



# Streams of Grace

World Council of Churches, 2005





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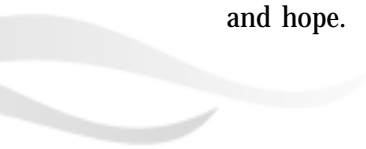
World Council of Churches, 2005



# preface

There is hope when a church in Norway passes a resolution condemning sexual harassment of women. There is hope when a Christian World Communion takes responsibility to challenge its membership to say “No” to violence against women. There is hope when a church in Greece writes for information on how to set up a refuge for women who experience domestic violence. There is hope when a church in the UK develops a policy to condemn pedophilia and to punish offenders within the church. There is hope when a regional council of churches or a national council of churches in Africa, Asia, Middle East or the Pacific produces educational materials on overcoming violence against women for its constituency. There is hope when a church in North America develops a policy on clergy sexual abuse and educational materials for its congregations. There is hope when a network of men in Namibia, Sweden, South Africa or Canada decide to speak out against male violence. There is hope when a group of church women prepare Bible Study materials or theological resources and campaign to end violence against women..... Yes, there is hope!

It is these signs of hope that this dossier attempts to focus on. It lifts up a sampling of examples from all the materials received by the WCC, to tell the world that the churches and communities of Christians and others do care and are acting with determination and conviction to overcome violence against women and children. These ‘good practices’ need to be affirmed as we challenge ourselves to continue in the attempt to make our world a safer place for women and children and our churches into sanctuaries of courage and hope.



We are just half way through the Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010), and therefore the churches still have opportunities to go even further and to call each other to mutual accountability. Some churches which have not yet addressed the issue need to be encouraged to stand in solidarity with victims and survivors of violence. The theological and ethical dimensions of violence and overcoming violence need to be further addressed because it is imperative that the churches do not tolerate or condone any form of violence against women and children – our faith provides us the liberation potential to do this. The next period of work is therefore of critical importance for the churches.

Selecting these samples of good practice and compiling them has not been an easy task. Penny Stuart from Scotland has worked hard on this – going through all the material and preparing this dossier. Our deepest gratitude to her for accomplishing this enormous task so well and so efficiently. In this she has been ably supported and encouraged by Helen Hood and Lesley Orr, who have been WCC's Consultants in this process. They have made a substantial contribution in the past 4 years or so to ensure that overcoming violence against women is an integral part of the Decade to Overcome Violence and stays on the ecumenical agenda - our thanks to all three of them. We hope this dossier will provide inspiration to the churches to continue to be signs of hope in a world so filled with violence.

**Aruna Gnanadason**  
Coordinator, Women's Programme  
World Council of Churches

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# introduction

## Background

This dossier is born out of the World Council of Churches history of engagement with women's issues.<sup>1</sup> This ongoing concern led the WCC to declare the decade 1988-1998, *The Ecumenical Decade - Churches in Solidarity with Women*. As part of this decade, visiting groups, 'Living Letters'<sup>2</sup> were sent to different parts of the world to gauge the true extent of the churches' solidarity with women. These visits revealed that women the world over experience personal and structural violence, both in society and often within the churches themselves. By the end of the decade it had become clear that the churches could not address the issue of gender violence in the societies in which they were based without reviewing their own practices.

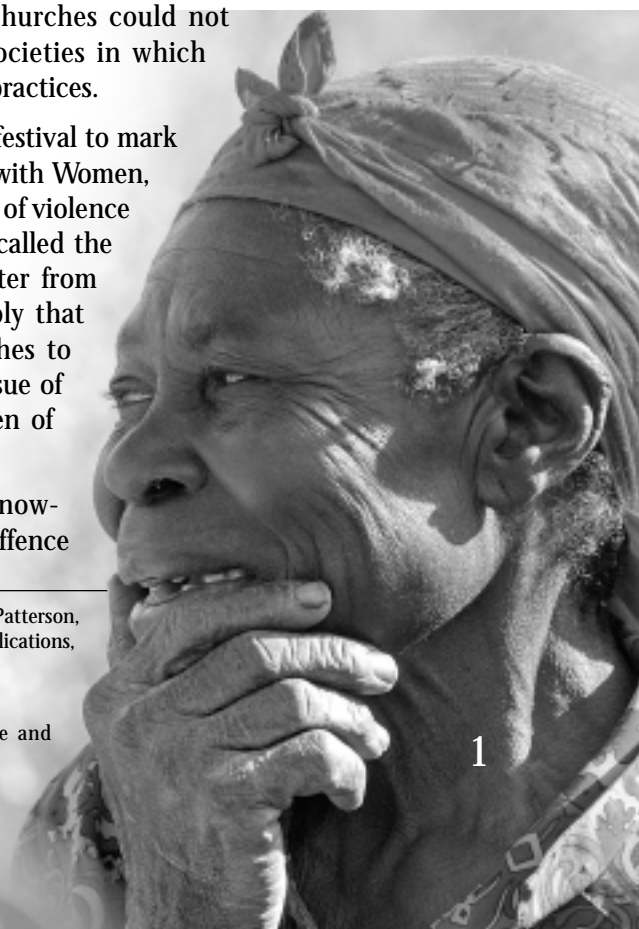
In 1998 in Harare, Zimbabwe, the WCC held a festival to mark the end of the decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, at which women who had suffered different forms of violence within the church spoke out with courage and called the global Christian community to account. A letter from the Festival went to the Eighth WCC Assembly that immediately followed it, calling on the churches to move from solidarity to accountability on the issue of the violence and exclusion which affects women of all ages.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequently the WCC Eighth Assembly acknowledged that violence against women is a sin and offence

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the history of this involvement see Gillian Patterson, *Still Flowing: Women, God and Church*, Risk Book Series, WCC Publications, Geneva. pp 3-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Still Flowing* pp 8-12

<sup>3</sup> "*Your story is my story, your story is our story*" Justice Peace and Creation Team, World Council of Churches. pp 90-98



against God and encouraged churches, networks and movements to engage in constructive efforts to overcome such violence in all its manifestations in both church and society.

### **The Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV)**

The Eighth WCC Assembly in Harare was held at the end of the most violent century in human history. In response to this situation the Assembly called on the churches, ecumenical organisations and all people of goodwill, to work together to overcome violence through peace and justice. The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 2001-2010, was then designated by the WCC as a '***Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace.***'

A message from the Assembly declared "*We are challenged by the vision of a church, the people of God on the way together, confronting all divisions of race, gender, age or culture, striving to realise justice and peace, upholding the integrity of creation.*" Dr Konrad Raiser, the then General Secretary of the WCC, spoke of the need to "*enter into a self-critical assessment of those theological, ecclesiastical or cultural traditions which tend to justify violence in the name of defending order and enforcing obedience.*"

The decade has thus been described as:

- An *opportunity* to affirm the unity of all God's people and commit ourselves to reconciliation.
- A *call* to explore ways to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence.
- A *forum* to work together for a world of peace.
- A *time* to analyse and expose violence and act against it.
- An *idea* that will take shape through the involvement of individuals, groups communities and organizations.

Specifically, with regard to the issue of violence against women, the Decade to Overcome Violence offers an opportunity to rise to Konrad Raiser's challenge to the churches to be self-critical with regard to the impact of their theological, ecclesiastical and cultural traditions on the lives of women. Where this impact has been negative and damaging, the DOV offers a creative framework for co-operation to try to transform the experience of women both within and outside the churches.

### **Dundee Consultation**

As part of the work of DOV, an Overcoming Violence Against Women Project was set up with an office in Edinburgh, Scotland. In August 2001 consultants to the project brought together thirty representatives from the major worldwide church traditions in a pioneering consultation in Dundee, Scotland. A statement from the Dundee consultation acknowledged the fact that violence against women is endemic and increasing, and that it happens everywhere including in churches of all traditions and communions. It also said that in recent years, churches, and denominational and ecumenical bodies, have begun to respond to this issue at different levels, but that much more remains to be done if churches around the world are to become places of safety, compassion and justice for all women. The participants at Dundee agreed on ten principles which should form the basis for any action on this issue, and committed themselves to practical steps, as appropriate in different contexts, to move towards fulfilment of these objectives.



### **The 'Dundee Principles'**

1. To reflect on biblical and theological perspectives that impact attitudes and behaviour in relationships and church practice.
2. To implement educational strategies which will develop awareness and training in all parts of the church community (local, national, international and lay and ordained, where these distinctions are applicable.)
3. To commit ourselves, and encourage our churches, to use language that is not violent and does not exclude the experience of anyone.
4. To sustain a safe environment within the faith communities where all will be empowered.
5. To achieve good practice in all church structures for prevention and intervention.
6. To be 'Church together', understanding and affirming diverse theologies, cultures, languages and structures.
7. To effect and develop a network of concerned persons and church bodies which can enable the sharing of resources, understanding and good practice.
8. To work in partnership with the wider community in overcoming violence against women.
9. To ensure funding in order to realise goals.
10. To adopt an agenda which will address all issues that concern violence against women and its consequences for individuals, faith communities and societies.

The Dundee Consultation participants endorsed a programme for the Overcoming Violence Against Women project to develop a wide-ranging resource collection, facilitate networks of concern, expertise and responsibility, and compile a dossier

of responses and policies concerning this issue, from churches around the world. This document is the outcome of that initiative. The examples of good practice that it documents are varied. Some are examples of small projects and tentative beginnings. It also offers instances of broad and comprehensive approaches by churches, denominations and world communions.

### **Water of Life**

The celebration that took place in Harare to mark the end of the decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women was enriched by the symbolic use of water in worship. This event saw women from throughout the world bringing water from their home countries and pouring it into one huge beautiful African earthenware pot. The water, carried and poured in this way, represented the Water of Life.

The examples of good practice presented in this dossier can be seen as streams of such life-giving water. A passage from Ezekiel<sup>4</sup> can serve to root this work in the images of a biblical vision of hope.

*My Guide took me out of the temple area by way of the north gate and led me round to the gate that faces east.*

*A small stream of water was flowing out at the south side of the gate.*

*The Guide measured five hundred metres downstream to the east and told me to wade through the stream there.*

*The water came only to my ankles.*

*After another five hundred metres and the water came up to my knees.*

*Another five hundred metres further down, the water was up to my waist.*

*Five hundred metres further on the stream was so deep that I could not wade through it.*

*It was too deep to cross except by swimming*

*My Guide said, "Mortal, note all this carefully."*

*I was led to the bank of the river, and I saw that there were very many trees on each bank.*

*The Guide said "Wherever this stream flows there will be all kinds of animals and fish.*

*The water will make the water of the Dead Sea fresh, and wherever it flows it will bring life*

*On each bank of the stream all kinds of trees will grow to provide food.*

*Their leaves will never wither and they will never stop bearing fruit.*

*They will have fresh fruit every month because they are watered by the stream that flows from the Holy Place,*

*and their leaves will be used for the healing of the people..*

In this passage the prophet is guided to see a stream that flows out from the Temple. At first it is very shallow, just a trickle, but as the stream goes on its way it deepens growing wider and stronger. The stream is life-giving water, which freshens tainted water and brings new growth and fertility to barren areas. It allows for the growth

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<sup>4</sup> This passage from the 47<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Ezekiel offers an empowering vision of hope, renewal and transformation. Earlier passages in the book of Ezekiel contain some of the most graphic descriptions of violence to women that are to be found in the Bible, and highlight the need for extremely careful interpretation and use of scripture so as not to add to the burdens that women in the churches already bear. This is a theme that emerges in a number of the resources cited in the dossier.

of that which will bring healing and nourishment. In just such a fashion, streams that will bring new life and hope to women have begun to flow in the churches and church communions, throughout the world. In some places the waters are just beginning to trickle, in others they have grown to a strong, steady and unstoppable stream.

This dossier of good practice gives us evidence that these streams are deepening all the time, fed by the commitment and hard work of many women and of men of good-will, inspired by the Spirit of our living God and blessed by God's grace. All of these projects and initiatives, at whatever stage of development and implementation, are refreshing and life-giving water to women throughout the world who thirst for freedom, respect and justice and an end to violence.

### **The Dossier**

It is apparent from the examples given in this dossier that there are strong similarities in the nature of violence that women face the world over, and also that in each cultural context such violence is expressed in specific ways which provide particular challenges for women in that setting.

Just as it is difficult to isolate one moment in the flow of a river, inevitably even as this dossier is produced, new projects are being undertaken and other initiatives consolidated, and there is recognition that this process is by no means complete. A dossier of this size cannot, by any means, offer a complete account of work being undertaken in and by the churches<sup>5</sup>. Readers will undoubtedly know of other initiatives underway in their own situations and locations. It offers examples for encouragement and inspiration, which form but a fraction of the ongoing work being undertaken, in all parts of the world, in the name of a God of love and justice. The pieces of work presented have been selected as a representative sample, from a broad range of church traditions and drawn from every continent. Those who have produced this dossier offer it as a resource which they hope will be used in the ongoing transformation of the churches to places of safety, affirmation and empowerment for all people of whatever race, class, age or gender.

**Penny Stuart**

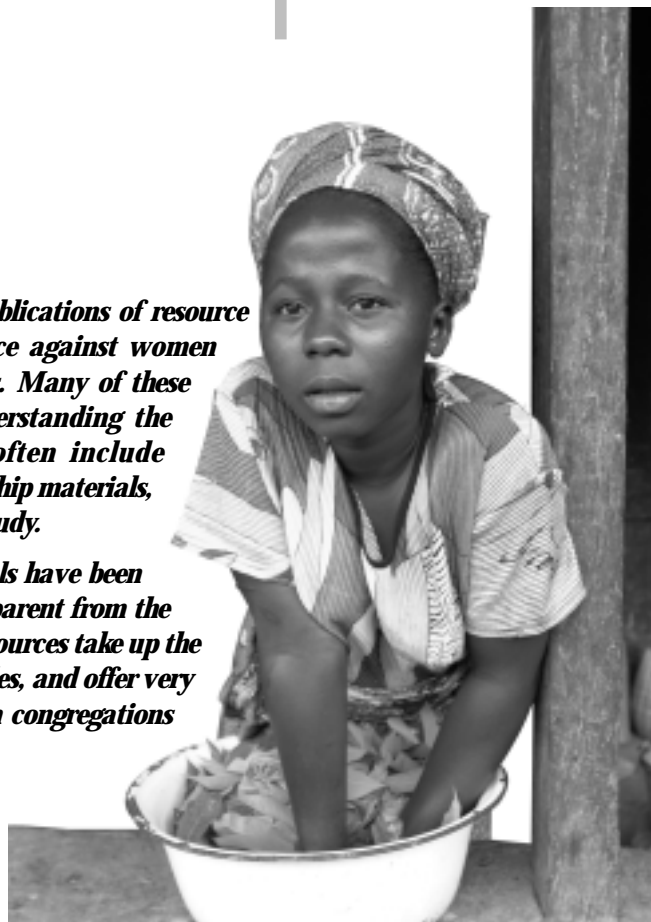
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<sup>5</sup> The dossier does not specifically cover the pioneering work done by churches and church bodies working against the trafficking of women and girls. Nor does it deal in detail with projects supporting women affected by HIV/AIDS although some of the examples cited in the dossier do include some work in this crucial area of concern. The particular issues of violence against women in conflict situations and the use of rape as a weapon of war are also not dealt with here, although these are matters of grave concern being taken very seriously by many churches.

# resource packs, study guides and workshop material

***There are now a number of packs or publications of resource materials related to overcoming violence against women produced by churches and church bodies. Many of these offer a wide-ranging approach to understanding the structural causes of violence; they often include theological reflections, Bible studies, worship materials, and suggestions for action and further study.***

***Some of the most comprehensive materials have been produced by world communions as is apparent from the first six examples offered below. These resources take up the challenge of the first two Dundee Principles, and offer very useful and accessible tools for work with congregations and church groups.***





## **Churches Say “No” to Violence against Women**

Produced by the Lutheran World Federation

Department for Mission and Development – Women in Church and Society

An Action Plan for the Churches published in 2002.

This resource book is the result of a collaborative undertaking of the Lutheran World Federation member churches between 1999-2001, which had begun as a response to the WCC Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women. It suggests ways in which women, men and faith communities could work together to overcome the sin of violence against women that hurts individuals, communities and the churches' very image. It says “To be healers, we must first heal ourselves”

The introduction includes an understanding of how violence against women may be defined;

“ The term violence against women means: *Any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.*”<sup>6</sup>

The chapters cover:

- 1. Naming the Sin.**
- 2. Analyzing Different Forms of Personal Violence.**
- 3. Transforming Church and Society.**
  - 3.1 Structural Violence
  - 3.2 Cultural Violence
  - 3.3 Effects of Economic Globalization and Modernization
  - 3.4 Assumptions and Practices of the Church

### **Conclusion**

### **Appendices**

- I. Aid to Victims
- II. Aid to Persons Who Assist Victims of Violence
- III. Men's Solidarity Networks
- IV. Spiritual Accompaniment
- V. Responses from LWF Council Meetings

Each chapter and section has suggestions for positive action and offers additional resources. The document contains theological reflection and explores the use of the Bible with regard to this issue

'Churches Say “No” to Violence against Women' is published by the Lutheran World Federation in English, French, German and Spanish and has been translated into over 20 other languages.

