

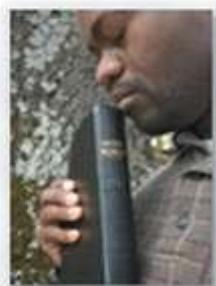
MINISTERS FORUM NEWSLETTER

INFORMATION MINISTERS CAN USE

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN DISPELLING DOMESTIC and INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (DIPV) & TRAFFICKING IN PERSON (TIP)

“ENDING THE SILENCE”

Proverbs 18:21 ; Matthew 23:23-28; Jeremiah 22:3; Psalms 55:20-21



As a church, we simply can't keep looking the other way because we don't know what to do with the situation of violence in the home. We may not know NOW what to do, but we need to make it our business to find out. We also need to pro-actively minister to those who need help.

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“Where there is no VISION, the people perish”

Greetings Ministers, in a few days many of you would have attended a Workshop/ Seminar on Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence and Human Trafficking sponsored by the FiWi Jamaica Project, UTech/USAID¹ which is intended to create awareness among Faith-based organizations/ churches of **the impact of DIPV and TIP on families** both in the church and our country Jamaica. Interest is placed on Faith-based organizations- churches in particular because the battered and wounded tend to be drawn to churches for help, support and prayers and often times except for prayers churches are not able to effectively guide because of lack of knowledge; and to a lesser extent insensitive to the needs of the Abused or even the abuser.

You may recall that the November, 2016 edition of this Newsletter addressed the matter of Domestic Violence and the church and you are invited to revisit it. Living in Jamaica you are aware of the many incidents of violence in the home some of which have resulted in death; more recently murdering a spouse seem to be the order of the day with men being the main perpetrators – and ultimately killing themselves also .

This edition will address some of the related issues – the impact on Persons with Disabilities (PWD), families, wider society and how the church can speak out and work towards ‘**ending the silence**’ and ultimately “**ending the violence**”. The socio-spiritual responsibility of the church must not be shunned but be championed Jamaica is losing too many of our people through this type of violence with men being the main perpetrators, taking lives of women, killing themselves and ultimately destroying families.

Another criminal activity that has been affecting Jamaica is **Trafficking In Person (TIP)**. Its impact has drawn the establishment of Trafficking in person task Force by the Ministry of Justice to address this additional social problem which is also a serious spiritual problem necessitating divine intervention along with law enforcement.

According to a representative of the Jamaica government agency with responsibility for Gender Affairs (Bureau of Gender Affairs) at a Workshop held 13/4/2017

¹ USAID is United States Agency for International Development



Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence is the most pervasive form of violence and is considered an international dilemma. It involves violence among families in household sexual violence, clandestine activities, transactional sex, intergenerational sex, and trafficking in person are some of the elements that have given rise to Violence especially against women and girls. Studies have repeatedly shown that the impact of these types of violence have had serious impact on children.

Impact on children:

Children who grow up in violent homes are more likely to develop alcohol and drug addictions and to become abusers themselves. This kind of orientation and socialization/exposure set the stage for a cycle of violence that may continue from generation to generation.

Impact of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence (DIPV) on Persons with Disabilities (PWD)

According to **World Health Organization - Department of Violence, Injury Prevention and Disability** both children and adults with disabilities are at much higher risk of violence than their non-disabled peers. The systematic review on violence against adults with disabilities, published in February 2012, found that overall they are 1.5 times more likely to be a victim of violence than those without a disability, while those with Mental Health conditions are at nearly four (4) times the risk of experiencing violence.

The **review on the prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities, published in July 2012**, found that overall children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than non-disabled children. The review indicated that children with disabilities are:

- 3.7 times more likely than non-disabled children to be victims of any sort of violence, 3.6 times more likely to be victims of physical violence, and
- 2.9 times more likely to be victims of sexual violence.
- Children with mental or intellectual impairments appear to be among the most vulnerable, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual violence than their non-disabled peers.
- 1.5 times more likely to be a victim of violence than those without a disability, while those with mental health conditions are at nearly four times the risk of experiencing violence.

