian teaching has a lot to contribute...Violence against women is not in the DNA of men but learned behaviour. The real work of our faith is in demonstrating love and respect within our families, neighbourhoods and communities. Young people look to the adults around them for guidance and role modelling. If an adult treats a young person with consideration, they will learn from this positive experience and will be able to build respectful relationships in the future."

In 2012, Dr Ree Boddé was appointed as Programme Director for the Diocese of Melbourne's violence-prevention programme. The training of clergy and laity now includes awareness of the impact of violence against women, social norms or attitudes that condone or excuse such violence, skills-building in challenging attitudes supportive of violence and implementing violence-prevention activities at a local level.



Poster used in the Diocese of Melbourne's Violence-Prevention Programme.

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[www.melbourneanglican.org.au/ServingCommunity/  
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**Claim back the night:** Anti-violence campaign for International Women's Day in Zambia.

## NEW PROGRAMME IN ZAMBIA

Gender-based violence is widespread in Zambia. The media is awash with reports of such violence in its many forms: spousal battery; domestic abuse; sexual violence against women and children; property grabbing, especially in the event of one spouse dying; harmful traditional practices like sexual cleansing and early marriages.

The USAID/Zambia Gender-Based Violence Programming Evaluation report of 2010 quoted the Zambia Demographic and Health Survey of 2007, which indicated that 47% of all Zambian women have experienced physical violence since age 15 (77% by their current/former husband/partner; 7% by a brother or sister; and 6% by their father/step father); and one in five have experienced sexual violence in their life time (64% of which is perpetrated by a current/former husband/partner or boyfriend). Among girls younger than 15, 19% of the sexual violence/abuse was inflicted by a relative. Almost half of them did not seek help, with 6% never telling anyone about it.

These are frightening statistics and show how prevalent domestic abuse is in our communities. The Church exists within these communities and is highly affected.

The programme set up by the Zambia Anglican Council in partnership with the mission agency Us (formerly USPG) and launched this year, has set itself the goal of a society free of gender-based violence. Achievements to date include:

- Training 33 church and community leaders across the country in gender-based violence and in supporting community action against violence. As an example of its success, two girls in Zambia were rescued from forced early marriages and re-admitted to school. Both were helped by their village headmen, who had received this training.
- Setting up 10 victim support centres and 10 community action groups, as well as training 10 counsellors specialising in gender-based violence.
- Holding a successful radio and TV awareness campaign thought to have reached thousands, not only in Zambia, but also in DR Congo, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.
- Introducing Night Prayer Vigils to raise awareness and in honour of victims of domestic abuse. This is done on the eve of International Women's Day in all the dioceses and in collaboration with other churches. The Government has recognised this Church initiative and a government minister is often present as guest of honour.

## Church teaching on Marriage

Rt Rev William Mchombo, Bishop of Eastern Zambia and Acting Provincial Secretary writes: "Last year, during my annual baptism and confirmation tours I was confronted with a very sad situation. Ninety-nine per cent of candidates presented for baptism and confirmation were girls and most of them were probably not more than 18 years old. I met them at the end of the service and discovered to my surprise that they were all mothers.

My immediate response was to engage the Mothers' Union (MU) leadership so that they could dissuade their members from encouraging early marriages. All the parish MU leaders underwent a Tamar Campaign training (See **Resources** p12). The Tamar story (2 Samuel 13:1-22) resonates well with the issues of secrecy and deceit in domestic abuse.

So, the Church's response to domestic abuse should be grounded in Scripture. I am alive to the fact that scripture has been (ab)used to subordinate women, yet with objective engagement of scripture at personal, family and community levels, our people will realise that while 'The Church is our Absalom, because they tell us to keep quiet right in our houses' there are Tamars who stand up for their rights and refuse to be complicit to the culture of silence.

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The most affected in domestic abuse are the women and children. The relationship and partnership of the two genders is not a matter of accident. From the beginning God desired that the two should live as partners in a harmonious relationship: "so God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27 NRSV); even Genesis 2 which is used to justify the abuse of women as a helper further on talks about a partner (2:20 NRSV).

As the most abused are women and children and it mostly happens in marriages, the Church should urge the men to take Jesus as their model in the way they treat women and children (Ephesians 5:25, 6:4 and Mark 10:16). The men should get involved in advocating for loving and caring families that will produce loving and caring members of society. Marriage is not a *shipikisha* (endurance) club; it is a sacred institution which should be full of joy, love and mutual respect. The Church should further dispel the myth that spouse-battering is a sign of love. Through various church youth groups, boys should be educated that they are in no way superior to women, and young girls taught that they are not inferior to males. For both genders, the beauty and dignity of the complete creation of human beings in a complementary way and not subordination should be stressed. While the Church teaches forgiveness, perpetrators of domestic abuse should be shown love by making them realise their actions are wrong and they have to suffer the consequences by facing the appropriate laws of the land.