*Published by The Lutheran World Federation,  
150 rte de Ferney*

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<sup>6</sup> *Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration*. Fourth World Conference on Women. Beijing, September 1995, par.113-115, pp.73-74.

*PO Box 2100*

*CH-1211 Geneva 2*

*Switzerland*

*or follow links for Department for Mission and Development publications at*

*<http://lutheranworld.org>*



## **Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership**

Produced by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

In the four years from 1999 to 2002, the Department of Partnership of Women and Men of WARC held regional workshops on gender awareness and leadership development worldwide.

As a follow-up to these workshops, a church manual for gender awareness and leadership development was published in 2003. The manual, *Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership*, is a training tool for increasing awareness and knowledge on gender and gender relations among women and men within the church and the wider community and is accompanied by a workbook for workshop participants.

### **The manual**

*Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership* has been developed with a sociological and theological framework and contains a facilitator's guide and eight modules. The modules and activities are designed to meet the needs of adult learners. The learner is viewed as a partner, bringing valuable experiences, skills and knowledge to the learning process. This methodology aims to be learner-centred and empowering, beginning from where women and men are, and acknowledging and integrating their knowledge and experiences through shared and highly participatory learning processes.

The facilitator's guide covers the following:

**Section I                      Sociological and Theological Framework**

**Section II                     Facilitator's Guide**

**Section III                  Eight Modules on Gender Awareness and Leadership Development**

- Getting Started
- Gender as a Social, Cultural and Religious Construct
- Understanding the Concept of Gender
- Gender Roles and Expectations
- Building Solidarity on Gender Issues
- Gender and Economic Justice
- Gender-based Domestic Violence
- Gender and HIV/ AIDS
- Self-Awareness: Renewing My Spirituality, Renewing My Faith
- Gender, Leadership and Power



- Church Renewal and Transformation
- Breaking the Chains of Gender Injustices within our Church
- Evaluation, Feedback and Closure

#### **Section IV      Glossary, Bibliography**

*Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership* encourages adaptation to the varied cultural and social contexts of its users - for example, through the inclusion of facilitation and learning styles that are culture-specific. It allows for concrete and relevant local examples of how gender differences influence the way issues are perceived, understood and responded to at various social levels.

*Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership* includes a workbook for participants containing

- activity handouts (fact sheets and other relevant information to help with issues, concepts and analysis, stories and case studies)
- Bible study resources (background, commentaries and reflections on biblical texts, and a bibliography).

*Published by WARC*

*P.O. Box 2100*

*150 Rte de Ferney*

*1211 Geneva 2*

*Switzerland*

*Details at <http://www.warc.ch> > News & Communication > WARC Update > December*



## **Peace and Healing**

Produced by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

This resource kit is made up of three resources.

- 1. The Peace and Healing Programming Handbook** is for pastors, counsellors, family ministries personnel, teachers and leaders who want to respond to abuse and family violence in a professional and compassionate manner. It contains:
  1. informative seminars
  2. reproducible handouts
  3. family centred sermons
  4. children's stories
  5. resources and bulletin insertsPlus Dos and Don'ts for Church Leaders and A New Design for Relational Power
- 2. The Quick Reference Guide for Making Homes Abuse-Free** for pastors and other church leaders to use with persons suffering physical, mental, emotional or social abuse. In this guide twelve chapters help to define various types of abuse, develop appropriate strategies and locate helpful resources. Chapters include:
  - We Have a Problem Here
  - Questions on Pastor's Minds

- Warning Signs of Abuse and Family Violence
  - A Caring Pastoral Response
  - Contact Information
3. **The Peace and Healing Awareness Video** is intended for adult viewing to raise awareness of the problem of domestic abuse in the church. It encourages congregations to:
- define abuse
  - break the silence
  - deal with myths
  - develop plans for helping victims



## **Breaking the Silence**

Produced by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

This material consists of six leaflets entitled:

**Breaking the *Silence*** – You can stop the violence – and help them heal.

**Breaking the *Silence*** – Do you know someone who is abused? You can help them

**Breaking the *Silence*** – Are you being abused by your boyfriend or husband? You are not alone, there is help for you.

**Breaking the *Silence*** – Are you being abused by your girlfriend or wife? You are not alone, there is help for you.

**Breaking the *Silence*** – Has your child been abused? You are not alone, there is help for you.

**Breaking the *Silence*** – Are you abusing someone? There is help for you.

Details at <http://wm.gc.adventist.org>



## **Out of the Shadows Resource Pack 2002**

Produced by Mothers' Union – Christian care for families world wide

This pack offers resources for group discussion with the help of a trained facilitator, to address the issue of violence at different levels.

### **Personal level**

The pack can help the group to:

- Identify and show that those who suffer from violence are not alone or unusual. Violence affects individuals across the world.
- Identify and show that each person is valued by God even if they do not feel loveable or valuable.
- Identify and show that violence is not the fault of the person suffering the violence.

### **Family level**

The pack can help the group to:

- Analyse attitudes within or about the family that are related to violence.

- Develop listening and other skills, which would impact on the family situation.
- Develop strategies for change and positive action within and around the family.

### **Community and Church level**

The pack can help the group to:

- Identify practices, attitudes and ideas that are helpful. Identify those which are unhelpful and may foster violence.
- Break the culture of silence.
- Enhance fellowship, trust and solidarity.
- Develop strategies for change and positive action within the community and church.

### **National and International**

The pack can help the group to:

- Raise awareness of rights and legal tools.
- Raise awareness of the worldwide nature of violence.
- Develop networks and begin working together with other groups.

The Pack is made up of a number of separate booklets which lead the group through the issue

These are:

**Beginnings** – Notes for facilitators and exercises for groups – including trust and listening exercises.

**Truth** – Acknowledging the problem of violence – including stories of experiences of violence from different cultural contexts.

**Faith** – Can violence be justified? – explores faith issues around the question of violence, using Bible passages and points for discussion.

**Picture** - Is this the story of your community? – uses 'code' pictures, drawings that help people to analyse situations carefully. The pictures used are from various cultural contexts.

**Ruth** – A Bible study from the Old Testament – it is also a tool to identify and analyse violence within our own society.

**Discussion** – Analysing violence in our communities and identifying policy tools. A range of sheets to guide discussion on a number of issues is offered, to be used as appropriate to the group.

They cover: Violence in the Home, Sexual Violence and Rape, Female Genital Mutilation, Widows, Early Marriage, Prostitution and Trafficking, Violence and Unemployment, Violence in the Church Community, Children and Violence, Civil Unrest, People with Disabilities, Violence and Older People.

**Action** – Planning practical initiatives

**Prayer** – Resources for worship and reflection

**Next** – Further resources and bibliography

**Feedback**

*Details at <http://www.themothersunion.org> > projects > resources*



**“It’s time to talk about it!” :**  
**Violence against women in culture, society and the church.**  
**Study of Culture**

Produced by the United Evangelical Mission

This study grew out of a Consultation on women’s issues held in Ramatea in Botswana in October 1993. The introduction to the study says, “ To Ramatea had come thirty-five women and ten men from different parts of the globe: Germany, the African countries of Tanzania, Namibia, Congo (still called Zaire at that time), Rwanda, Cameroon, Botswana and from Asian countries of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

Each day of the five days in which they were together revealed the pains women went through, from the womb to childhood to adulthood and on to their aging years. The sharing process helped women to name and identify what they had been through in life, for the home, the church, the community and the society as a whole has been discriminatory to them.”

This sharing revealed to the participants that both culture and religion had been responsible for this situation of women. Recommendations to the member churches of the UEM were made to address the problems put forward to them in the Consultation. The first of these was to conduct a ‘study of culture’. In 2000 a study of culture of women from the continents of Europe, Africa and Asia was commissioned. This study then, is a summary of the researches undertaken in all the three regions of Africa, Asia and Germany, with many case studies from and about women in those regions.

The material contains sections on:

**Theology and the Church** – including the role of the Bible and issues of women’s leadership and ordination.

**Culture and Society**

**Woman’s traditional place** - covering issues related to women’s work, widowhood, the raising of sons, dowry payments, and female genital mutilation.

**Equality before the law**

Two case studies.

**Economic factor: woman**

**Violence has many faces**

Facts and figures and definitions.

**Overcoming Violence**

Examples of positive action in:

Indonesia, Germany, Kenya, Rwanda, Worldwide.

**Don’t just talk, act!**

An **Appendix** contains recommendations for further action and documentation from past workshops,



including **Bonn 1996 and Windhoek 2000**. After the UEM Women's Workshops in Ramatea (1993), Bonn-Bad Godesberg (1996) and Windhoek (2000), the women drafted and passed recommendations for the UEM General Assembly. Several of these demands had been overlooked or remain unimplemented in individual member churches. They therefore took the opportunity presented by this study to document the recommendations from Bonn-Bad Godesberg and Windhoek in their entirety.

*Published by  
United Evangelical Mission,  
Rudolfstrasse 137,  
42285 Wuppertal, Germany*

***Some materials have been produced ecumenically on a regional basis. Here are two examples of such work, both wide-ranging in their scope:***



## **“Rise Up and Act” 2002**

Produced by the All Africa Conference of Churches (CETA)

In May 1994 the Women's desk of the World Council of Churches in collaboration with the Women's desks of the All Africa Conference of Churches and National Council of Churches of Kenya brought together church women and men from Africa and other regions of the world to reflect on the issue of violence against women. This was at the time when churches all over the world were observing the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988 – 1998). This group listed the various forms of violence against women, identified root causes and proposed a number of strategies for overcoming them. One such strategy was to produce resource materials for community sensitization on the issue. The AACC women's desk was challenged to take the lead in production of such materials reflecting continental (African) concerns. The group further challenged the churches in Africa to denounce violence against women.

The authors write 'Our aim is not to open old wounds or to incite but, rather to determine how widespread the problem is, the effects on communities and what we can all do to eradicate it. We believe that a renewed church that can recapture the ultimate meaning of life, its fundamental values and the need to protect it can among other things advocate for:

- a change of attitude
- protective legislation that defends Women's Rights'

The introduction to this resource material includes a definition of 'Violence Against Women and Girls'

*“Violence Against Women and Girls is any act of gender-based violence that violates their decency and privacy in public and private places. Such acts may be physical or psychological, and include the following: spousal battering, sexual abuse, rape including marital or acquaintance rape, incest, defilement, indecent assault, harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Cutting, forced marriage, and widowhood rites. They also include*

*intimidation and sexual harassment at work, in school and in the community.”*

The writers say that “Through the resource material we are urging all of God’s people, including the church to listen to victims of violence with a commitment to creating space for their healing, restoration of their dignity, liberation of the perpetrators and reconciliation of the communities.”

The resource material begins with a section on **Theological Challenges** and continues with modules on

1. **Domestic Violence**
2. **Cultural Violence**
3. **Women and the Economy**
4. **Structural Violence**
5. **Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict**
6. **Uprooted Women**
7. **Women’s Rights**

and has **Appendices** which include, among other things, details of **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**.

*Published by the All Africa Conference of Churches  
P O Box 14205  
00800 Westlands  
Nairobi, Kenya*



## **Healing Waters** **Churches Working to End Violence Against Women**

Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada

Launched in 2004 this resource explores the pervasive violence that is part of the context of women’s lives. It provides theological background and reflection, as well as practical tools for dealing with a woman’s experience of abuse. It is intended to be a helpful tool for the churches’ work of compassion in worship, pastoral counselling, support groups, legislative action and sanctuary. It contains both study materials and ideas for action.

Contents of the guide include:

- An historical overview of violence against women and the role of the church.
- Practical advice for recognizing and responding to a woman who has been abused.
- Handouts on abuse, myths, shelters and need of specific groups of women.
- Information on creating safe spaces in the church.
- Biblical and theological background, sermon guides and other practical resources for planning worship.
- Workshop outlines and Bible studies to use in congregations.
- Community action ideas.

*Finally in this section, an example of work from a single denomination, offering one resource focussing on the way in which congregations might support women dealing with past and present abuse, and a resource for men exploring alternatives to violent responses to conflict.*



## **Women Healing and Empowering**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

### **Women Healing and Empowering - by Pamela Cooper-White**

This is an eight-week Bible-focused support group programme intended to serve as a means for community outreach and a healing ministry for women in the congregation. The resource helps congregations organize and host a support group for women dealing with past or present abuse. It recommends that care be taken with publicity (one strategy is to publicize the group as a self-esteem group and explain its purpose fully when women inquire) and that a small group size is also important. The curriculum is a tool for what is admitted to be a challenging task and one that requires thoughtful preparation. A dozen ELCA synods have teams that have been trained to use the curriculum. It includes 1 facilitator guide and 5 participant books. (Single copies of participant books are not available. If a group has additional members, facilitators may photocopy a book, order another package, or ask members to share.)



## **Building Bridges: Men Dealing Constructively with Anger**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

This is an eight-session guide that assists participants in identifying emotions and discovering new tools for dealing positively with conflict. The packet includes 1 leader guide and 5 participant books.

Available from Augsburg Fortress Press

*<http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item>*

*Details at <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/resources/topical.html>*

# conferences and consultations

*“Heaven of women is still at the feet of men.”*

*“Patriarchy has put into place a structure where women are not only victimised but also penalised as victims.”*

*A number of accounts and reports<sup>7</sup> of consultations and conferences are included here to highlight the mutual consciousness-raising and empowerment of women that has occurred throughout the world in recent years. It is pleasing to note the increasing involvement of men in church efforts to overcome violence against women, as reflected above, and also in the fact that recent conferences and consultations have often been of the whole church community, not only women.*

*One particular aspect of the issue the South Asian Meeting of Women (below) identified is the ‘double’ victimisation of women.*



## **South Asian Meeting of Women (SAMOW)**

*Extracts from a report by Doro Lobo – a participant. From an article in ‘The Examiner’ 30.11.2002*

The first South Asian Meeting of Women was organised by the FABC office of Laity and the Commission of Laity of the Bishops’ Conference of Sri Lanka. Forty



five delegates including four bishops, from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal, came together at the Retreat Centre in Ragama, Sri Lanka to reflect on the theme *The Role of Women in Church and Society* and to discover ways in which we can work together in South Asia to promote the dignity of women, to foster women's spirituality for fullness of life and help women articulate their God experiences rooted in life.

Through prayer, reflection, discussions, sharing of life experiences and reports from countries it was realised that women are still being discriminated against. Male domination still reigns high in spite of there being a growing awareness among women of their rights and dignity. As one speaker put it "Heaven of women is still at the feet of men. Patriarchy has put into place a structure where women are not only victimised but also penalised as victims."

*"What is my experience of the Divine in Asian realities in my life as a woman?"*

*"Why do women allow this reality of silence in their lives?"*

***The Ecclesia of Women in Asia Conference focussed on breaking the silence that has been imposed on women by culture, particularly from the perspective of Asian women. Its participants employed tools of analysis, critique and theological reconstruction to break the silence that exists concerning the reality of their lives as Asian women.***



### **Ecclesia of Women in Asia: Gathering the Voices of the Silenced**

*This is a shortened version of the Conference report from the National Catholic Reporter, December 27, 2002 by Gemma Cruz and Christine Burke.*

Bangkok, Thailand

Asian Catholic women theologians gathered here for the first time in late November 2002 for a five-day conference titled *Ecclesia of Women in Asia: Gathering the Voices of the Silenced*. The gathering allowed the women to build new bonds by sharing their stories and hopes for a more inclusive church.

The conference drew 60 women from 18 Asian nations: China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, East Timor, Thailand, Myanmar, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Australia. The conference also had an ecumenical tone with Protestant representatives participating from the Christian Conference of Asia and the Asian Women's Resource Centre.

Sr. Evelyn Monteiro, a keynote speaker, said the conference aimed to provide 'space' for Catholic women theologians to have their "voices heard and their thoughts and reflections articulated." According to Monteiro, a professor of systematic theology at Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion in Pune, India, "Women theologians are asking, 'What is my experience of the Divine in Asian realities in my life as a woman?'"

In her address, Monteiro outlined the aims of the conference, which were to:

- Bring together Catholic women doing theology in Asia, academic theologians as well as women promoting theology in grassroots situations;
- Provide space for Catholic women to have their voices heard and their

thoughts and reflections articulated;

- Invite Catholic women theologians, in their power and potential, to evolve a theology from the perspective of Catholic Asian women;
- Encourage Asian Catholic women to engage in theological research, reflection and writing;
- Create networks with different Asian feminist grassroots/theological movements and global feminist grassroots/theological movements that are Catholic, ecumenical and interfaith.

### **Networking a priority**

After her address Monteiro said that participants had decided that networking among themselves was a top priority. She said the women hope to set up their own Web site so they can continue to have a forum for their reflections, poems and songs.

A growing concern among Asian women, Monteiro said, is the escalating violence against them because of fundamentalism, including 'Christian fundamentalism'. She said that Asian women continue to be viewed as objects and their space restricted to the home. "Though many women in Asia today are educated and working, they have to be silent because of these [fundamentalist] attitudes," she said.

