

CARIBBEAN BRETHERN ASSEMBLIES CONFERENCE
17-21 JULY, 2017

Cascadia Hotel, 67 Ariapita Road, St. Ann's, Port of Spain, Trinidad

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/ABUSE

by

ROBIN AND ANNETTE OSBORNE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEFINED

(recognition is essential)

ANY BEHAVIOUR WHICH CAUSES HARM OR HURT
(INCLUDING DEATH)

- TO ANOTHER, OR
- TO THEIR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, WELL-BEING OR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS,

COMMITTED WITHIN A DOMESTIC SETTING OR RELATIONSHIP, WHETHER OR NOT THE INTENTION WAS TO CAUSE HARM TO THE OTHER PERSON (e.g. the misled, judgmental accusations of Job's well-meaning friends...)

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

- WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE THE MAIN VICTIMS
- IN SOME SOCIETIES, A COMBINATION OF LAW AND/OR TRADITIONS PLACES THESE AT A DISADVANTAGE AS REGARDS:
 - (a) PROTECTION
 - (b) REDRESS OR JUSTICE
- THE CAUSES MAY BE COMPLEX

SOME STATISTICS

- 11,441 reports of domestic violence 2010-15, 75% females
- 131 domestic-violence-related deaths 2010-15, 56% female
- *Source: CAPA (Crime & Problem Analysis, TT Police Service)*
- 1 in 4 women abused (USA)
- Christian women stay longer in abusive situations (USA)
- One court in N. Trinidad handled 17,748 cases of DV, 2012-13 (Min. of Gender, Youth, and Child Development)
- In Pakistan, approx. 1,000 women killed/year in DV situations (*Newsday*, July 13, 2017, p.21)
- 60% of Caribbean drug victims are children (*UN report, BBC radio, 21 Dec 2016, 3.05pm T&T time*)

EXAMPLES/TYPES/EXPRESSIONS

- PHYSICAL (beatings, mutilation, honour-killing)
- VERBAL (humiliation, criticism, condemnation)
- RELIGIOUS (doctrinal browbeating, rituals)
- SEXUAL (denial, incest, forced behaviour, predation)
- FINANCIAL OR ECONOMIC (neglect; control; legal – property & inheritance; mean-ness)
- PSYCHOLOGICAL (mental & emotional) includes: intimidation/fear, control; destruction of self-confidence; inferiority imposition; comparisons with abuser or with “better” persons; dependency-creation, etc.)
- FAMILIAL (isolation, “choice-forcing”)

POSSIBLE CAUSES (SOCIENTAL)

- MALE DOMINANCE OF SOCIETIES, AND PERVERSE DEFINITIONS OF “MASCULINITY”
- PHYSICALLY (“weaker vessel” 1 Pet.3:9)AND STRATEGICALLY/TACTICALLY/LEGALLY DIS-ADVANTAGED STATUS AND STATE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN (where is the man? Jn.8:3-5)
- ROVING MALES/FATHERLESS HOMES
- THE INFLUENCE(S) OF PREVAILING VALUES AND CUSTOMS IN SOCIETIES

POSSIBLE CAUSES (SPIRITUAL)

- IGNORANCE OF RELEVANT BIBLE PRINCIPLES:
 - (a) lack of systematic and sufficient teaching, focussed on marriage and the family
 - (b) lack of acceptance of, **and commitment to**, these principles (if known), probably in response to pressures from alternative values and lifestyles in the surrounding society
- FAILURE OF THE CHURCH (and society) TO RECOGNIZE DV/DA for what it is, and its damaging and far-reaching effects (including intergenerational) on persons, families, and the wider society
- COVER-UPS in the Church, depending on accused, accuser

PREVENTION AND CURE

- “A FENCE AT THE TOP OF THE PRECIPICE IS FAR BETTER THAN AN AMBULANCE IN THE VALLEY”
- Recognition: Jer.17:9; Ps.19:12; Ps. 139:2.
- Avoidance: Phil.2:3,4;1Cor.12:26; Rom.12:15
- Escape: 1Cor.7:21. Possible role(s) of the protective services; some dangers, including non-training, secularism, confidentiality...
- What should be the Church’s role in Prevention, “Repair”, Recovery?

POSSIBLE RESOURCES

- THESE WILL DIFFER FROM TERRITORY TO TERRITORY, AND MAYBE EVEN FROM PARISH TO PARISH IN LARGER TERRITORIES LIKE JAMAICA AND GUYANA; in T&T, some possible resources:
- National Family Services, 624-8218
- Childline (toll-free) 800-4321
- Domestic Violence Hotline 800-SAVE (7283)
- Lifeline (Suicide) 6445-2800, 645-6616
- Families in Action 628-2333, 622-6952