Let us all stand up and speak out against domestic abuse."

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**Us (formerly USPG) is working alongside the Anglican Church in Zambia to combat domestic violence, see also [www.weareUs.org.uk/worldwide/zambia](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/worldwide/zambia)**



Federal Senate (Human Rights Commission), Christian Aid and Anglican Alliance, members of the National Commission of Truth and Reconciliation, and the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil. The Provincial Secretary said "This SADD publication will contribute to future activities in our parishes, in the ecumenical arena and in other areas of society... It is extremely important for the Church to appeal to its key symbols and especially to the Word of God as theological/ pastoral elements to help us in the fight against domestic violence."

Violence against women is a fact in all states of Brazil and we believe that the work of the resource book will open the eyes of our communities scattered throughout the

country to the need for women's rights and a safe place for them to break with all forms of aggression and be free to celebrate life. Now is the time for the Church to be engaged in this.

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As community members become aware of the violence suffered by women, they will no longer accept and conceal it and we expect a commitment from the Church to denounce the perpetrators of that violence. If we manage to stop the silence and women's voices begin to be heard, then we will be victorious in overcoming the evil of violence against women.

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**ANGLICAN RESOURCE BOOK – BRAZIL**

For a few years now, the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil – through the Anglican Diakonia and Development Service (SADD) – has been encouraging people to become aware of their rights and transform their social condition. Given the high rates of violence against women in Brazil, it was understood that it would be important to present a tool for the empowerment of people interested in working on this issue in the Church as well as in society.

Brazil has one of the highest murder rates of women. In three decades, at least 92,000 women were killed inside their homes. Statistics show that every 15 seconds a woman is assaulted in Brazil; every two hours a woman (the majority between 20 and 39 years old) is murdered; 65% of assaults on women are committed by their partners; 69% of assaults against women occur inside the house.

***The Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil wants to take its full part in this call for justice.***

All this data should be widely published so that we can do something about this terrible abuse. We believe that it is the responsibility of each Brazilian citizen to help prevent violence against women. In 2006, the *Maria da Penha* Law was created – an extraordinary advance. This law punishes more severely men who attack their partners and/or ex-partners, and has forced the Government to set up a network of protection for women victims of domestic violence – police stations, public defenders, prosecutors and courts. It also establishes as crimes sexual assault, attack on property, psychological and moral attacks – usually the initial stages before beatings and murder.

The Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil wants to take its full part in this call for justice and launched the resource book *Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence against Women* on 16 August in the Parish Hall of the Cathedral of the Resurrection. This brought together clergy and lay leaders of the diocese, who had also been taking part in a training session for the use of the resource book. Also present, were representatives of the





Co-ordinator giving talk on domestic violence to women of Laura Flores.

Photo: Jill Ball.

## BREAKING THE SILENCE – ECUADOR

According to a research study published in 1991, 68% of Ecuadorian women have experienced domestic violence.

In *Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas*, Ecuador, the charity *Vida en Abundancia*, in partnership with The Church Mission Society (CMS), works with *La Primera Iglesia Bautista* to relieve the suffering caused by this violence. The Pastor alerted the congregation to the topic, which is not normally spoken of within the Church. Some church members have suffered abuse for years. The message is “Say No” and we sense a sea-change in attitudes.

The charity was able to employ and train a women’s co-ordinator. She started working in *Laura Flores*, a community built on a disused municipal rubbish dump. During the first talk, tears came to women’s eyes as she defined abuse. In this macho culture there is a saying, “If he hits me or if he kills me, he is still my husband”. We are teaching the total unacceptability of this and about the short and long-term impact of domestic violence on children. We encourage women to find the strength to break free of a life of fear and servitude.

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The charity offers support in accompanying women to the relevant government bodies. The wives often draw back from denouncing their husband, through fear of what he will do, but also through fear of destitution. In Ecuador, only about a third of women are in paid employment. New laws are supposed to ensure women receive money from estranged husbands, but these are difficult to enforce. There is often a relationship of co-dependency so even if a woman does decide to leave the home,

the likelihood is that she will return rather than face life alone. We have learnt that a woman may have to experience a domestic crisis many times before she will make the definite decision to leave.

### **What, then, can we do?**

We have been working in the area of building women’s self-esteem through teaching them who they are in Christ. We combine this with teaching practical skills: ornamental crafts, chocolate making – whatever can be made on a small outlay and turned to a profit.