Prior to the conference, 30 papers had been posted on the Internet. Most participants had read the papers belonging to their subgroup. The six subgroups included: Women and Violence, Women and Spirituality, Women and Church Structures, Eco-feminism and Theological Method, Women and the Bible, and Women and World Religions.

### **Paper flowers**

The first day was given shape by morning and evening worship services prepared by women from Malaysia. They dramatized through ethnic music and dance the hardships of Asian women and how transformation in their lives could be achieved. During the opening worship a collage in the form of a flower was created from pieces of indigenous cloth that each participant brought from her homeland as the women sang and prayed in their own language. In the evening liturgy participants wrote on paper flowers their dreams for Asian women. They folded the flowers and floated them in pools of water where the flowers unfolded and seemed to bloom.

On the second day, regional groups studied the various papers, hearing short synopses from the authors. They attempted to discern common and divergent themes as well as underlying theological issues. In the process, the conviction grew that women doing theology at the grassroots and in academia must collaborate.

### **Reclaiming Christian memory**

Another speaker was Dr Lieve Troch, professor of systematic theology in Nijmegen who had worked in Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia and Brazil. She looked behind the various themes and issues seeking a broader context.

Troch asked "Why do women allow this reality of silence in their lives?" She called the group to accountability for this silence. Her analysis of the role of religion



in women's lives opened doors to further discussions of reclaiming the Christian memory, the memory of Jesus and all the crucified women and men of Asia and what it means to redefine Christology and Mariology within the Asian context.

The movement out of a classical model into the methodology of a liberation/feminist theology led to a wide discussion, at times punctuated by disagreement and conflicting views. Through it all, the conference was characterized by a sense of joy in being together as Catholic women theologians and the honesty of being able to disagree harmoniously.

Troch invited the Asian women theologians to move from a surface naming of issues to a process of analysis, critique and theological reconstruction. She challenged them to look at how the church and women in the church continue to be shaped by classical theology.

The conference's fourth day addressed the question, "Where do we go from here?" Participants offered many suggestions. Networking and providing each other mutual support were high on the women's lists. One idea that emerged is to have Catholic Asian women make themselves more visible, and in special ways link up with other major theological associations worldwide.

Still another suggestion is to develop Asian women's perspectives on contextual theology, perhaps offering short theology courses for women and men in remote areas.

The meeting concluded with a liturgy. By the accounts of the participants, the gathering was seen as a major step forward for Asian Catholic women. The women

left saying they would stay committed to keeping the new Asian women's networks alive.

*Access from National Catholic Reporter Online at [www.natcath.com](http://www.natcath.com)*

***Women are increasingly coming together to lobby for greater inclusion in the decision making bodies of the churches. In the example below women from Latin America and the Caribbean raise issues related to overcoming violence in families, including exploring 'new masculinities' and raising awareness of the 'feminization of poverty'.***



## **Latin American and Caribbean Women Decry Increased Violence in Families**

Appeal to Invite Women and Youth Leaders to  
Regional Body of Church Heads

*From a report in the Lutheran World Federation News 13.04 2003*

Representatives of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean have called on their regional body, comprising heads of churches, to invite leaders of women and youth work to their annual working conference in the future.

The call for the representation of women and youth in the Conference of Bishops and Presidents of Lutheran Churches in Latin America (COP) was part of the women's message to the 51 participants in the April 6-9 2003 Latin American and Caribbean LWF Pre-Assembly Consultation (PAC) in the Salvadoran capital, San Salvador. The region's women met a day prior to the regional PAC, to discuss their contribution to the July 2003 Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada.

In their message, the women delegates recommend to the LWF that the 'Women in Church and Society' in the LWF Department for Mission and Development should be renamed 'Desk for Gender Issues in Church and Society'. The participants also called on the LWF to include trans-generational aspects and the subject of a 'new masculinity' in future studies and projects.

In their message, the women participants listed six points summarizing the consequences of economic globalization for women in their region. They observed an increase in violence in families because of frustration, unemployment and growing individualization. They regretted the 'feminization of poverty', growing pressure to migrate, free trade agreements within Latin America, external influences on the traditional role models for women and the lack of church work on the problems in these areas.

*Details at <http://www.lutheranworld.org/News> > 2003 > April*

***In many contexts the churches work with other agencies and concerned individuals who seek to overcome violence against women in a particular culture, as in this example of a conference in Lebanon***



## **Violence Against Women in the Family and Society**

A conference organised by the Justice and Human Rights program of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), in cooperation with the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women (LCRVAW)  
Beirut, Lebanon, 5-7 June 2003

*From a report by Helen Hood, Consultant to the WCC DOV Project, Overcoming Violence Against Women*

There were 74 participants, the majority of them women, with around 40 coming from Lebanon. Others came from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and one each from Morocco, Tunis, Yemen, Mauritius, England and Scotland. It had not been possible for participants to travel from Iraq or Palestine, but there were Iraqi and Palestinian representatives amongst the 'Lebanese' women.

The main focus of the conference was on legal, religious and traditional factors with regard to Violence Against Women in the Family in Arab countries, and sessions were held on the following topics:

- International Charters, Definitions and Terms
- Legal Protection Regarding Family Violence
- Religious Sources for opposing Violence Against Women
- Positions Taken by Religions on Violence Against Women – Ambiguities in Application and Ambiguities in the Laws of Personal Status

In the first of these, Pramila Patten, United Nations CEDAW expert, was the main speaker. She congratulated the MECC and LCRVAW on organising the first Regional Meeting on Violence Against Women anywhere in the world, and spoke about international charters and the understanding of violence against women in the context of the family.

The two speakers on the topic of Religious Sources for opposing Violence Against Women were Shiite Shaykh Hânî Fahas and Greek Orthodox Bishop George Khodr. They both spoke about the importance of unity, the fact that violence against women is against the will of God, and the need for change within religious communities.

The second full day of the conference had a more practical emphasis. Under the title 'Some of the International Campaigns Against Violence Against Women', Helen Hood spoke about the WCC DOV Project and Lisa Gormley, Legal Adviser, spoke about Amnesty International's intention to launch its first world-wide campaign against violence against women in March 2004.

Then some time was spent in smaller groups, reviewing initiatives and sharing experience on the following issues:

- Direct services for women who have suffered violence
- Research being done
- Revising the laws
- Training, awareness-building and communications

Finally, conference recommendations were agreed.

Valuable additions to the arranged programme were two locally-made videos, illustrating some of the frustrations for women victims of domestic abuse in dealing with particular aspects of religious jurisprudence and cultural practices, and the opportunity to hear personal stories from two women visitors to the meeting.

This was a unique opportunity for those in the region, including the churches, who share similar concerns to meet and work on these issues. One outcome of the meeting will be continuing networking and mutual support. This in itself made the conference an extremely useful meeting.

***Consultations such as the one detailed below, confirm that while it may be manifest in forms specific to a particular culture or region, violence against women is a universal phenomenon which all can work in partnership to overcome.***



## Violence and the Family

International Anglican Family Network - Consultation 2003 Kenya

The International Anglican Family Network is a well-established network of the Anglican Communion. Through its Newsletter, which has been published regularly for twelve years, it links together many thousands of Anglican Christians involved in family ministries across the world.

The range of topics covered in the Newsletters, including domestic violence, street children, fathers and families, prostitution, nutrition, single parents, children and war, demonstrates the many areas of family problems where the Anglican Communion has been active in responding to people in need. The Newsletter is always practical, setting out the problems in various cultures and then showing the ways in which Anglicans involved in family ministries are responding to these problems and the people they affect.

*“We recognised that violence and the family was a worldwide issue but we felt that our African sisters and brothers would have particular insights into these problems”.*

During these twelve years IAFN has been a virtual network linked by the Newsletter. However, through a generous grant from a trust, the first ever IAFN Consultation was held in Kenya in June 2003. This Consultation was held in Africa because Christians from that continent had been the most enthusiastic contributors to the Network. The topic of “Violence and the Family” was chosen because it was a theme which had recurred in the Newsletter. The organisers write, “We recognised that violence and the family was a worldwide issue but we felt that our African sisters and brothers would have particular insights into these problems”.

Thirty two people attended the Consultation, representing 17 African countries and a wide range of professions – the ordained ministry, Mothers’ Union trainers and workers, teaching, social work, nursing, counselling and administration.

violence and the family:

- Violence between couples
- Violence against children
- Violence from the wider world

In each case they drew on their experience and that of their fellow Christians in their home country to set out the nature of the problem and then made practical recommendations on tackling it.

Some of the recommendations are specific to Africa and demonstrate how Anglicans there are being courageous in tackling traditional practices such as bride price, female genital mutilation and the abuse of widows, as well as taking the lead in tackling new problems such as the AIDS pandemic and being active in promoting conflict resolution and peace-making activities. But many of the recommendations are relevant to all parts of the Anglican Communion.

Violence against women is endemic across the world and the report calls on the Church to break the silence that surrounds all forms of violence.

Marriages are under pressure everywhere. The delegates identified the pressures which are common in Africa and the report says that every Province needs to identify the pressure points in its own culture and see how the Church can respond to these.

### **Violence between couples**

The consultation report includes the following:

Violence between couples (mostly, though not always by the man against the woman) can be physical, sexual or psychological. Violent acts are intentional and are about force and control.

Some of the causes of violence between couples are common to most cultures – alcoholism, drug abuse, extra-marital affairs, HIV/AIDS, poor communication, women’s growing economic independence, poverty, violent upbringing, jealousy, possessiveness.

Others are specific to countries in Africa – bride price, cultural practices, the shame of infertility, female genital mutilation. Linked to these are cultural practices which particularly affect widows –sexual cleansing and inheritance of the widow by her late husband’s family, labelling as a witch, exclusion from normal life as well as property-grabbing.

Finally the report identifies some causes as specific to the Christian Church. Pre-marital counselling often focuses on the women’s role in the marriage so that the man does not understand his responsibilities. Misuse of the Bible to support male domination is also a problem. One delegate commented that men read Ephesians 5:22 “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord” but overlook the previous verse “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ”

### **Summary of Consultation Recommendations**

1. The Church should work at all levels to break the silence on violence between couples (including rape within marriage) and violence against children, widows



and the elderly. These should be addressed in all aspects of church life including sermons and synod resolutions.

2. The Church must care for those who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS while continuing to encourage faithfulness in marriage. It should encourage HIV testing and openness about HIV status, with the use of condoms within marriage for those already affected. It should offer pastoral care and support for those infected and affected, as well as discouraging stigmatisation.
3. High priority should be given to pre-marital counselling and marriage enrichment seminars. They should aim to promote mutual agreement between partners on family budgeting, family planning and the making of wills, etc.
4. As Christians we need to develop a more appropriate interpretation of the Bible, especially with regard to the roles of husband and wife within the home, the Church and the wider community. We also need to challenge cultural practices that dehumanise people. These include female genital mutilation, bride price and polygamy.
5. Theological education is significant in preparing both men and women for various ministries in the Church. It should accommodate gender sensitivity and the issue of violence both in the family and in the wider society.
6. The importance of both research and dissemination of information on family violence and human rights cannot be over-emphasised if the Church is to achieve real change. Men and women can only take greater control of their lives when the silence is broken on family violence and human rights. Church and civic leaders need to make this a priority.



7. The issue of family violence is a concern for both men and women. It is therefore essential that programmes addressing violence include both sexes.
8. The prophetic role of the church should include advocacy and lobbying governments and NGOs, and participation in existing organisations to improve legal and social systems which serve to control and reduce family violence. This may involve the creation of new groups e.g. a couples group, or a gender desk, within the Church which can adequately sensitise people on social issues of great concern to Christians.

*Details at <http://www.aco.org/networks/iafn/newsletters> > Michaelmas 2003*

***A concern for 'gender justice' can bring together those of different faiths as in this consultation in Bangkok. Such working together raises a powerful challenge to patriarchal oppression wherever it is found, and offers a range of possibilities for mutual support and action***



## **Changing the world: An Interfaith consultation on gender justice**

*From a report by Hope S Antone, Executive Secretary of CCA (Christian Conference of Asia) from CCA News Vol. 39 No. 2 June 2004*

Wongsanit Ashram, in Nakhon Nayok, Thailand - a Buddhist intentional community for simple living, engaging in social action and spiritual practice, situated about an hour outside of Bangkok was a perfect place for the 'inter-religious consultation on gender justice and genuine partnership of men and women'.

A group of 24 women and six men-representing Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, gathered in the ashram as participants/resource persons on 14-19 May 2003. We came from eight countries - India, Pakistan, Laos, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia. Among us were two Buddhist monks, two Buddhist nuns, a Catholic nun, teachers, ecumenical and church workers, activists and workers with grassroots and NGOs.

The consultation was a follow-up to an earlier consultation on inter-religious cooperation in April 2003. It was planned in response to a recommendation from the April consultation that in order to live our faiths in community-seeking justice and peace, there is a need to "examine the patriarchal theologies, structures and practices of our religions and cultures in order to empower women by developing alternative educational resources for the promotion of equal partnership between women and men."

The consultation began with personal storytelling, a sharing about oneself and the web of relationships that shape who we are. For while we are born either male or female, we get caught in the social constructions of gender or what it means to be masculine or feminine. Each one's family, culture, class and faith, contribute to the shaping of the self. As we heard our personal stories, we saw how each mirrored the other in many ways; the burdens of gender injustice and the continuing struggle to break the cycle of oppression.

We also had a session of national storytelling, during which many stories were

heard, told from different social locations. Weaving through the stories were some common threads:

- That we are all influenced or shaped by and socialised into a patriarchal mindset, behaviour and way of life in the family, culture, religion and society.
- Patriarchy makes us think in hierarchy that puts the male at the top, privileged or superior position.
- Patriarchy makes us think in dualism that puts one side (all those associated with the male) in a positive light and the other (all those associated with the female) in a negative light.
- Patriarchy has been so ingrained in our lives that we often do not question it any more, we think it is simply the normal or natural way.
- The socioeconomic and political systems of our Asian societies also reflect patriarchy. Globalisation, being the new form of colonisation, has led to further objectification and commodification of our Asian cultures, natural resources, women and children.
- Although our religions speak of equality of women and men, they also reflect patriarchal teachings and practices that inscribe or re-inscribe the domination of certain groups and the oppression of others. All our religions are after all patriarchal, the founders, keepers and interpreters are also men.

We therefore recognised patriarchy, which is embedded in our cultures and religions, as the root cause of the issues that we confront now and which manifests itself in:

- prohibition of women from access to power and decision making in social life and structures,
- relegation of women in the domestic sphere, which undermines women's full realisation of their potential,
- misinterpretation of sacred texts and traditions to perpetuate the marginalisation and violation of women,
- justification of traditions and practices that are oppressive to women to maintain the interests of the powerful and the rich, represented by elite men in communities,
- ignorance, which has kept Asians in the dark of oppression and hindered them from realising their full human potential,
- globalisation and its evil effects, which have kept the majority of Asians in the depth of poverty and exploitation.

Surprisingly, as Asians, steeped in a plurality of spirituality and religiosity, we hold on to our various faiths, and seek their liberating aspects for both women and men, even as we critique or question their oppressive aspects.

Hence, the consultation included panel sharing by representatives (a man and a woman) of each faith community sharing attempts at reinterpreting some religious texts and deconstructing traditions and practices that have been oppressive to women. We realise how such voices are still few, especially when for some of us, the religious texts are not even easily accessible, and that we therefore need to do more in this area.

In a workshop session, we tried to envision alternative Asian communities where:

- women and men are treated equally as full human beings,
- men and women are equal partners in decision making in all spheres of human life, in the economic, social, political, religious and domestic spheres,
- the marginalised and the oppressed are liberated and empowered.

We positively acknowledge the liberating themes and efforts that are emerging around Asia:

- The building of inclusive communities that
  - promote interrelatedness, mindfulness and loving kindness among all created beings,
  - support women's participation in all areas of life and genuine partnership with men,
  - encourage the voiceless to speak towards genuine dialogue,
  - critique practices and traditions that negate the dignity of human beings.

We support women's attempts at reading and interpreting sacred texts in context to recover their liberating, empowering and transforming themes.

As our commitment to addressing the problem of gender injustice in Asia, we clustered and prioritised the following issues and brainstormed on possible strategies, which include the following:

- Violence against women - awareness building, outreach and service to victims, advocacy and mobilization.
- Gender participation - advocacy for equal participation in policy and decision making, legislation and implementation.
- Gender justice in religious education - interfaith critique of education materials, development of interfaith curriculums that promote a culture of peace, and rereading of religious texts.
- Globalisation and consumerism - contemplative retreat to reclaim women's spirit, promotion of value-based products and fair markets in religious establishments and communities, training in sustainable economy and fair market analysis and feminist religious perspective.
- Giving blessings in Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian ways, and bonding ourselves in commitment to start transforming ourselves and our faith communities to help build our envisioned Asian communities.

Access at <http://www.cca.org.hk/> > CCA News > Past Issues > June 2004

***Conferences and consultations such as the one held in the Philippines reported below, are opportunities to name, and give first-hand testimony to, the impact that militarization, and war, state-designed and sponsored aggression, economic sanctions and globalisation can have on women and children. They can also celebrate women's resilience in such circumstances. However, again, in this context with many external factors impacting on women's lives, the emphasis lies in calling the Church to account for violence against women within it.***



## Ecumenical Asian Women's Consultation

Some thirty-two churchwomen from the Asian region attended an Asian Ecumenical Women's Consultation held in the Philippines in September 2004. They gathered from the four corners of the region: Korea to the north, Aotearoa New Zealand to the south, India to the west and Indonesia to the east.