Another key strategy is education. Wherever possible, we encourage and support their attendance in

weekend schools. We give adult literacy classes; we invite outside speakers to talk about health and hygiene, nutrition, and family planning.

### ***Another way of breaking the cycles of abuse over many generations is through working with the children.***

Another way of breaking the cycles of abuse over many generations is through working with the children. We set up an after-school homework club and the Baptist Church in *Laura Flores* has a busy Sunday school. The children receive unconditional love and acceptance, while learning good values and seeing godliness modelled.

None of this is enough. We are only touching the tip of the iceberg. *Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas* has a population of nearly half a million, and we are working with at best dozens of women. So early this year we set up a working party to devise a Five-Year Plan to develop the scope and effect of our work. We organised a conference for local pastors to learn about domestic violence in Ecuador, and how they can be a part of positively bringing about change. The vision is for churches throughout the town to be strategic places of help for abused women. We have planned a series of talks to different groups. A tele-amigo service is being set up, where distressed women can call and obtain immediate counsel.

In Luke 4:16 Jesus announced that he had come to set the captives free, and this ministry is a small manifestation of that.

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## RANGE OF PROGRAMMES – ANGLICAN CHURCH OF MELANESIA

The **Christian Care Centre** at Tenaru, which opened in 2005, is the only shelter/safe home for abused women and children in the Solomon Islands and is run by the four religious Orders of Church: Sisters of the Church, The Melanesian Sisters, the Society of St Francis and the Melanesian Brotherhood. The Centre works at community level, running awareness workshops in towns and villages while also providing a safe home, pastoral care, trauma counselling and healing for women and children survivors of domestic and sexual abuse. It is currently accommodating up to 70 women and children.

Another exciting and challenging ministry is the programme *Men wea waka for men for stopem Violence*. The **Male Advocacy** team specifically deals with the perpetrators, who are mostly males. Volunteer members are from the four religious orders, parish laity, and officers from the local police force. The creation of this male group to advocate against domestic violence has enabled men to speak to and train other men on non-violent management of family affairs and throughout the Province has opened up great opportunities for teaching, awareness, counselling and healing.

The Christian Care Centre is active in bringing the perpetrators of violence to justice. It does this by signing up to a **'SAFENET' Network**. This includes the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare Office, Public Solicitors Office and the police. These institutions actively collaborate in mutual support and also make referrals to the Christian Centre for those survivors who would be at risk if they returned to their homes.

The **Alcohol-Awareness Family Recovery Programme** is committed to providing continuous support for men, woman and their families who face hardships from alcohol abuse so that they may recover and be better equipped to live a life in peace and prosperity. The Church believes 60% of all domestic abuse in the Solomon Islands is alcohol-related. The programme is being piloted within the diocese of Central Melanesia and positive results have been achieved.

To have a strong community and church, first you need a strong family and the **Positive-Parenting Programme** is growing from strength to strength, now reaching five dioceses. This programme is important because it targets the centre and nurturing part of family life and by doing so parents and children will grow in a safer environment.

We believe that violence against women and girls is a consequence of gender inequality and injustice, compounded by numerous forms of discrimination. The Church believes that

with these programmes actively going on in the communities, we can effectively recognise and address domestic violence against women and children in a more proactive manner.

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### Survey in progress – Vanuatu

At its General Synod of 2011, the Anglican Church of Melanesia declared that "Violence is Sin". A Child Protection Policy was adopted and the Church in Vanuatu, through its Mission Department, is currently raising awareness of the policy throughout its two dioceses. The Women's Desk and Youth Officers are also surveying and assessing the needs of women and youth, covering three main areas: spiritual, social, and livelihood and finance. The Mission Department Vanuatu is compiling a report of findings from the survey which will then be distributed widely for possible collaborative efforts with other partners, including the Government, through community action plans. Consultations, starting in October, will be held in each region. The social part in the survey questionnaire has direct questions concerning family and violence, including domestic violence.



Children sitting at the front row of the Church in Divers Bay, Urepapara, Banks listening to an awareness programme on the Child Protection Policy.

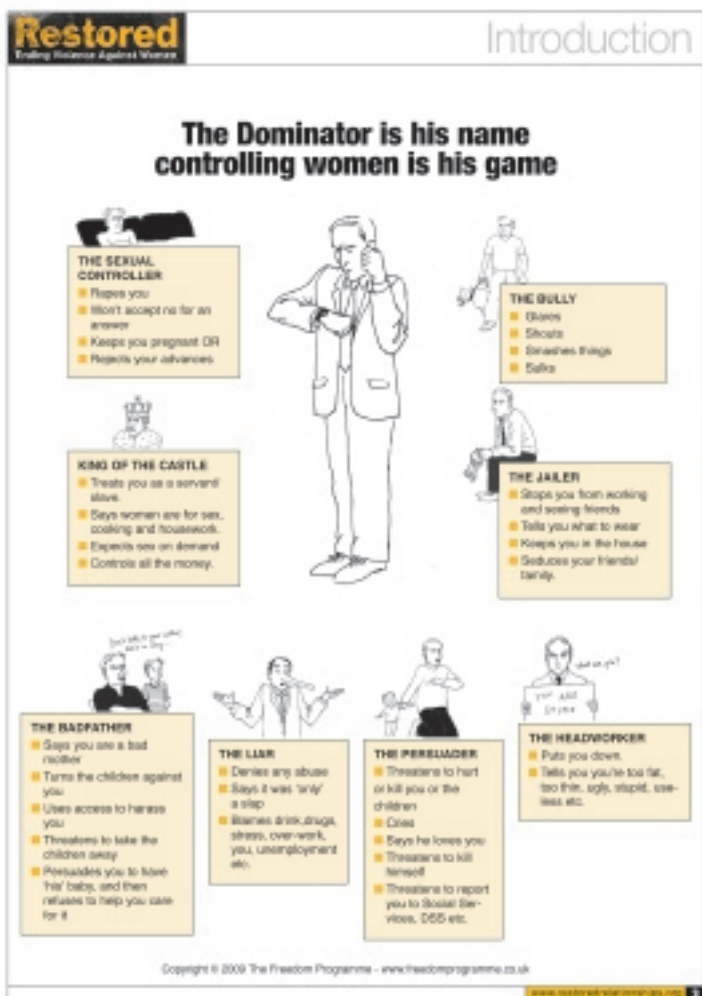
Photo: E. George.

The survey showed that a lot of awareness-raising was being done by NGOs in our communities but not everybody is getting the message. The Church is working to identify means and ways as to how we can help address the identified social needs.

As Women's Desk Officer, I am travelling to Honiara, Solomon Islands, to talk with the Board of Mission staff to follow up on the policy, find out more on the Male Advocacy Programme, visit the Christian Care Centre and follow up with the Mothers' Union on the Positive Parenting Programme. This tour is vital, as findings will greatly enhance the Vanuatu Mission Department in its short and long-term planning.

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# SURELY NOT IN OUR CHURCH? – RESTORED CAMPAIGN



'Surely not in our church?' came the response from a marriage course facilitator at a well-known Anglican church in London. Restored, an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against women, was conducting a brief overview of the issues of domestic abuse and the key signs to look out for when conducting the marriage course. It's a familiar response. We often think that domestic abuse cannot happen here – in our congregation – maybe that church in the other part of our town or country, but not here.

***We often think that domestic abuse cannot happen here – in our congregation – maybe that church in the other part of town or country, but not here.***

Sadly, the reality is that it is in our churches and it is here. With one in three women globally suffering violence in her lifetime, it is a global epidemic that is often not talked about. In the UK, one in four women will suffer abuse, which counters the myth that violence only happens to poor women. In reality, any woman can suffer violence regardless of age, ethnicity, location, education.

Domestic abuse affects children too. In the UK, 750,000 children grow up in homes where domestic abuse takes place.

Children know, see and hear the abuse which affects their own development as well as their own view of relationships. The National Centre for Domestic Abuse estimates that almost 80% of domestic abuse is witnessed by children. A UNICEF report in 2006, looking at the impact of domestic violence on children, stated that 275 million children worldwide are exposed to violence in the home and that millions more children may be affected.

Silence, shame and stigma surround victims and survivors of violence and prevent them speaking out. A survivor has to overcome many barriers to speak and it is essential that when they do, we listen and believe what is being said. This has to be done in a safe place. Is your church a safe space for women to speak out?

At Restored, we believe the Church can be central in the response to preventing and ending violence against women – given its unique role in both ethical teaching and pastoral counselling. Often, however, the Church has chosen instead to emphasise male leadership and authority in a way that has excluded women and condoned abuse. In many countries, this is changing. In Latin America, *Peace and Hope*, a Christian organisation is conducting a baseline survey of domestic violence in the Church and planning to mount an extended campaign to challenge machismo culture and to train churches

***In reality, any woman can suffer violence regardless of age, ethnicity, location, education.***

to respond effectively to domestic abuse. Restored has produced a church pack to help churches to respond, and is rolling out a package of church training in the UK. The potential for churches to challenge violence and support local services such as women's refuges is immense.