The consultation began with a public meeting of local Filipino church leaders and women at which Dr Aruna Gnanadason, Executive Secretary of the Women's Programme, Justice, Peace and Creation Unit of the World Council of Churches launched the International Campaign *On the Wings of a Dove* in the Asian region.

Many different forms of violence against women and children were spoken about within the context of Violence in the Family, Violence in the Community and State along with strategies and methodologies, preventions and interventions for healing.

The hosts, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, showed just what an impact militarisation and war, state-designed and sponsored aggression, economic sanctions and globalisation has on women, children and the environment. They also showed the courage, the creativity and the vibrancy of the Filipino churches that together showed ecumenical strategies of witness and presence in situations of conflict, prayer and fasting, fact-finding missions and peace journeys, initiatives of cooperation and collaboration.

On the final night of the consultation, women from Batis - AWARE (Association of Women in Action for Rights and Empowerment) presented their own story through theatre. With superb presence and skill, they showed the power of Filipino women migrant workers who on their return home can reclaim their lives and the lives of their families.

The Batis Center works for the rights of women, empowers women to overcome their poverty and the hardships they have endured along the paths they have chosen, such as illegal recruitment in places like Japan and Korea, contract violation, physical, psychological and sexual abuse, and offers social case management, children and youth development, education and research programmes.

*“It wasn't violence 'out there' that deeply concerned the women. It was overcoming violence against women in the Church. Each woman brought with them their own stories of struggle with violence within the Church.”*

However, a common theme was struck as stories were offered at this ecumenical Asian gathering. It wasn't violence 'out there' that deeply concerned the women. It was overcoming violence against women in the Church. Each woman brought with them their own stories of struggle with violence within the Church. It raised the question of how women, whose energy is given to being there for others in their community, can be sustained when they encounter injustice and misuse and abuse of power within the institution they seek support and nurture.

Dr Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro in her presentation of a biblical-theological perspective raised the issue of religion being an accomplice in violence against women, recognising that as the architect of culture and tradition, religion has been a powerful influence in the social construct of women. Through the sacralization and idealization of family, the home had become the geography for violence against women and children. The Christian challenge was to move beyond blood and family ties and to build new relationships based on the Reign of God. “We are all sisters and brothers,” she said. “We are all called to look after the vulnerable and the weakest members.” The Church needs to find new ways of reading the Scriptures that focus on the context and the call to love, respect, to care and be non-judgemental. The path to healing would require rituals, the healing of memories through ‘anamnesis’ (re-membering), and seeking to overcome violence through acts of non-violence.

Many of the churches represented at the Consultation had yet to develop their own church policy and protocols to support the work of overcoming violence against women and children. The need to ecumenically embrace collaborative strategies, which included resources and guidelines for teaching seminaries, was recognised as an urgent matter by the Consultation.

The Asian-wide women’s consultation had set out to broaden the regional ecumenical network. It was intended to be an opportunity to listen and to learn from each other, and to share resources. It set out to deepen the understanding of violence against women and children that, as one of the most common and most widespread human rights abuses, not only denies justice and peace for the human community and the whole of creation, but also threatens the being of the church itself, its authenticity and witness.

The path to healing was recognised as one that will demand the response of the whole Christian community. As for the women who attended the Consultation, when they bid each other farewell, their resolve was clear, “spread the word... make it known... we shall no longer be silent!”

*Details at <http://www.ccanz.net.nz/dov/happening/philippines.html>*

# workshops for education and empowerment

*Three examples of 'workshops' have been chosen, representative of some of the more focused work happening within churches and church bodies. Unlike the Conferences and Consultations, these are not 'one-off' events, but elements within longer term strategies for overcoming violence against women, each using a different method for some form of consciousness-raising. First we read of a workshop following a solidarity visit to Timor Lorosa'e by members of the Christian Conference of Asia, leading to a*



*process of listening and encouragement; then an account of one in a series of workshops on gender awareness and leadership development, organised by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, for participants from WARC member churches in the Pacific. Finally, The Tamar Campaign, using contextual Bible study, is an example of a whole campaign programme arising from a workshop in South Africa.*

## **Breaking the Silence - Women moving from darkness to light in Timor Lorosa'e**

Christian Conference of Asia

*Extracts from a report by Cora Tabing-Reyes, Executive Secretary CCA, in CCA News Vol.37. No. 3 September 2002*

*“We spoke of having strength because of God’s presence and of being strong like a stone, but also of being simple and basic like a stone to build something good for God. On the other hand, a woman shared that she was ‘like a paper with nothing on it. People write on it, get bored, crumple it and throw it away.’”*

At Timor Lorosa'e airport, a big billboard picture of smiling Timorese children announces: “All together for one future of Timor Lorosa'e. Todos juntos pelo futuro de Timor.” And leaving the airport, one cannot but notice the big white crosses on top of the hills. They speak of the predominant Christian religion in Timor Lorosa'e. The crosses symbolise the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus remembered during the Holy Week. Indeed, they symbolise the suffering and deaths of Timorese people from 1975 to 1999 in the hands of Indonesian militia invaders. But they also symbolise their hope to rise above these dark memories so that they can move on to a new future, a new time, now that they have freedom as a new nation after their long struggle.

In this new future, members of CCA are invited to participate, to be in solidarity, to express concretely our being the body of Christ. Thus Rev. Francisco M. de Vasconcelos, moderator of Igreja Protest-ante Iha Timor Lorosa'e (IPTL) and a CCA General Committee member, organised a visit on 20-21 July 2002 to Los Palos Imanuel Church, in the easternmost district of Lautem, a five-hour drive from Dili across the hills and along the coast.

After the visit, we held a two-day women's workshop at the IPTL Centre in Dili on 22-23 July. Twenty women attended, representing three local churches of IPTL, the Church of God, the Pentecostal Church and Bethel ELSADAI in Dili. This was the first time that this had happened, according to them. Within the framework of developing trust, we established the climate of acceptance through introductions and orientation. We used symbols to tell about ourselves, our strengths and how we feel about wanting to grow, to write experiences, to be a light like a

candle and to serve God and people. We spoke of having strength because of God's presence and of being strong like a stone, but also of being simple and basic like a stone to build something good for God. On the other hand, a woman shared that she was “like a paper with nothing on it. People write on it, get bored, crumple it and throw it away.” At times, we were in silence, empathising with the teary-eyed. At other times we shared in laughter.

The dyadic and big-group sharing of stories of experiences and problems in the home and in the community brought to the surface gender issues of violence against women, prostitution, overwork, women's lack of education, poverty, problems in the family (in communication and in parenting), the creeping Westernisation of culture, health issues such as HIV/AIDS, the need for reconciliation based on truth as expressed by an Indonesian woman who opts to stay in Timor, religious tolerance, living in harmony in the neighbourhood, trauma counselling and understanding the role of women in church and society during this time of nation-building. "Sisters in Asia, please pray for us!" This is their plea.

We prayed together, reflected on biblical stories of Jesus healing women and having them as partners, reviewed the issues that surfaced from the sharing and discussed the concept of gender, though very briefly. They shared the situation and program priorities of women in their churches. In most churches not all women are able to attend activities because of preoccupation with traditional practices and ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, which take much of their time and limited money. Towards the end of the workshop, the women decided to work together for fellowship, prayer and study and formed the 'Persekutuan Wanita Kristen se Timor Lorosa'e (Fellowship of Christian Women in Timor Lorosa'e)

The visit initiated the coming together of church women from Dili to listen to one another and send their message to sisters and brothers in Asia. One participant said 'It is a healing experience to be together, breaking our silence,'  
*Access at <http://www.cca.org.hk/> > CCA News > Past Issues > September 2002*

***The workshop reported on below uses a model developed by WARC but adapted to address specific challenges raised by the culture in which it is delivered***



## Engendering Change in the Pacific

World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

WARC workshop on gender awareness and leadership development – Brisbane Australia Nov. 2000

*From a report by Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, WARC, Department of Partnership of Women and Men*

"God in Christ gives up culture for us, so that culture is seen in functional terms, at the service of the gospel, and not in absolute terms," said Rev Professor James Haire, national president of the Uniting Church of Australia. This principle "must be applied to gender issues in all cultures".

Haire was one of the speakers at a WARC workshop on gender awareness and leadership development which was held in Brisbane, Australia, in November 2000. Talking about gender in different cultural situations was a central element in the workshop.

Exploring our experiences within our specific cultural contexts as we hear the word of God challenges the churches to re-read the gospel message and to re-examine the role of women. According to Haire, "the gospel must live in each culture. However, it stands over against culture and will always be engaged in a double-wrestle with the culture."



In the islands of the Pacific, women are placed socially within the private sphere of the home. Their function is to nurture children, husbands and extended families. This domestic role translates into their role within the church, where they are excluded from areas of ministry that are seen as a male preserve. In some cases, they are not allowed to enter the pulpit. Some churches now allow women access to theological study, but they expect women to study separately from men. Women who have been trained theologically do not find it easy to be accepted as pastors.

Culture is a powerful force. In many cases, it is used to defend and preserve traditional male and female roles. Often, it is an excuse for not taking action. We need to ask: when does faith endorse our culture, and when does it challenge it? We need discernment, to value the good aspects of our culture and to recognize the need to change aspects that are bad.

*“We need to ask: when does faith endorse our culture, and when does it challenge it? We need discernment, to value the good aspects of our culture and to recognize the need to change aspects that are bad.”*

Participants in the workshop, the fourth to be organized by WARC since the 23rd general council, were drawn from member churches in the Pacific. They came - women and men - from Australia, Hawaii, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

In a Bible study we discussed some of the problems that come with picturing God in traditional, male, ruling-class roles which typically justify the subordination of women and their exclusion from social or church leadership. The Bible calls us to go beyond such stereotyped pictures of God to a more inclusive understanding. This expanded horizon should also lead us beyond stereotyped male and female social roles to the fuller realization of the human potential of both women and men.

Our perspective is based on the principle of gender equality and has justice as its goal. The aim is renewal of gender relations in the search for the inclusive community initiated and intended by Jesus Christ. Participants went away from the workshop with the hope that their churches could open dialogue on including women as full partners in God's mission.

Access at <http://www.warc.ch/com/index.html> > Update > December 2000

***While Biblical texts have been used, at times, to reinforce the oppression of women, the story of the Tamar Campaign, detailed below, offers a powerful example of the way in which a contextual reading of a passage from the Bible can challenge patterns of unjust and oppressive behaviour, can open eyes, and change perceptions.***

## **The Tamar Campaign**

The Institute for the Study of the Bible and Worker Ministry Project (ISB &WM)

*This account of the campaign is an edited version of an article in Ministerial Formation - World Council of Churches - Education and Ecumenical Formation 103 July 2002*

Every two years the Institute for the Study of the Bible and Worker Ministry Project (ISB&WM) hosts a major workshop which brings together ordinary African Christians from churches, Christian organizations, Bible study groups, and all the

projects the ISB&WM is associated with. The purpose of the workshop is to offer an opportunity to reflect theologically on a major issue confronting those in the South African context. The theme for the 1996 workshop held at the Koinonia Conference Centre in Botha's Hill (near Pietermaritzburg), from the 23-27 September, was *Women and the Bible in Southern Africa*. More than ninety women from all over the country attended; there were also guests from Kenya, Brazil, Malawi, Swaziland, and Lesotho.

The workshop was divided into three sub-themes: Women and Culture, Women and Violence, and Women and the Church. The theme for the third day was Women and Violence. The day started with devotions led by the Lesotho Women's Group. They read from 2 Samuel 13:12-18 and related the story to their own context. They emphasised that the laws of both the country and the church grant men all the privileges to prosecute, divorce, and excommunicate. The devotion was followed by a Bible study based on the same passage, 2 Samuel 13:1-22, the rape of Tamar. (See 'Ministerial Formation' for the questions used in the Bible Study)

*“This campaign has changed many people’s lives; Tamar’s protest has given many women a voice. Young men have been infuriated by the actions of the many men in the story who are accomplices in the rape of Tamar. This has encouraged them to promote a different culture of respect and protecting their loved ones. Church leaders have used this text as a tool to encourage a spirit of openness within churches.”*

### **The Tamar Campaign**

Since the workshop in 1996 the text of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 has continued to be used in contextual Bible studies. Contextual Bible study is a form of Bible study in which ordinary people are given the opportunity to speak for themselves about how they hear God speaking to them through the Bible. Biblically trained scholars enter into a partnership with ordinary (often illiterate or semi-literate) Bible readers, each bringing their resources to a contextual interpretation of the Bible.

Bible studies on this text are now a common feature of the work of the Women and Gender Programme of the ISB &WM. At the end of the 1996 workshop the ISB&WM was challenged to appoint someone who would work alongside women, and towards the end of 1998 a Coordinator of the Women and Gender Programme was appointed. Since her appointment Tamar's story has been used in many Bible studies to create space for women (and men) to break the silence about abuse in many varied contexts.

Following this appointment, the Tamar Campaign was launched in 2000, with the aim of encouraging the churches to speak out against violence against women and children and with the related aim of supporting survivors of violence.

In deciding exactly what the aims of a campaign like this would be, it was acknowledged that most churches saw the issue of gender violence as something that belonged in the private sphere as opposed to being openly discussed by either

churches or communities. It was felt that the 16 Days of Activism on No Violence against women, November 25 to December 10, was a perfect opportunity to launch this campaign. Three women worked together to produce the first resources of the campaign. They enlisted the help of a poster designer to portray the message of pain and suffering which we as the church and society have chosen to hide or ignore.

The organisers decided that they wanted churches to openly speak out against abuse. They had learnt from previous workshops that the church responded with unhelpful suggestions to survivors of abuse. Women are usually encouraged to pray for their abusive partners or to persevere in the abusive relationship. More often than not it was the woman's faith that was questioned instead of the abuser being confronted.

They also realized that texts which dealt with the issue of abuse are not popular in churches. They are not read or used for sermons. They felt it was important for these texts to be read publicly, knowing from experience that these texts encouraged women to share their own stories of pain, and only then can they be referred to places where they could get help.

A common understanding of abuse was that it was primarily physical. The organisers of the Tamar campaign felt it was important for women to be aware of the other dimensions of abuse, including sexual, economic, verbal, psychological and spiritual dimensions. They believed that their cultures and religion clearly provide a setting for all these forms of abuse to take place without being reported or challenged, and that most women have accepted this as their lot, believing this is how God has ordered the world! They were aware that some women believe the other kinds of abuse are not as bad as physical abuse!

It was therefore believed to be important for ministers to use the pulpit to challenge the notion of accepting abuse as part of life, and that it was fair to ask them to use the Sundays of the sixteen days of activism for sermons on gender violence, its causes and consequences. While the campaign received much support from those churches and leaders who had been exposed to a Bible Study on Tamar's story, it was found that those who had not encountered Tamar and her story were reluctant to take this campaign seriously.

With the assistance of colleagues with computer skills, the initial resources, posters and pamphlets were designed. In 2001 a newspaper that had different articles on violence against women was published. This newspaper was distributed to many churches and organizations as an insert in Challenge magazine, a prophetic South African ecumenical magazine.

Initially it was hoped to make this an interfaith campaign. This proved to be difficult because the Bible was the main resource, though other faith communities were asked to identify texts in their sacred texts that might be useful in such a campaign. As many human rights organizations as possible were asked to co-operate in this initiative, especially those that were committed to the emancipation of women.

The response was not as widespread as hoped, demonstrating just how difficult it is to tackle gender issues in this context. However a few faith based organizations committed themselves to the dissemination of the material in churches and communities. These organizations also contributed financially to the then limited

funds for the Campaign. The staff of all the committed organizations used every available opportunity to promote the Campaign.

The organisers write, “The issue of HIV and AIDS kept coming up each time we facilitated workshops on gender violence. One woman asked, “What would have happened if Amnon had also infected Tamar with HIV?” This was then a burning issue at the time as our government was struggling with the rights of women who are raped and infected by their rapists. Another burning issue was raised by women who claimed that no matter how informed and empowered they are, if their partners do not understand the realities of gender violence and HIV and AIDS then their lives are not any better. At the beginning of 2002 we therefore introduced ‘men’ and ‘gender work’ and we also added the link between gender violence and HIV and AIDS.

At this point, it was found that the poster and pamphlets needed to be redesigned to incorporate the way in which the Campaign was being shaped by our local contexts. With the help of a feminist artist, a poster was produced that incorporates all the different issues that it is necessary to address with this Campaign. The new posters are brighter and more explicit. Young people particularly have found them more challenging and easier to understand. Indeed, the poster on its own can be used as a tool for discussion. These innovations were made possible thanks to substantial funding from the Australian Agency for International Development’s Addressing Gender Violence Fund over a period of three years.