The Church cannot ignore the issue of violence within its own congregations. The aim of our new campaign is to raise awareness about domestic abuse and that it happens *in churches too*. It dispels some of the myths surrounding abuse and explores how we can take positive action to bring it to an end.

Domestic abuse goes to the heart of relationships, distorting all that is good. It is vital that women and men in the Church stand up together to address this issue. The heart of the gospel is about love and the laying down of power. As we model what this looks like, and take this issue seriously, then the Church can offer hope, both to its own members and to the wider community.

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# HELP FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN



Parenting Programme - Group work and discussion.

## MOTHERS' UNION PARENTING PROGRAMME – GUYANA

For decades, the Mothers' Union (MU) in the Diocese of Guyana has partnered with other organisations in the quest to eliminate all forms of violence against women and children in the communities.

Since 2009, the United Nations designated day for the *Elimination of Violence against Women* has been included on the MU Diocesan Calendar. As a result, a number of events – spearheaded by MU branches in the hinterland and coastland communities – unfolded, with the aim of increasing awareness of violence in its many forms and its effect on families and society as a whole. Events include church services with a focus on prayer, ministering to the individuals and families affected by domestic violence, candlelight vigils, posters, panel discussions, and workshops, led by specialist leaders for the youth, men and women.



MU members pinning prayers onto the Tree of Life for persons who suffered domestic violence.

Photo: MU Guyana.

***It is through these informal parenting groups in safe and secure environments that many share the sensitive issues affecting their families.***

The MU Parenting Programme has an extensive network throughout the Diocese and works with people of all faiths and those of none. It is through these informal parenting groups in safe and secure environments that many share the sensitive issues affecting their families. Then we are able to network with experts in the community and give them the help they need. Although this MU work is being done in a quiet way, for obvious reasons, the Church is able to help victims and survivors not only in the Church but also in the wider community.

Through this intervention, the impact in the communities has been tremendous, with amazing success stories.

We are very proud of a hinterland community where the MU Officer was grieved by the high incidence of violence affecting the lives of young children there. She gathered the community together in her church, spoke of her concern for families being affected by violence, and within a year was presented by a piece of land donated by the village council. There she and the other parenting group members started a *Kiddies' Recreation Park* where schoolchildren could receive supervised attention and light refreshments after school, play in a safe environment, and are helped with their homework. In the same community, a priest reported that one man physically abused his wife and children regularly after a bout of drinking. His wife

struggled to provide for the family. But, before completing a parenting course, he told the members that he was sorry for what he had done, wanted help to change and invited his wife to attend the parenting group with him. He is a changed man today. *To God be the Glory, great things He has done!*

Photo: MU Guyana.

The local parish priest has been using the MU Parenting Manual to supplement his sermons on family life and continues to encourage the parenting groups to reach out to all families in the community in an effort to reduce the many incidences of violence. Recently, the Government Child Care and Protection Agency released much-needed funds to assist the parenting groups sustain this work.

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## EFFECTS ON CHILDREN – SALISBURY WOMEN'S REFUGE – UK

In households where there is domestic violence, children can suffer serious long-term emotional effects, even if they are not physically harmed.

Children can witness domestic violence in a variety of ways. They may be in the same room and get caught in the middle of an incident, risking getting hurt, perhaps in an effort to make the violence stop. Children may be in another room but hear the abuse or see physical injuries following violence. Or they may be forced to take part in verbally abusing the victim.

Children will react differently to being brought up in a home where there is violence. They may think they are to blame, feel angry, frightened, or confused. They may have ambivalent feelings, both towards the abuser, and towards the non-abusing parent. They may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches. Short-term psychological problems can include fear, denial, distrust of others and withdrawal. Children will be affected in some way by tension or what they witness – even if they do not always show this.

Violence can interfere with children's lives in other ways. They may feel unable to invite friends round and become isolated. Some children will stay home, missing school, in an attempt to protect their parent. Worry, disturbed sleep and lack of concentration can all affect schoolwork.

There is a strong likelihood that this will become a continuing cycle of violence for the next generation. The single best predictor of children becoming either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence later in life is whether or not they grow up in a home where there is domestic violence.

### Help from the Church

Support workers at the Salisbury Refuge have many ways to help new residents work through the upheaval and distress that domestic abuse causes and – after a while – to start to look forward to an independent and violence-free life. The road is often quite long, but professional support and counselling, which includes the children, can be found for each stage. The Head Teacher and staff at the local Primary School are extremely

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***The single best predictor of children becoming either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence later in life is whether or not they grow up in a home where there is domestic violence.***

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supportive and absorb the children who arrive on the Refuge doorstep. They try to normalise their lives and encourage routines and regular education. The local community, too, gives generously to the Refuge by running a Homework Club. The local church Youth Group comes in regularly to have fun with the children.