A range of different methodologies are used to achieve the Campaign’s aims. The basic approach is contextual Bible study, but sometimes there just is not enough time or an appropriate opportunity to facilitate a workshop or Bible Study, and so the campaign has a flexibility and uses whatever amount of time there is and whatever resources are available. For example, at the beginning of 2004, in collaboration with PACSA, a group of performers were invited to perform a powerful stage play on rape, *Tsapeng: the third testament*. This play is based on an actual case of child rape. It is described as having “a profoundly powerful message of pain and hope with amazing Christologies and images of God.” This event was attended by activists, church leaders, young men and women. Following an engaging and moving discussion, community members and church leaders committed themselves to being proactive and to raise the alarm if children and women are raped.

The organisers write, “ because the Campaign addresses issues which are a growing problem in our communities, it usually is received very well. People are always shocked and disappointed to find that there are texts that are hardly ever read in our churches. When we ask groups to write down their plans of action after workshops, one of their goals is to challenge their leaders to read the texts which we use for the Campaign.”

The posters and pamphlets have been distributed at every opportunity. This has resulted in a greater awareness in all the sectors of our society and beyond. While attending a conference in Zimbabwe for church leaders who are infected/personally affected by HIV and AIDS, the Women and Gender Coordinator was given an opportunity to speak, and the Tamar Campaign was one of the things she talked about. This resulted in her being invited to run the Campaign in Zambia, and so the following year she went there at the invitation of Aglow Zambia, a women’s organisation, to launch the Tamar Campaign in Zambia. The Campaign was not

only recognized as a powerful tool by church leaders in Zambia but also received support from government departments.

This campaign has changed many people's lives; Tamar's protest has given many women a voice. Young men have been infuriated by the actions of the many men in the story who are accomplices in the rape of Tamar. This has encouraged them to promote a different culture of respect and protecting their loved ones. Church leaders have used this text as a tool to encourage a spirit of openness within churches. These issues were for a long time seen as taboo and had no place within the church. The increase in the number of children and women who are raped has forced the church to recover its prophetic voice and Tamar's story has provided important resources and has built a capacity for doing this.

*Ministerial Formation available from P.O.Box 2100, 150, route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland*

*also available at <http://www.wcc-coe.org>*

# projects and programmes

***Churches and church bodies throughout the world support and co-ordinate projects and programmes aimed at improving the lives of women where they are acutely affected by different forms of violence. Many different kinds of response are offered, some very practical, others focusing on support and empowerment. Often this is done in partnership with other agencies. Details of examples of such programmes are included below<sup>8</sup>.***

***The first of two accounts of practical responses, describes a project set up by a church in the aftermath of a conflict which impacted in particular way on women and girls.***

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<sup>8</sup> Project descriptions are taken from accounts of organisers, lightly edited.





## **Breaking the Silence (No Violence Against Women and Girls in the Church)**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone, West Africa

Workshop led by Hon. Rev Marie J Barnett September 2000

*“Sexual violence in particular and all forms of violence and inhuman treatment and injustice have been directed at women of all ages, often including very young girls and children.”*

The account of this project begins by identifying the effect of 10-year-old armed conflict on women. “Abduction, Amputation, Rape and Sexual Slavery of Women and Girls, Child Abuse, Use of Drugs, Gross Human Rights Abuse, Injustice and Poverty directed against Women, Girls and Children have been the most abhorrent and distressing features of the 10 year old internal armed conflict. Sexual violence in particular and all forms of violence and inhuman treatment and injustice have been directed at women of all ages, often including very young girls and children.”

It notes that The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone (ELCSL) is engulfed in this social calamity and trying to respond to the challenges created. This report identifies some remedies and needs for women and notes some things that are being done by women with the accompaniment of ELCSL

- A project called Women’s Income Generating Project (WIGRAP) was presented and supported by ELCA
- A Micro credit scheme has been set up in each of the 15 congregations
- Workshops on income generating have been organized. Tie and Dye, Soap making, and Gari making are in progress
- An Amputee Trust Fund has been established. The women have started a wet feeding programme every Saturday for Amputees and their children at the camp.

***The Central Violence Intervention Programme of the Salvation Army in the Australian Southern Territories is an example of a church body collaborating effectively with legal and social agencies to address the issue of domestic violence.***



## **The Central Violence Intervention Programme**

The Salvation Army – Australia Southern Territory

The Central Violence Intervention Program is an interagency initiative to reduce domestic violence. The program is a collaborative venture between The Adelaide Magistrates Court, The Department for Correctional Services, The Department of Human Services, The Salvation Army and the South Australia Police.

### **Service Model**

The program offers specialist services to men, women and children experiencing domestic violence. Its broad aim is the establishment of an integrated and co-

ordinated interagency and criminal justice response that promotes the safety of women and children and challenges men's use of violence against their partners or ex-partners and children.

***Four principles underpin intervention:***

- The safety of women and children is paramount at all times
- Men who abuse are responsible and will be held fully accountable for their actions
- Interventions will be respectful
- The program is accountable to the experience of those who have been abused

***The model incorporates three main features:***

1. The location of services within the criminal justice system
2. Interagency partnerships to promote timely and consistent intervention
3. Dedicated specialist domestic violence interventions. Interventions are generally up to 6 month's duration.

**Referrals**

The program accepts referrals from:

- The Adelaide Magistrates Court (Family Violence Court)
- The Child and Family Investigations Units (SAPol)
- Department of Correctional Services
- Priority is given to Court referred participants.

**Eligibility Criteria**

The Central Violence Intervention Program provides a service to men who acknowledge their violence and abuse as problematic and are prepared to work on ceasing their behaviours. Women whose partners (or ex-partners) are clients of the program are offered support and information. The team is responsive to issues of domestic violence occurring within heterosexual relationships, which are co-habiting or separated, and with or without children. The status of the relationship does not preclude eligibility.

**Services**

The program offers specialist services to men, women and children. Services are tailored to meet the needs of each of the client groups and include: · Domestic violence counselling for both men and women · Groups for men addressing their violent and abusive behaviour · Support for women and children · Information and referral · Advocacy and liaison · Assistance to access other services

**Programme Staff**

The Central Violence Intervention Program team consists of 6 staff: 4 employed by The Salvation Army and 2 by the Department for Correctional Services. The roles are complementary and structured to provide a co-ordinated and considered picture of the impact of violence and abuse on each individual. The staff consists of a Coordinator, a Courts Unit Worker, two Men's Workers, a Women's Worker, and a Children's Worker

Details at <http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/cvip>



*practical response, and implements one of the Dundee Principles (9. “to ensure funding in order to realise goals”) It can support groundbreaking initiatives such as in the first example here where scholarships were awarded to women who were the first to be ordained by their churches.*



## **Theological Education Scholarship fund**

World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

A nineteen year old woman from the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil, a twenty-nine year old woman of the Evangelical Church of Maraland in India, and a thirty-five year old married mother of two children from the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda, have all received support from the WARC's theological education scholarship fund for women in the south.

Lack of access to theological education is just one of many obstacles faced by women in the south who feel called to ministry. The department of partnership of women and men launched the theological education scholarship fund for women in the south in 1998. The first awards were made in 2002. Women from Brazil, Republic of Congo, India, Kenya, Latvia, Myanmar (Burma), Rwanda, South Africa and Togo have received scholarships. In two cases, scholarships were awarded to the first women to be considered by their churches for the ordained ministry.

The scholarship fund builds on the foundational work of the department in gender awareness and leadership development of WARC, which has opened a new dialogue on the place of women in the church. Some of the churches that have taken part in this work have responded by putting in place mechanisms for the ordination of women. Feedback from church leaders to WARC emphasizes that the support offered by this fund is significant in fostering partnership of women and men and enabling women to take their place alongside men in church leadership.

*Details at <http://www.warc.ch> > News and Communication > WARC Update > past editions > May 2004 > 'Scholarship Fund for Women...'*

***Support from the Mennonite Global Gift Sharing Programme has enabled the process of bringing together Latin American women theologians and women church leaders, inspired by the 'good practice' of their African sisters, to resist the threat of patriarchal systems and move forward in promoting the well being of women.***



## **Mennonite World Conference Global Gift Sharing Program**

*Distributed internationally by Mennonite World Conference with permission from Timbrel, a magazine for Mennonite women. April 7, 2004*

*Extracts from an article by Cathleen Hockman-Wert for Timbrel, March-April 2004*

Dream Develops for Latin American Women Theologians Group

Inspired by the gathering of African women theologians at Africa 2003, a Colombian woman and a Mexican woman are in the process of organizing Latin American theologians.

With the support of the MWC Global Gift Sharing program Alix Lozano (a previous recipient of Mennonite Women USA's International Women's Fund) and Ofelia García are beginning an inventory of Latin American women with theological training, current theological students, and women leaders in the church.

The next step will be regional or national gatherings of the women. Then representatives of the regions will meet together; the goal is to have this gathering at the July 2005 Latin American Anabaptist Consultation in Costa Rica.

Connection with the Global Gift Sharing program lends needed support to this dream, Alix and Ofelia explain in their letter to MWC. "The patriarchal system is still strongly present in many communities and it is felt as a threat when women attempt to move forward with a project for their well-being," they say. "So we consider it important ... to have in principle an affirmation from a team or commission. ... May the Spirit illuminate and encourage us to [develop] this dream that was inspired in good part by our African sisters."

"MWC Global Gift Sharing sees this activity as an integral part of the work which we are encouraging and facilitating, and we note that it has the specific endorsement of the MWC General Council," says staff Tim Lind in his reply.

*Details at <http://www.mwc-cmm.org/News/MWC/040407rls2.html>*

***Next come two pieces of work based on supporting and strengthening women through a form of accompaniment.***

***In the first, experienced women workers from countries outside Britain act as catalysts for co-operation between parish churches and women's refuges, illustrating the fruitfulness of seeing violence against women as an issue for all women and all churches throughout the world and the benefits of learning from one another's experience. This project sees 'mission' for the church as involving practical engagement with victims and survivors of domestic violence. The account of the project also offers an agreed definition of domestic violence as a necessary starting point for such work.***



### **"All Talk"**

The Church of England: Diocese of Chester - The Parish Refuge Project

The background to this project is that in 1997 the Chester Diocesan Committee for Social Responsibility was approached by the Church Mission society to join the celebration of its 200th Anniversary in 1999. The celebration year would illustrate the nature of worldwide partnership in mission by bringing teams of specialized workers from the world church to work in an area of mission designated as a priority by a diocese. Domestic violence was identified as a priority.

In April 1999 three skilled and experienced women from different parts of the world arrived in the UK and were placed in three parishes, which each had a women's refuge within their boundary. The women link workers acted as catalysts to stimulate and promote effective relationships between the parish and the refuge. A proportion of their time was spent at the refuge supporting, listening and befriending women and children. They also had the responsibility of promoting the aims of the project at every level of church life, and recruiting and working alongside volunteers from the parish. The practical outcome of the work included parish

volunteers working regularly in the refuge and the church offering services such as parent and toddler groups and children's groups. At the outset it was believed that such engagement would challenge as well as give substance to the church's witness at both local and diocesan level.

One of the first tasks of those involved in the project was to reach a definition of domestic violence that would be acceptable to all parties.

### **A Definition of Domestic Violence**

The process of reaching a definition, although expensive in terms of time, proved of great worth to the success of the project, in that it helped to clarify several areas where misunderstanding could be anticipated, and ensure that the values of the project were made as transparent as possible.

Those working on the project stated that:

“Working in the area of domestic violence is a new venture for many of us. It is essential that we share a basic common understanding of what domestic violence is and how we should act in response. We invite all who participate in the project to consider and commit themselves to the principles outlined below.”

“Domestic violence is:

- The emotional, physical, sexual or psychological abuse of a person by their partner, family member or someone with whom there is, or has been, a relationship.
- It involves a range of different types of abuse which may include: severe physical assault, rape and sexual abuse, emotional abuse, including humiliation, degradation, verbal insult, threats and withholding access to money, support or other means to have control over one's own life.
- Men and women are created in the image of God for mutual loving relationship. Domestic violence destroys this relationship, damaging individuals and the society they comprise. Therefore, although the abuse often takes place behind closed doors, it is not a private matter. Many forms of domestic violence are punishable by law, but even when they are not, domestic violence is to be tackled as an offence against humanity and a sin against God.
- Domestic violence can affect anyone, regardless of race, class, age, religion, sexuality, mental or physical ability. However the majority of offenders are men and their victim's women, so that the primary focus of this project is the female survivors of male violence.
- No one ever deserves to be abused. The responsibility for resolving difficulties in a relationship lies with both partners, but abuse is always the abuser's fault. A woman cannot 'cause' the violence of her partner and cannot be held responsible for it.
- The experience of such women and children and of those who work with them is the starting point for our action and should guide the development of the project.
- Women's choices must be respected. Domestic violence destroys a woman's ability to be responsible for her own life. In any relationship with an abused woman we must aim for that recovery of self esteem and confidence which enables her to make her own decisions.

- Supporting women in the decision-making process involves recognizing the reality of their relationship with the men who hurt them. There are many reasons why women stay with abusive partners or return to them – fear, love, financial dependency, isolation, religion or children. Often a woman wants the violence to stop but the relationship to continue.
- Our approach to tackling domestic violence is holistic, involving active support for the woman, changing attitudes in ourselves and our community, and, where appropriate, addressing the abuser’s need to stop his behaviour and to change his attitudes.”

“We have a great deal to learn and are aware that we must proceed with humility. The church has been silent for a long time, but we want to be a part of ending that silence, working with others in our community to confront the evil that is domestic violence.”

*For details contact  
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***This second example again shows the value of churches working ecumenically to make it possible for those with the appropriate skills to live and work alongside others in order to realise the vision of freedom, equality for women, and partnership with men in God’s kingdom.***



**WEAVE - Women’s Ecumenical Accompaniment  
for Vision and Empowerment**  
Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)

*From a report by Dominica Faurillo in CCA News, Vol. 38 No.3, September 2003*

WEAVE is a women’s project that facilitates the ecumenical sharing and capacity building among CCA member councils and churches. This project enables sharing and learning together in a sustained way as an ecumenical accompanier lives and works with a more needy member council in another country.

The first project is a response to the need of women of the Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) member churches to be organized, develop their leadership capability and build their capacity in organizational work in serving church and community as ecumenical women. The National Council of Churches in the Philippines and CCA arranged for a lay church worker of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines to accompany the ecumenical women and also the KCC from 2003-2004.

Women of all ages, the girl child, the lass, the teenager, adult, retiree, elderly.

Ecumenically embracing in fellowship, whatever your race, creed, color, and status may be.

Accompanying one another, going together hand in hand, not ahead, not behind, reaching for a


Vision - the dream we want to be - free, equal, and in partnership with men in God's kingdom

Empowering, affirming, demonstrating, transforming all of creation for God's reign.

—Dominica Faurillo—

*Details at <http://www.cca.org.hk/> > CCA News > Past Issues > September 2003*

***Finally in this section, a description of how a research project was used by the Methodist Church of Great Britain to acquire reliable data and give direction to the church in its work on overcoming violence against women. This is an example of the significance of research in deepening understanding of an issue, dispelling myths and acting as the basis for further study and action. It leads to the recognition, that among other things, there is a need for greater understanding of the theological perspectives which underpin the churches' response to issues of violence, family, marriage, and forgiveness<sup>9</sup>.***



## **Domestic Violence and the Methodist Church –The Way Forward?**

The Methodist Church of Great Britain

Authors of the Research: Dr. Lorraine Radford and Ms Cecilia Cappel  
University of Surrey Roehampton, Southlands College, London  
Funded by: Commissioned by: Southlands Methodist Centre

In 1999 The Way Forward Project was set up to explore the Methodist Church of Great Britain's response to domestic violence and to identify ways to maximise the use of the Church as a resource in violence prevention.

The specific aims of the project were:

- i) to review the Church's response to domestic violence when ministers or church members are directly approached for help or support, particularly in the context of 'pastoral care';
- ii) to explore with ministers and with survivors what constitutes a 'good' or 'helpful' response;
- iii) to review the contributions that ministers and church members make to supporting domestic violence prevention initiatives through their broader church work, their involvement with community projects and in their corporate and worshipping life.

The aim of the research project was to gain as broad and as detailed a picture as

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<sup>9</sup> As in the first of the Dundee Principles

possible of the Church's involvement in the field of domestic violence. Lay workers and ministers were asked about their experiences of domestic violence, both personally and in their work, by means of:

- i. 1000 postal questionnaires sent to ministers and lay workers during the summer of 2000. The questionnaire asked about their direct and indirect work regarding domestic violence, and their own attitudes, beliefs and experiences of abuse as adults and/or children. 557 questionnaires were returned completed and were computer-analysed.
- ii. Follow-up interviews with a small number of ministers (17) to explore in more depth issues raised in the questionnaire survey;
- iii. In depth interviews and communications with a small number of domestic violence survivors (11) who were also ministers, church members or lay workers;
- iv. Information gathering on good practice examples and initiatives that have developed with the help of some Church support.