Mothers' Union contribute in several ways: by giving cash, clothes, toiletries and household necessities; by providing gifts for those who find themselves in the Refuge at Christmas; a local MU Branch comes in to have cookery and domestic skills sessions with the women; they provide holidays by the seaside; and, most of all, they hold the Refuge constantly in their prayers.



Archbishop of Wales washes young feet.

Photo: Anna Morrell.

## CAMPAIGN AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

Corporal punishment of children is the most common form of violence in the family but it is rarely included in the global challenge to domestic violence. This is surprising, not only because it is closely linked to domestic violence against women but because of its negative effects on children, the most vulnerable members of society. Research shows that tolerance of corporal punishment of children increases acceptance of other kinds of violence within the family. Prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment is fundamental in preventing violence against women and as part of a broader strategy for eliminating other forms of violence.

Human rights law is clear that children have a right to legal protection from all corporal punishment, including in the home. Research on the effects of corporal punishment shows it carries multiple risk of harm and has no benefits. It can have short and long-term effects on development and health which not only impact on the child and family but ultimately on society as a whole.

Growing numbers of religious leaders worldwide acknowledge that corporal punishment is incompatible with core religious values of compassion, justice, equality and non-violence and are taking action to end it. Three Anglican bishops are members of the advisory group of the newly formed Caribbean Coalition for the Abolition of Corporal Punishment of Children. This aims to build a strong movement for prohibition and elimination which will increase visibility of the issue and lobby state and civic authorities. On Universal Children's Day 2012, the Archbishop of Wales signed a joint statement with other Christian leaders supporting law reform to end physical punishment of children. He led a vigil at St David's Church, Cardiff dedicated to the issue. During the service, speaking of Jesus' emphasis on the infinite value of the child, he washed children's feet as a mark of respect for all children.

**Contact: Chris Dodd, Churches, Network for Non-Violence, Enderley, North Road, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 5LE, ENGLAND**  
see also [www.churchesfornon-violence.org](http://www.churchesfornon-violence.org)

**Contacts: Diane Stage, Refuge Manager and Madeleine Tarrant, MU rep on Refuge Board, C/o IAFN office**

## PROGRAMMES FOR MEN



Photo: Diocese of Melbourne Violence-Prevention Programme.

**Central to ending violence against women is the role of men. For too long this has been seen as a women's issue, when it is primarily the attitudes and actions of men that need to change. Mandy Marshall, Restored First Man Standing campaign [www.restoredrelationships.org/firstmanstanding/](http://www.restoredrelationships.org/firstmanstanding/)**

### WORK WITH YOUNG MEN – GUYANA

In 2011, the Church in the Province of the West Indies celebrated the year of the Family under the theme *Building Strong Christian Families*. The Diocese of Guyana took a critical look at family life and the role the Church was playing. Violence in schools and among the youth, teenage pregnancies, domestic violence and abuse of seniors by members of their families and the community were among the critical areas for action.

**Over the last three decades, while state and civil society programmes seek to empower women to become more involved in the social and economic life of their families, programmes for men's development have been overlooked.**

Domestic violence and teenage pregnancies were given special attention by the Family Life Commission since these are important national issues. Over the last three decades, while state and civil society programmes seek to empower women to become more involved in the social and economic life of their families, programmes for men's development have been

overlooked. Men are unprepared for the changing roles of the women in their lives! The Family Life Commission was challenged to develop a programme to reach men and boys.

In a bold step, the Commission successfully organised funding from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). With an initial sensitisation programme for the Lord Bishop, Archdeacons, senior members of the clergy, and leaders of the main diocesan organisations, a partnership was established with UNFPA for two initiatives. These focused on the critical issues of sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence for adolescents/youth, men and boys.

The members of the main men's organisation in the Diocese, the Brotherhood of St Andrew, were trained by UNFPA to facilitate men's programmes. These workshops focused on implementing work with men and boys on conflicting family issues which can develop into violence against family members – especially women and girls – and identifying coping strategies.

***This (Manup Programme) provides young men with information to help them move smoothly into manhood, with greater understanding of their positive roles and responsibilities as members of the family.***

The Brotherhood seeks to reach out to men in the Church community and from other organisations. A special programme for boys was recently launched entitled *Manup*. This provides young men with information to help them to move smoothly into manhood, with greater understanding of their positive roles and responsibilities as members of the family.