A summary of the results of this research includes the following:

### **The Experience of Domestic Violence in the Church**

The research showed that domestic violence is clearly an issue that has affected the lives of many Church members, especially, though not exclusively, women. Whilst 83% said that they had never personally experienced domestic violence in their relationships, 17% of the questionnaire respondents had done so, 13% several times and 4% frequently. The prevalence and the type of abuse reported showed stark differences in the experiences of men and women. 1 in 4 female respondents (the same level as found in the British Crime Survey 1999) and 1 in 9 male respondents reported experiencing domestic violence {personally} from a partner as an adult. The main perpetrators of domestic violence were husbands and male partners (53% of situations).

Domestic violence often persists over a long period. While 25% of those who had experienced violence had done so for a year or less (this included some male respondents who described 'one off' incidents), 54% had experienced it for up to 5 years and 21% for 10 years or more. One female minister reported living with her abuser for 30 years. Nine respondents said that the abuse was still going on. 1 in 5 respondents (19%) had lived with and witnessed domestic violence as children.

### **Attitudes about domestic violence**

Overall the research found a polarisation in views about domestic violence among ministers and lay workers. There was some disagreement about how domestic violence is defined and how prevalent it is, but considerable agreement about the way that it affects people's lives. This most probably reflects the different levels of experience respondents had from directly working with these issues. There was no association between beliefs about domestic violence and age or gender, although younger ministers and lay workers were more likely to say they were unsure about their views. Female ministers and lay workers were more likely to say they disagreed with the view that domestic violence is mostly perpetrated by males against their female partners. Female ministers were also more likely to disagree with the views that violence stops on separation and women invariably go back to live with their abusers.

## **Christian Beliefs**

Almost three-quarters of ministers and lay workers surveyed (74%) felt that their approach to domestic violence had been influenced by their Christian beliefs. Some ministers interviewed felt that the Church was either out of touch on this issue or seen to be out of touch with the rest of society. Christian beliefs seemed to afford ministers little guidance on how to support families living with domestic violence. Even though many said that they were deeply concerned about the issue and would try to help families in this situation, the majority seemed confused and unsure. Many saw a conflict in the Church's thinking on marriage, endurance, redemption, forgiveness and violence. A few discussed justice and the importance of transformation in the context of violence and abuse. All the survivors interviewed said they stayed longer with abusive partners because they felt they had an extra responsibility to preserve their marriages.

Although survivors had found individual colleagues who were very understanding and supportive, the Church as a whole was perceived to have dealt with the issue very poorly, wanting, as one respondent put it 'brush the violence under the carpet'. Perpetrators, especially partners of ministers, were not expected to do anything about the abuse. Christian forgiveness was mostly seen to mean continuing to welcome an abuser as a member of the Church while an ex partner was excluded from Church attendance by fear.

As the researchers commented "In general, we were left with the conclusion that Christian beliefs had played an ambiguous role in survivors' journey to safety, in some ways helping but in other ways hindering their efforts to overcome the abuse."

## **Working against Domestic Violence**

Many survivors found there were considerable resources available in the Church to help them to overcome the abuse – practical support, emotional support, generally 'rallying round'. However, the level of support varied according to location. In this respect the Methodist Church response is similar to that of the police, social services and other agencies. Getting a helpful response is dependent on where a person lives and the level of awareness of the issue. It means entering into the, 'domestic violence lottery'.

Ministers who are abused by partners feel that they are in an especially vulnerable position, fearing loss of their jobs, home and vocation if they talk about the violence that is happening to them.

The report also comments on:

### **Direct work with families living with domestic violence and Indirect and Community Work**

#### **The Way Forward – the Church as Resource**

The research clearly indicated the need for the for the Church to develop a policy on Domestic Violence and to evolve effective strategies for assisting ministers, lay workers and congregations in helping those who come to the Church for support.

The research points to many practical and theological issues which need to be addressed as the church and individual Christians seek to move forward in this area. There are many implications around the theology of family life which have

emerged as part of the study and these need to be addressed as part of the overall response of the Church.

Training is seen as an area where the Church needs to develop resources in collaboration and consultation with other agencies.

Safety and security are seen as an issue and appropriate training should be made available to everyone who is involved in Domestic Violence issues including a data base of referral agencies and clear guidelines for good practice.

### **Recommendations**

In order that the issues raised in this report are taken forward it was recommended that:

The Methodist Council appoint a task group to include members of the Women's Network, the Family and Personal Relationships Committee and the Faith and Order Committee to manage and direct further work and study in the following four areas:

1. Theology

We recommend that, this group develops theological understanding on the theology of the family, the theology of violence, the theology of forgiveness and the theology of marriage

2. Policy

To develop a policy on domestic violence for the Methodist Church

3. Practice Guidelines To develop practice guidelines for use in the Methodist Church

4. Training

Working in co-operation with, and recognising the expertise of, other agencies working in this field, to identify and develop appropriate training on domestic violence to be used throughout the Methodist Church.

5. Monitoring

That the task group report back to Conference 2003 with progress and developments in these four areas.

On 1 July 2002, British Methodist Conference adopted these recommendations.

*Details from <http://www.methodist.org.uk> > Methodist conference > Methodist church reports > 2002 Domestic Violence and the Methodist Church*



# policies and protocols

***Churches the world over from all denominations are beginning to adopt policies and protocols to address, formally, various manifestations of violence against women, both as found within the structures and practices of the churches themselves, and as guidelines for pastoral care of women affected by violence. These statements, policies and protocols serve also to 'break the silence' that has concealed the extent of the abuse of women. They also challenge the myth that has existed in the churches, that 'it doesn't happen here'. Examples from different parts of the world and various church traditions are offered here, to show the breadth of this kind of response and as inspiration for those seeking to put similar policies in place.***

***The first five examples relate policies and protocols governing church responses to incidences of sexual abuse and harassment.***





## **Anglican Diocese of Melbourne**

Power and trust in the Church

Responding to the issue of Abuse and Harassment within the Anglican Church, the Diocese of Melbourne has produced a discussion paper, updated in July 2003. This offers an example of the processes involved in formulating such guidelines.

*The report of this process contains sections relating to:*

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour

What Defines Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour?

What is the Effect of Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour?

Complainants

Respondents

Community

Code of Good Practice - Our system prior to 2003 - The Review Team's Conclusions -Proposals for a New Protocol -The Role of the Director of Professional Standards - The Professional Standards Committee

The Panel -The New Protocol Process -The Complainant -The Respondent - Investigation and Discipline - Pastoral Strategy - Completion of the Process

This Review of the Church's response to complaints of sexual harassment and sexual abuse in the Diocese follows a series of initiatives by previous Archbishops which were intended to address the issue.

On 5 June 2002, The Archbishop appointed the Review Team to:

1. Review the sexual harassment protocols, child protection policy and Code of Conduct;
2. Review sexual abuse (of children and adults) in Anglican parishes, schools, welfare institutions and other agencies;
3. Consult with Heads of Schools;
4. Review the case load and case outcomes of the Committee for Dealing with Sexual Harassment Complaints and their Advisers;
5. Review the way the Diocese handles such complaints and recommend to the Archbishop any changes that should be made; and
6. Make recommendations for education in these matters of clergy, church workers and churchwardens.

The Review Team:

1. Shared the work and communicated regularly with the Archbishop;
2. Reviewed three Diocesan documents "Sexual Harassment: How To Complain", "Protocol For Dealing With Sexual Harassment Complaints" and "Code of Good Practice For Clergy";

3. Undertook a review of the relevant literature and some media;
4. Consulted with the current and some past Committee members;
5. Wrote to, interviewed and consulted with all current and some previous Bishops and Archdeacons, other administrative officers and some clergy and laypersons in the Diocese;
6. Considered the current Protocols for the Uniting Church, the Churches of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Anglican Dioceses of Brisbane, Gippsland, Ballarat, Bendigo and Wangaratta;
7. Attempted to audit known incidents of inappropriate sexual behaviour by clergy and church officers that occurred or came to notice in the last ten years;
8. Reviewed the relevant law; and
9. Consulted with and provided input into the deliberations of the National Committees.

A First Discussion Paper was published in November 2002. This paper was intended to provide a basis for discussion at planned meetings of lay people and clergy and involvement of the Diocese in determining the best ways of preventing sexual abuse and sexual harassment. As well, it was hoped that the Discussion Paper would provide important background information and education around issues relating to sexual abuse in our Church community. It also included a draft new Protocol for responding to complaints or disclosures of abuse in the Diocese.

This Second Discussion Paper incorporates the responses to that first discussion paper and the updated version of the Protocol for responding to complaints or disclosures of abuse in the Diocese. These changes have evolved in the course of implementation of the process during the last six months and in response to the draft documents released by the National Working Parties. It is expected that further changes will occur over time, as the needs of the Diocese change and other practical issues arise.

As a next step, it is intended to incorporate this version of the protocol into the Clergy Code of Good Practice and expand both to apply to Diocesan employees and volunteers as well as ordained and licensed lay ministers. As well, other Dioceses in the Province of Victoria have indicated they intend to pool resources and adopt the updated protocol in their responses to abuse in each Diocese.

*Details at <http://www.melbourne.anglican.com.au/episcopate/harassment.html>*



## **Baptist Union of New Zealand**

Protocols and Policies for dealing with complaints of sexual harassment  
and sexual abuse.

Adopted by Assembly Council September 2002

The reason for detailed documentation and procedures:

*Society is increasingly aware of the issues of sexual harassment and abuse. This awareness includes inappropriate sexual behaviour, abuse and criminal offending in a number of church communities.*

*The Baptist Union is committed to resourcing Baptist congregations and their leaders so that they are not only aware of the need to have good and effective documentation and guidelines, but also to be equipped with knowledge and wisdom as to the processes which may lead to resolution of complaints and the restoration/redemption in the lives of those involved.*

This document covers:

**Document One** – For complaints against a person(s) appointed (paid/unpaid) by a Baptist church to a leadership position in the church's ministries.

**Document Two** – For complaints against a Pastoral Leader appointed (paid/unpaid) by a member church or agency of the Baptist Union of New Zealand.

**Document Three** – Sexual Misconduct Response Team and Investigation Commission.

**Document Four** - Children's and Youth Ministries – protocols and policies for recruiting workers.



**National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK)**  
Church Statement on Overcoming and Preventing Sexual Violence  
1<sup>st</sup> General Council 18<sup>th</sup> November 2002

*(This statement contains a full and helpful analysis of the whole issue of sexual violence in the church. It is possible only to reproduce part of it here).*

**Content**

1. Introduction: background and purpose of the statement
2. Confession to overcome and prevent sexual violence
3. Guidelines on overcoming and preventing sexual violence in the church

**1. Introduction**

**Rationale for the church statement on overcoming and preventing sexual violence**

Discrimination against women is the violation of women's human rights and women themselves. One of the most outstanding issues which shows the discrimination against women's human rights is sexual violence against women. Unfortunately, South Korea's sexual violence against women is serious enough to rank first or second in the world. According to a report, 250,000 cases of sexual violence are reported in South Korea annually and one rape case in every three minutes. Victims of sexual violence are increasing year after year and victims' ages are getting lower. Witnessing this serious situation, South Korean society now regulates sexual violence in the category of human rights violations. It has been making efforts to prevent sexual violence and improve women's human rights. As an effort it has enacted a Special Law on Sexual Violence, and a Law on Prevention of Sexual Violence in the Workplace. It also has been revealing the list of sexual offenders against minors. But churches have been neither addressing sexual violence issues nor providing church members with guidelines. 60 percent of women seeking shelter from domestic

violence are Christians and the actual number of sexual violence cases occurring in the church is not small at all (according to a report published by the Christian Women Counselling Center of the Korean Association of Women Theologians, 31 cases of domestic violence and 95 cases of sexual violence were dealt in the center in 2002).

The South Korean churches have achieved a remarkable growth over the last few decades. They have focused on the materialistic growth of churches and spiritual salvation of church members. But they ignored psychological, physical, and sexual violence against women and maintained silence. Churches are supposed to present the society with ethical guidelines but as a matter of fact, human rights are violated within churches under cover of God's name. There is no support system in the church that can help church women suffering from sexual violence. Sexual violence destroys human dignity, threatens human survival, and disturbs the integrity of human life. Facing this reality, now churches are strongly requested to play an active role in preventing and overcoming sexual violence.

The church statement on overcoming and preventing sexual violence is derived from Korean Christian women's desire to restore human dignity of men and women in God's image and contribute to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation through establishing a healthy culture and definition of sex. In October 1998 Korean Christian women announced a statement on "The Second Decade of Solidarity with Women for Life Community of Sharing and Respect" upon the closing of the Decade of Solidarity with Women in Korea. As the first task of the second decade, Korean Christian women announced church guidelines on women's issues entitled "Churches Working With Women" in 2000. The document was officially adopted by Korean churches. To establish a culture of equality in the church, the document presented guidelines on custom, culture, and women's participation. After the statement however, Christian women involved in the ecumenical movement witnessed the increase of sexual violence against women in the church and society. They decided to choose the issue of sexual violence as one of the major agendas churches and Christian women have to deal with in years to come. At the very time Korean Christian women were raising the issue on sexual violence against women, the World Council of Churches (WCC) decided to launch a campaign on Decade to Overcome Violence and called for churches to work for non-violence and reconciliation, and establish a culture of non-violence. Encouraged by the dynamic movement of the world, Korean churches, Korean ecumenical bodies, and many people of good faith came together to announce a church statement on overcoming and preventing sexual violence, calling for churches to contribute to peace, justice and reconciliation through overcoming and preventing sexual violence.

### **Churches' affirmation to prevent and overcome sexual violence**

- 1) Sexual violence is a challenge to God, violation of human dignity, and an injustice. Churches proclaim that violence against women is a human rights violation, injustice against God's justice, and sin before God.
- 2) Churches confess that the misleading theological tradition and biblical interpretation that tolerate and justify gender inequality and violence against women are cultural violence against women. Churches will develop theological interpretations based on an inclusive understanding of sex.

- 3) Churches will work on church reforms to disconnect the church system from the patriarchal tradition through new approaches to biblical and theological interpretations. Churches can neither deal with gender discrimination as a sin, nor liberate themselves from the sin, without the effort of internal reforms.
- 4) Churches will adopt the issue of sexual violence as one of major mission agendas, establish a theological position and action guidelines, and include issues on the restoration of gender equality and the inclusive understanding of sex in the theological education. In addition, churches will carry out fact-finding work on sexual violence cases within Christian institutions and churches.

### **Purpose of the statement**

The purpose of the church statement on overcoming and preventing sexual violence is to encourage churches to break silence on sexual violence against women and take the issue up as one of churches' major agendas. It will contribute to the establishment of a community of equality and peace in the church and society based on gender justice.

- The statement deals with violence against women including sexual and domestic violence in the church and family, and provides churches with analyses and ways to overcome violence.
- The statement calls for churches to make efforts to overcome sexual violence and reaffirm the spiritual understanding of gender justice and sex.
- The statement establishes new ways for the understanding of sex based on not physical power and violence but love and justice.
- The statement helps church communities learn spirituality of peace, and men and women in church communities build partnership to work together.
- The statement challenges the culture of violence in the world. It especially challenges the spread of sexual violence against women and children.

On the other hand, the purpose of the statement is to draw the attention and effort of churches, ecumenical bodies, and Christian women's bodies so that they can contribute to making a world without sexual violence in a substantial and positive way. The statement will be a foundation of a world where men and women restore their dignity in God's image and build partnership together through creative and dynamic energy of churches and organizations.

*The statement continues under various headings:*

## **2. Confession to overcome and prevent sexual violence**

*includes:*

**Men and women in God's image**

**Human body as a temple of the Holy Spirit**

**Jesus Christ comes to open a world of peace and equality**

**Holy Spirit of healing and re-creation**

*The statement then focuses on the role of the church*

**Churches' responsibility for sexual violence**

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)*

- Churches have a special responsibility to protect the weak, the deprived, and the oppressed. Churches are called to denunciate injustice and repent evil actions (Isaiah 61:1-2). Churches are called to help women who have been oppressed by the patriarchal system and sexual violence and to restore God's image of creation. Furthermore, churches are called to help all God's creatures establish relationships based on justice.
- To respond to the demand churches must disconnect themselves from the structural injustice which has been promoting oppression and grievances, and rebuild an alternative life. Especially, churches' internal renewal is required to disconnect Christianity from the patriarchal system. Without the internal renewal churches cannot respond to sexual violence rooted in gender discrimination in an affirmative way.
- One of the most urgent tasks churches have to carry out is to break silence on sexual violence (John 18:37) and make a clear, strong affirmation to stand by victims of sexual violence.
- Church communities must clearly identify that victims of sexual violence have been objects of unjust violence and that sexual violence is a sin. This will help victims of sexual violence have a clear understanding of what has been done to them. On the other hand, churches must strongly call for offenders of sexual violence to take responsibility for what they have done, confirm that their actions are sins before God, and help them make efforts for transformation through healing process. Through the process, churches must seek a way to bring men and women together to be children of God.

#### Suggestions to overcome and prevent sexual violence in the church

- Studies on structural and cultural root causes of sexual violence.
- Theological reflections on sexual violence and sexual understanding focusing on human dignity and human rights.
- Campaigns on opposing offenders of sexual violence and instruments of violence.
- Educational programs on the definition and dignity of sex.
- Development of sex education models based on gender equality and inclusive understanding of sex, and collecting and publishing of materials on sex education for children, youth and adults.
- Challenge to social cultures and the media which promote sex marketing and sexual violence.
- Development and sharing of liturgies, prayers, bible studies and activities, and materials on inclusive understanding and definition of sex.
- Development of and support to a broad network of people working on overcoming and preventing sexual violence.
- Sharing of experiences and stories about sexual violence issues, activities to overcome sexual violence, and efforts to build sustainable peace.

(Churches, organizations, communities, and individuals can share experiences and stories through the internet, published materials, video tapes, events, and personal exchanges. This sharing will make linkages among people working on

sexual violence issues, combine their efforts, create support and solidarity, help them share materials and ideas, and provide them with useful information for campaigns to overcome sexual violence.)

*The statement continues with:*

### **3. Guidelines to overcome and prevent sexual violence in the church**

#### **What is sexual violence in the church?**

#### **Characteristics of sexual violence in the church**

#### **Side effects of victims of sexual violence in the church**

#### **Theological subjects on sexual violence in the church**

*The statement ends with:*

#### **Efforts to overcome sexual violence in the church**

- 1) Churches must establish church laws which protect the rights of victims of sexual violence.
- 2) Church laws must include structural details on sexual violence itself and punishment of offenders.
- 3) Each denomination must make guidelines on gender discrimination and the prevention of sexual violence, and teach the guidelines in churches and seminaries.
- 4) Each denomination must establish and run a clean-up system of ministers concerning sex ethics.
- 5) Each denomination must establish, run, and support facilities to protect and heal victims of sexual violence.
- 6) Churches must make efforts to investigate all sexual violence cases and eliminate sexual violence in the church.

*Full text at <http://www.kncc.or.kr> search for Church Statement on Overcoming and Preventing Sexual Violence.*



## **The Orthodox Church in America**

Policies, Standards and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct  
Adopted by the Holy Synod of Bishops, April 2003

This 21 page document sets out policies, standards and procedures for the purposes of preventing sexual misconduct, effectively dealing with it if it occurs, providing appropriate pastoral care, and ensuring that justice and fairness are achieved.

It sets out the policies and principles of the church as follows:

### **3. Policy and Principles of the Church**

**3.01. General Policy on Sexual Misconduct:** The Church laments the sin of sexual misconduct, and will not tolerate it by its clergy or any layperson. The Church should educate clergy, laypersons, and the Church community about prevention of sexual misconduct. It will utilize advance screening and review procedures to reduce



the risk of sexual misconduct, and to maintain a safe environment for minors. It will implement procedures to fairly deal with and resolve allegations of sexual misconduct.

**3.02. Guiding Principles on Allegations of Sexual Misconduct:** The Church will take all allegations of sexual misconduct seriously, and will promptly respond to all allegations. It will report allegations in accordance with the civil laws of any jurisdiction where an act of sexual misconduct is alleged to have occurred, and will cooperate in accordance with civil and canon law in any investigation by civil authorities. The Church will reach out to the victims of sexual misconduct and their families to provide for their spiritual well-being and healing. The diocesan hierarch, in exercising his duties, has both pastoral and disciplinary responsibilities.

**3.03. Justice and Pastoral Concern:** The Church will strive to see that justice is done. The innocent must be protected while those responsible for sexual misconduct must be held accountable. Just as the rights of victims must be respected and secured by the Church, the work and ministries of clergy and laypersons must not be impaired by unfounded accusations. Fundamental principles of fairness must not be compromised either way. The Church's pastoral concern in this respect shall be directed to both complainants and respondents.



**3.04. Theological Basis:** These *Policies, Standards, and Procedures* are based upon the Church's understanding and application of Holy Scripture in the Orthodox tradition, which is that the sexual character of human persons has a positive role to play in human spirituality. Like all things human, sexuality must be sanctioned by God and inspired with the Holy Spirit, used for the purposes God has intended. And like all things human, through its misuse and abuse, sexuality can be perverted and corrupted, becoming an instrument of sin rather than the means for glorifying God and fulfilling oneself as made in His image, and according to His likeness. Members of the clergy and laypersons, in living out their faith, must adhere to Christian moral principles in their sexual conduct. The betrayal of this trust by transgression of sexual boundaries denies our Christian identity.

*Full text at <http://www.oca.org/>  
> search for Policies, Standards and  
Procedures on Sexual Misconduct*



## **The Protestant Church in Württemberg (Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg)**

Booklet - Responsible Action: in cases of sexual harassment and violation of personal boundaries in the working environment of the church

Published on behalf of the Protestant Church Assembly, Stuttgart, May 2004

Edited by: Protestant Church Assembly, Department of Women's Representation

Edited extracts from the booklet include the following:

### **From the Foreword by the Regional Bishop**

The following recommendations are aimed at offering assistance in violent incidents/situations, which also arise in the church. This document is also a contribution by the Protestant Church Assembly in Württemberg to the theme of the Ecumenical Decade 'Overcoming Violence', in which churches worldwide were asked to participate by the World Council of Churches in 2001. Over and above this, these Recommendations build on the theme of the protestant church's initiative started in 1998 'Solidarity within the Church – Raising Awareness of and Overcoming Violence against Women and Girls'.

An analysis of the phenomenon of violence requires an honest look at the church itself as workplace. These recommendations aim to sharpen our focus in order to overcome, in our own ranks, the spirit, the logic, and the practice of violence.

### **Introduction**

Cases of sexual harassment and violation of personal boundaries occur in the church. Only those who, despite all existing taboos, refuse to close their eyes to them, will be able to stop sexual harassment and infringements of personal space, help the victim, find appropriate ways to deal with the perpetrator (male or female), and retain credibility vis-à-vis those responsible and the institutions involved.

These Recommendations aim to address the theme of 'Responsible Action'. They serve to guide and highlight sensitive measures in dealing with boundary infringements and violations.

The aim of the Recommendations is to sharpen awareness of potential signs of sexual assault, and to offer advice on how to help and support those affected. For this reason, the Church Council recommends these Guidelines to employee representatives, services and production, and all those employed in pastoral and care and community work, both fulltime and in an honorary capacity. It is their responsibility to protect the dignity and integrity of individuals who are working in the church, who trust themselves to colleagues working in the church, or who carry out voluntary work in the church. It is imperative to create an atmosphere in the church which offers to those affected a safe and secure place, one in which they feel able to speak openly about the violence they have suffered. The Recommendations aim to work towards:

- removing sexual harassment from the realm of social and church taboos
- highlighting the possible ways of dealing with problems in the working life of the church

- sharpening our awareness of signs of potential infringement of personal space
- ensuring that those affected experience full and effective support and assistance.

### **I Dealing with sexual harassment and violation of personal boundaries**

Responsible behaviour in the workplace builds a foundation for a positive working environment, and is therefore an important prerequisite for effectively carrying out all the tasks and duties belonging to the workplace.

Sexual abuse constitutes a serious disruption to the peace and harmony of the working environment. Such behaviour is an offence against human dignity, against the rights of the individual, and is incompatible with stipulations set down in the Conditions of Employment.

There already exists (in Germany) a concrete legal basis for the prevention of sexual harassment: the law for the protection against sexual harassment in the workplace stipulates that employers and line managers are responsible for the protection of employees against sexual harassment in the workplace. Such protection encompasses also preventative measures. The law also stipulates that sexual harassment in the workplace is a contravention of contractual obligations, or a breach of duty.

#### **1. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

##### **Definition**

In Section 2, paragraph 2 of the Law for the Protection of Employees (in Germany); sexual harassment is defined as follows: “Sexual harassment in the workplace encompasses all deliberate, sexually determined acts or behaviour, which offend against the dignity of employees in the workplace. This includes sexual acts and behaviour which are punishable offences under criminal law, as well as other sexually motivated acts and incitement or invitation to engage in sexual behaviour, inappropriate touching, sexually suggestive or explicit remarks, as well as the displaying and showing of pornographic images which are explicitly rejected by those on the receiving end.” Sexual harassment can take many forms – words, actions, gestures, or other sexually determined behaviour:

##### **Sexual harassment through language**

- Smutty jokes directed with implicit hostility at men or women.
- Belittling, suggestive remarks about an individual’s physical characteristics, appearance, clothes.
- Remarks about an individual’s private and intimate life.
- Calling an individual derogatory names.
- Ambiguous, suggestive compliments.
- Using teasing, mocking, ridiculing, insulting, aggressive language.
- Using threatening, patronizing language and innuendo with sexist content.
- Patronizing terms such as ‘little mouse’, ‘little one’, ‘honey’, ‘sweetie’, etc.

#### Sexual harassment through modes of behaviour

- Unwanted physical contact.
- Invitation to engage in sexual activity/acts.
- Suggestions that sexual interaction could be advantageous at a professional level.
- Copying, application, or other use of pornographic or sexist computer programmes on departmental equipment.
- Distributing, showing and displaying images of a pornographic nature or pin-up calendars.
- Sexually determined or suggestive 'undressing' looks and stares.
- Provocative, obscene/offensive behaviour, also with explicitly sexual body-language/gestures.
- Whistling at individuals.
- Shouting comments with sexual connotations.

#### Harassment through violent physical behaviour/abuse

- Unwanted physical proximity and infringement of personal space/boundaries.
- Unwanted touching of any kind.
- Forcing kisses and sexual behaviour on an individual.
- Sexual coercion including rape.
- Abuse of an individual through stalking.

Incidents of sexual harassment are common in the workplace. These do not only involve sexual or erotic behaviour, but also the abuse of power with the intention of intimidating, belittling, or coercing. Such behaviour does not exclusively occur in any one specific area or group, but rather it can be found in all areas of working life.

It is mainly women who have to deal with being the victims of harassment and sexual attacks. Again and again, there are confused men who use their positions of seniority in the workplace to adopt and act out a kind of sexual supremacy, leading them to abuse their hierarchically determined positions of power to harass women who are subordinate to them in the workplace. But even male colleagues who are hierarchically on the same level as the women often think they too own the 'right to dominate' these female colleagues. So women who are anxious about their jobs frequently feel obliged, against their will, to endure such behaviour.

In rare cases men too suffer harassment. Studies have shown that instances of harassment occur less at the hands of superiors/line managers as at the hands of colleagues equal in rank. Accordingly, as a general rule, men experience incidents of harassment as less threatening and are able to act to defend themselves with less fear. As a result of the power relations between the sexes that are already in place at a socio-cultural level, women experience harassment by men as much more threatening.

*The booklet goes on to cover:*

## **2. Infringement and violation of personal boundaries in pastoral care, guidance and instruction**

*It then deals with issues of:*

## **II Intervention and Support**

1. What can those affected/the victims do?
2. What can superiors/line managers do?
3. Actions of superiors/line managers vis-à-vis the victim/recipient.
4. Actions of superiors/line managers vis-à-vis the alleged (male or female) perpetrator/harasser
5. What can colleagues do?
6. What can members of the MAV do?
7. What can mediators/representatives do?
8. Lodging a complaint.
9. Dealing with the general public.
10. Preventative Measures.

### **Appendix**

Advice and Drop-In Centre  
General Advice Centre  
(Legal) In-House Advice Centre  
Selection of brochures and written guidelines.

Address for orders:

Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat, Versand, Gänsheidestraße 4, 70184 Stuttgart  
Tel.: (07 11) 2 14 92 69, Fax: (07 11) 21 49 92 69, e-Mail: Ute.Leiensegger@elk-wue.de

Printed by Heinzelmann Papier- und Druck-Service, Metzingen

*Details at <http://www.elk-wue.de/> > Frauen in der Kirche > Opfer Sexueller Belästigung...> download Verantwortliches Handeln. (German only)*

***The following document from the Church of England offers an example of a Charter on Domestic Violence, which can be adopted by churches to make clear their response to this issue. It is followed by a statement from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops offering a model of an appropriate pastoral response to those affected by domestic violence.***



## **Church of England**

Southwark Diocesan Board for Church in Society  
Domestic Violence: A Charter for Churches

Domestic Violence in all its forms is unacceptable in the Church and in society.

The Diocesan Board for Church in Society wishes to help make our churches safe places where those who have experienced abuse can find sanctuary and informed help. It commends this Charter for use in all churches, and urges every parish to break the silence over domestic violence.

Domestic violence is the physical, emotional, sexual or other abuse by someone (usually but not always a man) of a person (usually but not always a woman) with whom they usually have or have had some form of intimate relationship such as

marriage, in order to maintain power and control over that person. Threats to kill or harm may extend to children or other family members.

### **The Charter**

This Parish:

1. Accepts that domestic violence occurs in church as well as in wider society, and is unacceptable in all its forms.
2. Undertakes to listen, support and care for those affected by domestic violence.
3. Will keep up to date with the support agencies working locally, making them known, learning from them and working with them.
4. Will play its part in teaching that domestic violence is sin, requiring repentance, before reconciliation with God and the victim can occur.
5. Will live a new model of what it means to be human, male and female both made in God's image. We will teach, preach and pray this, thereby challenging abuse and affirming the love, justice, mercy and forgiveness of God.
6. Will encourage the use of good practice, through the implementation, review and development of this Charter

*Issued by the Southwark Diocesan Board for Church in Society, March 2003, with acknowledgement of the work of the Women's Group of Churches Together in Gloucestershire*

*Details at <http://www.southwark.anglican.org/bcs/social/domestic.htm>*



## **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

**When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women.**

*When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women*, is a statement the bishops approved on 12/11/2002. This statement represents a revised 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of the 1992 statement of the same title issued by the bishops' Committee on Women and Society and the Church and their Committee on Marriage and Family.

In the introduction it says "Violence against women, inside or outside the home is *never* justified. Violence in any form – physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal – is sinful; often, it is a crime as well. The Catholic Church teaches that violence against another person in any form fails to treat that person as someone worthy of love. Instead, it treats the person as an object to be used. When violence occurs within a sacramental marriage, the abused spouse may question, 'How do these violent acts relate to my promise to take my spouse for better or for worse?' The person being assaulted needs to know that acting to end the abuse does not violate marriage promises.

The revised statement gives an overview of domestic violence, addresses the issues of why men batter and why some women stay in abusive relationships. It also offers practical suggestions to victims, abusers and to church personnel and educators, who, it says "are often the first responders for abused women." It says that

“intervention by church ministers has three goals, in the following order:

1. safety for the victim and children;
2. accountability for the abuser;
3. restoration of the relationship (if possible) or mourning over the loss of the relationship”

It says that “church ministers should become familiar with and follow the reporting requirements of their state” noting that “many professionals who deal with vulnerable people are required to report suspected crimes which may include domestic abuse.” The bishops condemn the use of the Bible to support abusive behaviour in any form. “Religion,” the bishops say, “can be either a resource or a roadblock for battered women.” In the statement the bishops say that, “No one is expected to stay in an abusive marriage.” They also assert that “violence and abuse, not divorce break up a marriage.” Pastors and pastoral staff members are encouraged by the bishops to make their parishes safe places “where abused women and abusive men can come for help.” Parishes are encouraged to “have an action plan in place to follow if an abused woman calls on you for help.”

*Full report at <http://www.usccb.org/laity/help.shtml>*

***The final examples in this section demonstrate how different churches have responded to the issue of violence against women (and children and men), and to the question of gender equality in the churches***



### **Church of Norway**

Church of Norway General Synod 1999 -Issue KM  
13/99

Plan of strategy for women’s issues and  
gender equality of status 2000-2008

- I Promote women’s participation at all levels in the church.
- II Make visible and strengthen women’s work with theology, worship and faith.
- III Focus on women’s competence in work with the churches for justice, peace and integrity of creation.
- IV Intensify the action of the church against violence and abuse.
- V Promote a community with equality of status and value.

*Details in English at [http://www.kirken.no/engelsk/engelsk\\_mistreat.html](http://www.kirken.no/engelsk/engelsk_mistreat.html)*





## **Church of the Province of Southern Africa,**

Acts and Resolutions of the 30<sup>th</sup> session of Provincial Synod 2002

Resolution 27

### **Violence against women, children and men.**

This synod

1. Noting the escalation of violence against women children and men, including Christian homes,
2. Respectfully request the Metropolitan to:
  - 2.1. Set up a Provincial Task Team which will identify and compile resources for appropriate education, inclusive of gender equity and justice issues, in our churches, for use in Sunday Schools, youth, confirmation classes, marriage preparation and enrichment of all church groupings;
  - 2.2. Present these to the next PSC for approval and implementation.

*Details at <http://www.cpsa.org.za>*



## **Disciples of Christ (Assemblies of the Christian Church)**

On Ending Violence Against Women

Resolution adopted at General Assembly October 2003

Past General Assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have spoken against domestic violence (8520 and 8116). The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was a participant in the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998, GA resolution 8936). Currently the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is participating in the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010). Central to the goals of this Decade is a focus on ending violence against women.

The Resolution states: "Even though we acknowledge that men and boys also experience violence, nevertheless historically and to the present, women and girls are more often targets." It quotes the Beijing Platform for Action (the United Nations Fourth Conference on Women,) "Unequal power relations between women and men have created circumstances in which women and girls are especially vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse."