The Youth Friendly Space (YFS) Programme, which had commenced at one parish prior to our discussions with UNFPA, was expanded to include two other parishes in different archdeaconries. Through this, the parish provides a room/space where youths can meet for a variety of activities which incorporate the UNFPA's mandate of sexual and reproductive health and adolescent development. With equipment provided by UNFPA, and under the direction of a Youth Coordinator who works with special facilitators, the youth are encouraged to do their own research and lead discussions, and there is a wide range of programmes. Activities also include sports and life-skills training, craft and technology, parenting education and discussions on community issues. YFS is attracting the interest of other parishes who are seeking their own funding to promote a space for their young people.

The Diocesan Family Life Commission, with the support of the Lord Bishop and Diocesan Council, is therefore working not only to develop an awareness of the scourge of domestic violence, but is seeking also to assist parishioners of all ages and gender to be more involved in promoting a violence-free society, with strong moral values and ethics that will take not only our Church and its community forward, but the nation as a whole.

**Contact: Sandra Hooper, Diocesan Family Life Commission Coordinator, The Diocesan Office, Barrack Street, Kingston, Georgetown, GUYANA**



### MY SOLEMN VOW – WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

In my lifetime, I have made a number of solemn vows – in marriage, in ordination and in installation to various offices in the Church. Some months ago, I was invited to make another one. It reads like this: “I will never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women.” It’s the vow associated with the White Ribbon Campaign initiated by a number of men in the aftermath of the massacre of 14 women in Montreal in 1989. The campaign is now an annual event in 55 countries

**Statistics provided by the United Nations make it clear that no country, rich or poor, dictatorship or democracy, has come close to eliminating violence against women.**

around the world. As I made my vow in the presence of the Rev. Canon Alice Medcof, who has been a longtime member of the International Anglican Women’s Network (IAWN), my mind went back to the earlier Primates’ Meeting. A major

presentation on gender-based violence portrayed the issue as a global phenomenon, ranging from domestic abuse to human trafficking to female genital mutilation to the systematic killing of women. Statistics provided by the United Nations make it clear that no country, rich or poor, dictatorship or democracy, has come close to eliminating violence against women. In the spirit of our baptismal promise “to respect the dignity of every human being”. I hope we will all embrace this solemn vow with genuine passion and integrity. For deep within it lies the sanctity of human life, beauty before God and mutual respect, one for another.

Let’s wear our ribbon and make good our vow.  
**Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of Canada**

### MEN LEARNING WITH WOMEN – ZAMBIA

Perhaps not surprisingly, the initiatives taken in the new programme in Zambia to combat gender violence have met with a lot of resistance from men who are unwilling to question traditional gender roles. The Church has responded with

***What better way for women and men to come to a new understanding of gender than by working and learning together?***

awareness-raising in the villages to try and address people’s concerns. Thankfully, there are signs attitudes are starting to change. Often, when the Church sets up a women’s group, the men see the women learning new things and having fun, and want to join in. This is ideal. What better way for women and men to come to a new understanding of gender than by working and learning together?

**Contact: Grace Mazala, Zambian Anglican Council,  
 PO Box 320100, Kabulonga, ZAMBIA  
 see also [www.weareUs.org.uk/worldwide/zambia](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/worldwide/zambia)**

## PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN TEENAGERS

### DAY PROGRAMME – UK

“*Soul Survivor* was really good, the worship was amazing, but the boys were really disgusting. They kept making comments about girls.” Brianna was talking to me about the Christian summer camp that her church youth group had recently attended, alongside 20,000 other young people from across the UK. When I asked whether she had spoken to her leaders about the boys’ behaviour, or whether the leaders had challenged the boys, she answered “no”. The only message the young people had been given was to stay out of each other’s tents. In a society where young people’s lives are saturated with sexually-explicit songs and films, this seemed woefully inadequate and out of touch with the lives of young people.

Over three years ago, I wrote *The DAY Programme*, a domestic abuse education programme for young people. I have trained over 100 professionals to run *DAY* in schools, youth groups and youth-offending projects and for young people leaving care and in supported housing schemes.

As a Christian, I felt it was important to develop a version of *DAY* that would address the issues that Christian teenagers are facing. So I began to develop *DAY Plus Christian Version*. I didn’t remove content from the original; Christian young people are not living in a bubble, they are part of the wider world. So this version adds theological context for young Christians.