The Resolution continues, "Violence against women has many forms: physical, psychological, sexual, spiritual, and emotional. Violence leaves wounds both visible and invisible. Types of violence include domestic violence, rape and sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, incest, child abuse, sexual slavery, media sexual exploitation, genital mutilation, and pornography."

The Resolution states:

WHEREAS, Christ calls each person, female and male, to full personhood, he further calls us to a mission of love and compassion toward all people, exemplified in his relationship with the woman at the well (John 4:7-26) and the woman about



to be stoned (John 8:3-11). Scripture requires us to do justice and to love kindness as we walk humbly with God.

WHEREAS, the Church is too often complicit in the problem of violence against women, silencing, ignoring, and indirectly accepting this violence. Moreover, the Church sometimes justifies its lack of action with biblical interpretations. The way in which issues of Church hierarchy are approached, the choice of words used in a worship service, and the ways in which scripture has sometimes been interpreted may all contribute to a culture in which violence against women is accepted.

WHEREAS, churches need to recognize that violence against women is a serious problem and a sin. We need both to end our silence and actively seek to end the violence.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, October 17-21, 2003, urges congregations and regions to:

- Teach children, youth, and adults that girls and women are created and loved by God.
- Become a non-judgmental place of safety and support for women.
- Communicate verbally and visually information about local support resources and denominational resources such as the Disciples Home Missions poster “Is Someone Hurting You? Here are help and hope.”
- Provide education and training opportunities for congregational leaders. Encourage the United States Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and encourage church leaders, members, congregations, regions, and organizations to advocate for the ratification of CEDAW.
- Display in the building the Disciples Home Missions poster, “Is Someone Hurting You? Here are help and hope.”

*Details at <http://www.disciples.org/ga03/resolutions/0313.htm>*



## **The United Church of Canada**

Division of World Outreach

### **Gender Justice and Partnership Guidelines**

This document is the outcome of the Aurora Consultation which was a four-day gathering held in February 1998 in Aurora, Ontario, Canada

The thirty participants included nine overseas partners, members of the United Church from across Canada, and several staff from the division of World Outreach and other Divisions of the United Church of Canada.

It begins;

***“Gender Justice and Partnership” is an approach that we must weave into all aspects of our work.***

We believe that the gift of Jesus Christ and the call of the Gospel is to honest, just

and transparent relationships with God, with one another and with creation.

Within the churches' responsibility to promote systemic justice, the struggle for gender justice is one of the most fundamental ways in which we seek to transform structures and systems in order to be faithful to God's vision for humanity and creation as revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

We live in a world broken by poverty, systemic and domestic violence and oppressive patriarchal structures. These realities, which are magnified by the effects of globalization, take root even in our churches. Globally, the majority of people in the world are denied justice and access to decision-making and power, denying them the fullness of life. The injustices that result from this brokenness impact most heavily on women.

There are signs of hope in the stories of survival, struggle, resistance and courage. We have experienced the initiative and creativity that women bring to this struggle for wholeness and life. These stories come from around the globe.

This is our *kairos* – the time to commit ourselves and to act for gender justice.

The United Church of Canada's work on Gender Justice issues is rooted in the work of the Committee on Sexism formed as a standing committee of the General Council in 1984. Since then the committee has focussed its work of educating and providing resources for inclusive language, promoting and monitoring the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998), and translating committee resources into other languages such as French, Asian and First Nations.

At the 37<sup>th</sup> General Council in 2000, the Committee on Sexism became the Committee for Gender Justice to express more clearly its goals – to focus on gender justice and create and foster links with people working on justice for women in diverse ways.

### **Mandate of the Gender Justice Committee**

*The following Mandate was approved at the 25 June 2003 meeting of the Gender Justice Committee:*

To advise the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit on issues of gender justice, specially:

1. To witness to our recognition that the pain caused by Gender Injustice is still a very present reality in our society.
2. To promote a better understanding of issues around Gender Justice, recognizing there are changes in how the word 'gender' is interpreted, and building on the strengths of past witness.
3. To advocate for those marginalized by gender injustice, and to work in a collaborative way in order to bring about change in our church and in society

### **Gender Justice Committee focuses on The Decade to Overcome Violence**

Through evaluation of the Decade with groups and individuals throughout the church, the Gender Justice Committee has witnessed positive change but has also observed that gender justice is not yet a full reality. The need to ensure that the church does not lose momentum in its seeking of gender justice, in particular the

need to address all forms of violence against women, is recognized as more urgent than ever.

Because of this, the committee has now started its work on a new Decade for Gender Justice. In accord with the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010), adopted as the United Church' mission theme (2003-2006), the committee is working for gender justice in our midst.

The Committee for Gender Justice invites The United Church of Canada to:

1. recognize the brokenness and abuse created by the unequal valuing of people based on gender;
2. acknowledge the impact of our patriarchal and imperialistic past and present, which causes double oppression for some;
3. challenge gender inequality and injustice; and
4. work toward wholeness and connection, equality and shared power, mutual respect and safety.

(From the Gender Justice Committee's Vision Statement, June 25, 2003)

*Details at <http://www.united-church.ca/humanrights/genderjustice/home.shtm>*



## **The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women**

Resolution on Violence –World Assembly 2001

The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women is a body that is independent of, but linked with the World Methodist Council. At their World Assembly 2001 at Loughborough England, there were Bible Studies, plenaries and workshops on the theme of Violence Against Women. Various resolutions were adopted.

The resolution on Violence is as follows:

“Violence against women continues in many forms - domestic violence (including marital rape), forced marriage and abduction and the trafficking of women and girls. The rights of women in particular countries and communities, for example, Afghanistan, are currently being drastically and systematically eroded to the extent that women and children are dying, having been denied the opportunity to work in order to feed and clothe their families. We commend and urge women to participate in the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence.

As in 1996 we urge WFMUCW in areas and units to lobby their governments to put into action the, Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, measures and with regard to specific national abuses of women to join in campaigns to alert the international community.

We urge WFMUCW to challenge their Churches, Units and Conference or Synod as appropriate to listen, to believe and support and protect the victims of abuse, to help perpetrators to learn to address and limit their abusive behaviour and to break the silence surrounding this issue.

We propose that the WFMUCW Units challenge their churches to develop/

implement education for all, to initiate training modules for ministers and laity, challenge instances of violence, underpinned by theological interpretation, and share examples of good practice and work with other people of faith and local and national secular agencies working in this area.”

*Details at <http://www.methodstandunitingchurchwomen.org> > Resolutions > Gender Justice*



## **The United Methodist Church (USA)**

### **Violence Against Women and Children**

*This is an edited version of a statement adopted in 2004*

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church affirm the family as “the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity.” Clearly violence and abuse cannot be tolerated within such an understanding. The Social Principles are explicit: “We recognize that family violence and abuse in all its forms—verbal, psychological, physical, sexual—is detrimental to the covenant of the human community.

#### **Policy Statements and Actions**

The United Methodist Church affirms the sacredness of all persons and their right to safety, nurture and care. It names domestic violence and sexual abuse as sins and pledges to work for their eradication. The church commits itself to listen to the stories of battered spouses, rape victims, abused children, adult survivors of child sexual abuse, and all others who are violated and victimized. The church further commits itself to provide leadership in responding with justice and compassion to the presence of domestic violence and sexual abuse among its membership and within the community at large.

*For details of recommendations for actions adopted by UMC see website*

See Social Principles, ¶ 162C and E.

From *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church* — 2004. Copyright © 2004 by The United Methodist Publishing House.

*Details at [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org) > Site search: Violence against women > Book of Resolutions*

# further resources and contacts

*This is a selection of resources that are available to inform and inspire those concerned to overcome violence against women. They include Bible studies, and worship materials. Many of those in the churches working to overcome violence against women stress the importance of acknowledging the suffering and struggle, the gifts and potential, of women, in prayers, liturgy and the worship life of the churches. Women from Christian backgrounds, who are victims and survivors of abuse, speak of the need to understand their experience in relation to Biblical texts, preaching and prayer. A number of resources addressing this need were produced in the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women and more have been created in the first half of the Decade to Overcome Violence. Examples will be found also in the Resource and Workshop material in the first section of the dossier.*

*In 2004 churches worldwide were asked by the WCC to highlight the issue of violence against women and children during 16 days of action from 25 November to 10 December in a campaign called 'On the Wings of a Dove'. Many congregations and church organisations responded to this request and some of the resources below are the outcome of that response.*



## Bible Studies

- Women's Ways of Being Church: A Bible Study Guide Editors J. Shannon Clarkson, Letty M. Russell. These Bible Studies provide an opportunity for groups to gather for reflection on women's role in the life and ministry of the church.  
*Publisher WCC e-mail [info@wcc-coe.org](mailto:info@wcc-coe.org)*
- What is this place?: 6 Bible Studies These studies follow the "journey" which a woman experiencing violence may make, from recognition of her situation to making a new beginning.  
*Publisher: Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9HH, UK or order from [http://www.churches-together.net/resources\\_publications.html](http://www.churches-together.net/resources_publications.html)*
- 16 Bible Reflections on the Issue of Violence These reflections were published during the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence, in response to The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women's Resolutions on Violence and Personal and Communal Spirituality formulated at The Loughborough World Assembly 2001.  
*Enquiries contact <http://www.methodistandunitingchurchwomen.org/contact.php>*
- Breaking the Silence: Violence Against Women: A Gender Response. A Bible Study adapted from the World YMCA/YWCA Week of Prayer
- So much Violence in the Bible A reflection by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, from Nigeria/Ghana who was formerly Deputy General Secretary of the WCC.
- The Community of Men and Women, Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Kathy Galloway: A bible study and a prayer.  
*For the three resources above direct enquiries to WCC e-mail [info@wcc-coe.org](mailto:info@wcc-coe.org)*

## Worship

- Overcoming Violence in the Church An ecumenical, Asia-wide campaign to overcome violence against women in the church. This resource, prepared by the Asian Network of Ecumenical Women, suggests a focus and a prayer to conclude each day during the period of the 16 day campaign (November 25 to December 10, 2004).  
*Download at <http://www.ccanz.net.nz/dov/happening/philippines.html>*
- Prayerline is a resource, created by the National Council of Churches in Australia, to encourage prayer and action in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, taking up the hand of friendship offered to others by Australia's Indigenous peoples. It suggests prayer resources to use each day of the campaign.  
*Download at [http://www.ncca.org.au/special\\_projects/dov](http://www.ncca.org.au/special_projects/dov) > search for 'Prayerline'*
- Breaking the Silence . . . on violence against women. Churches Together in England: A series of leaflets including a Liturgy resource leaflet with ideas for use in worship in church or with small groups.  
*Publisher, Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9HH, UK*  
*Download (RTF) at [http://www.churches-together.org.uk/resources\\_freeleaflets.html](http://www.churches-together.org.uk/resources_freeleaflets.html)*

- 16 Prayers for the 16 Days of the Campaign. The Church of Scotland Guild Women have come up with the idea of asking all their members to pray at 16.00 every day during the Campaign and have produced short prayers for use at these times.

*Contact the Church of Scotland Guild, 121 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4YN, UK e-mail [guild@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:guild@cofscotland.org.uk)*

- Violence Against Women - Study Material. This is a World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women study & worship material on Violence Against Women, prepared in East Asia.

*Enquiries contact <http://www.methodistandunitingchurchwomen.org/contact.php>*

- 16 - DAY PRAYER CAMPAIGN for the elimination of all forms of violence against women. Women and Gender Commission of the Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines, and the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies Student Body. \*

- A Liturgy for those Violated by Rape and Abuse. A special service, Anglican Cathedral, Grahamstown, South Africa, 9 August 1999, held for women who had suffered rape and abuse, giving them the opportunity to tell their stories within the context of liturgy.

- A Selection of Prayers. This is a Selection of Prayers from I Will Pour Out my Spirit and Celebrating the Decade

*For the three resources above direct enquiries to WCC e-mail [info@wcc-coe.org](mailto:info@wcc-coe.org)*

*\* See also Echoes Magazine below*

## **Books**

- A case study on YWCA's Ndola - Drop - In - Centre counselling session for the victims of Domestic Violence. The Revd. Paul Kibirech Korir: This study puts into context the definition of some terms as for example Counselling, Victims, Offenders, Domestic, Violence etc.

*Publisher, Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation, P.O.Box 21493, Kitwe, Zambia*

- Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls. (2000) Kapoor Sushma: This Digest focuses on domestic violence as one of the most prevalent yet relatively hidden and ignored forms of violence against women and girls globally.

*Also available in Spanish French and Italian*

*Publisher, UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, Piazza SS. Annunziata, 12 50122 Florence*

*Publisher's web site <http://www.unicef-icdc.org>*

- Free from Violence in the Family. Dr. Amparo Medina: With the publication of this book in English, people in many lands will hear an urgent call for the Church to break its silence regarding the terrible blight that affects families around the world.

*Publisher, Baptist World Alliance (BWA), Women's Dept.405 North Washington St. Falls Church VA 22046 (Published originally in Spanish 2001)*

*<http://www.bwanet.org/index.htm> > Resources*

- Little Girl, Arise: new life after Incest and Abuse. (2002) Thandeki Umlilo: This is one of the first accounts ever written by an African woman telling

her own painful story of incest.

*Publisher, Cluster Publications, Pietermaritzburg. e-mail cluster@futurenet.co.za*

- No longer a secret. The church and violence against women. (1997) Aruna Gnanadason: This book points to some of the ways in which women and men in the church and elsewhere are beginning to struggle courageously against all forms of violence against women.

*Publisher, WCC, 150 rte de Ferney, P.O.Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland  
<http://www.wcc-coe.org>*

- Out of the Shadows: Christianity and Violence Against Women. (2001) Lesley Orr MacDonald. An account of an action-research project drawing on the first hand accounts of the experiences of a number of women from the Scottish churches who are survivors of abuse.

*Publisher, Centre for Theology and Public Issues, New College, University of Edinburgh, Mound Place, Edinburgh, EH1 2LX*

*<http://www.div.ed.ac.uk/theologypubl.html>*

- The courage to tell. (1999) Margaret Kennedy (David Gamble and Anne van Staveren): Christian survivors of sexual abuse tell their stories of pain and hope. In this book Churches Together in Britain and Ireland challenges the Churches to find the courage to act to protect children and adults. There you can also find ideas for liturgy and worship.

*Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower March, London SE1 7RL, UK*

*<http://www.ctbi.org.uk/> > publications*

- Together with courage; Women and men living without violence against women. (1998) World Council of Churches: This book is an offering to the churches to listen to the women, to feel their pain and rage...and to act resolutely and with compassion so that woman and men, with the solidarity of their churches can together achieve a world free of violence against women.

*Publisher, WCC, 150 rte de Ferney, P.O.Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland  
<http://www.wcc-coe.org>*

- Women, Violence and nonviolent change.(1996) Aruna Gnanadason, Musimbi Kanyoro and Lucia Ann McSpadden: After three analytical essays, women from thirteen countries around the world present case studies of how women's groups are confronting violence in their context.

*Publisher, WCC, 150 rte de Ferney, P.O.Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland  
<http://www.wcc-coe.org>*

### **Articles**

- Violence against Women. Gloucestershire Churches Together. A Discussion Document for Churches.

*Publisher, Gloucestershire Churches Together, Theology in Gloucestershire, 38, Sydenham Villas Road, Cheltenham, Glos.G152 6DZ, UK*

### **Brochures and magazines**

- Echoes: Justice Peace and Creation News 23/2004. Overcoming Violence Against Women and Children.



*Publisher, WCC, 150 rte de Ferney, P.O.Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland  
<http://www.wcc-coe.org>*

- Breaking the Silence . . . on violence against women. Churches Together in England: A series of leaflets aiming to raise awareness.

*Publisher, Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9HH, UK*

*Download (RTF) at [http://www.churches-together.org.uk/resources\\_freeleaflets.html](http://www.churches-together.org.uk/resources_freeleaflets.html)*

- When Christian Solidarity is Broken..., World Council of Churches: A pastoral and educational brochure addressing the issue of Sexual Harassment.

*Publisher, WCC Publications, 150, rte de Ferney, P.O. Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2  
<http://www.wcc-coe.org>*

- When the silence is broken ... marriage ... where do you stand? The Baptist Union of Great Britain: This leaflet proposes reflections for Ministers and Pastoral Workers in supporting someone living with violence in marriage.

- Why do Women Stay? The Baptist Union of Great Britain: A leaflet presenting a reflection on why women put up with violence from a partner or find it hard to leave.

*The two resources above are published by The Baptist Union of Great Britain, Baptist House P.O. Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8RT*

*<http://www.baptist.org.uk>*

### **Websites**

- FaithTrust Institute, formerly the Centre for Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, offers a wide range of services and resources, including training, consultation and educational materials, to provide communities and advocates with the tools and knowledge they need to address the religious and cultural issues related to abuse. They are an international, multi-faith organization working with many communities, including Asian and Pacific Islander, Buddhist, Jewish, Latino/a, Muslim, Black, Anglo, Indigenous, Protestant and Roman Catholic.

*<http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/>*

- The Mennonite Central Committee website offers educational, informative, and worship resources

*<http://www.mcc.org/abuse/resources.html>*

- Amnesty International - Stop Violence Against Women Campaign

*<http://www.amnesty.org>*

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