I was 25 when I wrote *DAY*, and some of the content was based on my own story of experiencing abuse from the age of 17 until I was 21. I was pregnant at 17, married at 18 and endured sexual, emotional, psychological and physical abuse for four years. I managed to escape when my second child was born premature. Often, we can imagine abuse is something that happens to people outside the Church. However, I was raised in a Christian home and attended church every week, I was part of a really good youth group and loved God deeply. Although it was God who enabled me to move beyond the pain of abuse, to a place of freedom and safety with a wonderful new husband, the Church’s teaching on relationships disabled me from making good choices as a teenager. Some of the things I learned on my journey to wholeness, and have subsequently made part of *DAY Plus Christian Version* include:

- **What does Jesus’ model of power look like?**

Domestic abuse is primarily about power and control, rooted in beliefs of owning a partner and being entitled to behave in abusive ways. To address domestic abuse from a Christian perspective, we need to recognise that Jesus’ teaching states: “The rulers of this world dominate, it shall not be like that among you.”

- **Forgiveness and repentance**

Teaching about forgiveness often promotes forgiving and



## Domestic abuse and exploitation: bringing young people out of the dark and into the light of DAY

forgetting. However, forgiveness is a revolutionary act which makes the person forgiving stronger not weaker, and is not the same as saying the consequences of a person's actions do not matter.

### ■ Headship and submission

We must be clear that headship and submission are two sides of the same coin; they are both about choosing to serve one's spouse sacrificially and are not excuses to perpetuate abuse.

### ■ Women's equality with men

The Bible states that "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female" for we are all one in Christ Jesus. If we are to see young people equipped to form healthy relationships, we must make clear to them that women and men are equally valued and deserving of respect.

### ■ Addressing unhealthy teaching on abstinence

Often young people are taught "sex is like a chocolate cake, leave it in the fridge and stay out of the kitchen". Sex is everywhere, in songs, films, adverts and across the internet. This teaching doesn't equip young people to know the difference between sexual abuse and sex before marriage. We need to give young people practical advice and achievable goals in forming healthy relationships that are about more than just not having sex.

So far it has been a challenge to convince Christians to attend the training for *DAY plus Christian version*. There are limited resources and time, and a lot of misconceptions and fears that UK churches need to overcome before they invest in this type of resource. However across the UK, 25% of girls will be physically assaulted by a boyfriend by the age of 16; 32% will be sexually assaulted and 72% will be emotionally abused. Churches need to wake up to this issue.

Perhaps if they do, in years to come when I speak with young people who have attended large Christian summer camps, they will tell me how well their youth leaders addressed unhealthy attitudes, how they felt able to be honest if there were issues and how not only was the worship time good, but the relationships that were built through the camp made them feel good about themselves and good about God.

**Contact: Natalie Collins, DAY Programme, C/o IAFN office**

## PRAYERS

We beg you, Lord, to help and defend us.  
Deliver the oppressed,  
have pity on the abused,  
raise the fallen,  
show yourself to the downtrodden,  
and lift the weak.

Strengthen those who give support  
and inspire those who seek solutions.  
Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,  
Amen.

*An adaptation of a prayer by Clement of Rome c. 100 AD.*

Dear God,

We thank you for the work your Church is doing to tackle domestic abuse. Strengthen, we pray, those who do this work:

Give them courage in tackling institutional abuse  
Give them insight in their work with families  
Give them discernment in identifying and challenging abuse.

We pray that you will continually make us aware of what is around us.

Open our eyes and hearts to those who are suffering from domestic abuse.

Prevent us from becoming complacent and unaware of the pain behind closed doors.

Make us willing to give our time and energy to those in need.

We ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who saw us in our need and gave everything to draw us back to Himself.

Amen

Ian Sparks

## RESOURCES SUMMARY

*Coercive control: how men entrap women in personal life*  
by Dr Evan Stark (ISBN: 9780195384048)

Melbourne Programme

[www.melbourneanglican.org.au/ServingCommunity/src/Pages/Prevention-of-Violence-Against-Women.aspx](http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/ServingCommunity/src/Pages/Prevention-of-Violence-Against-Women.aspx)

Zambia Programme – supported by Us (formerly USPG)

[www.weareUs.org.uk/worldwide/zambia](http://www.weareUs.org.uk/worldwide/zambia)

Tamar Campaign see <http://bit.ly/168nx83>

Brazil resource see <http://bit.ly/19TN7Zo>

Church Mission Society [www.cms-uk.org](http://www.cms-uk.org)

Restored Campaign – [www.restoredrelationships.org/resources/info/51/](http://www.restoredrelationships.org/resources/info/51/)

Churches Network for Non-Violence [www.churchesfornon-violence.org](http://www.churchesfornon-violence.org)

DAY programme [www.dayprogramme.org](http://www.dayprogramme.org)

For more articles see

<http://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/newsletters/index.cfm>

*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](http://www.iafn.net) for further information and how to receive the newsletters electronically or in the printed version.*

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