Trafficking in Person (TIP)

Trafficking in Persons is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights. Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin,



transit or destination for victims. The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines Trafficking in Persons as the **recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.**

Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

If we should observe the circumstance around Trafficking in person and Domestic Violence worldwide and closer home to Jamaica it will be observed that the role of the church cannot be one of a – **Spectator**. The realization that Abuse of all types especially among and between family members occur among people of every economic status and ethnic group, in any households in both urban and rural communities must be addressed. Studies have shown that it is also important to know that indulgence in these activities is related to our personal and collective history, issues of poverty, discrimination, gender expectation, religion and homophobia which Christ has already liberated us from.

Church as the “city of refuge”

When silence prevails among the people of God the will of the Master which is to advocate for the hurting is not being achieved. It is the role of the church to help people see themselves and others through the eyes of Christ, without exception and without reservation. When people of God move in tandem with the Holy Spirit, they will not only have the burden to mobilize and advocate for the implementation of just laws, policies and procedures; but in their personal encounters they will manifest respect, trust, support, and accountability for all God’s children at all ages and stages.

Churches can help break this cycle and the silence - There is enough proof that many abused, abuser and their families seek help first from the Church because they see it as a safe place. Even when abusers isolate the abused from other social contacts, they may still allow them to go to church. Churches therefore need to be aware and understand how to help victims of violence who may need help to break out of their pain and isolation; bearing in mind that ***pastors, ministers are often the first responders for the abused.***

Churches can help abusers both Abused and Abusers by:

- *knowing what Family Violence –specifically Domestic & Intimate Partner Violence is all about*



- *telling the truth about experiences of abuse, to give a voice where there has been silence* so that a battered woman/man/child in the pew can hear a prayer for all those living with abuse in the home; thereby - opening the door or breaking the silence - that it is okay to ask for help/prayer.
- *providing helpful resources* on Domestic Abuse through sermons, prayers, education and pastoral care.
 - *providing support and inspiration* Whether in a public worship setting or a private pastoral care setting offering encouragement to those seeking to end violence in their families.

Physical Signs and Symptoms of Domestic & Intimate Partner Violence (DIPV):

Domestic Violence assault may lead to specific injury types and distributions. These injury types and patterns may result from things other than Domestic Violence but should raise suspicion of abuse when present.

Injury types seen more commonly in Domestic-violence injuries than in injuries caused by other means are:

- Tympanic membrane (eardrum) rupture
- Rectal or genital injury
- Facial scrapes, bruises, cuts, or fractures
- Neck scrapes or bruises
- Abdominal cuts or bruises
- Tooth loose or broken
- Head scrapes or bruises
- Body scrapes or bruises
- Arm scrapes or bruises

Physical signs and symptoms of domestic violence that result from traumatic injury may seem similar to injuries resulting from other causes. But some injury types and locations may increase the suspicion of assaultive violence.

Adapted from:

<https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic->

-Establish temporary shelters or provide material support for shelters for those in abusive relationships.
 -provide encouragement from the word/scriptures to the abused
 -Listen to the voice of the abuser and the abused who are most time suffering/wounded for example: Psalm 31— seem to speak to the Abused "Be gracious to me, O God, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief"—
 Psalm 32— can be heard as the voice of an abused woman. "While I kept my silence, my body wasted away“Then I acknowledged my sin to you . . . and you forgave the guilt”—
 can be read as the voice of an abuser. Counselling for both abused and abuser *These Church teachings can serve as a resource for victims and abusers.*

HELP TO



Ministers of this great gospel it is clear that it is not the will of the Lord for us to give a 'blind eye "to the issues of Violence that affect both members of the church and society. I am also conscious of the fact that members of the body of Christ including Ministers are involved in this type of violence (consciously or unconsciously).It is also a known fact that Violence in or outside the home, is never justified. Violence in any form – physical, sexual, psychological or verbal – is sinful and is also a crime. It is important that churches take a public stand as is being done in recent times through marches

and intercessory prayer vigils to address these Social Justice issues. It matters greatly to the faithful of the church what we say or don't say about these painful, personal and persistent experiences of abuse that many church members have buried alive which are not dead. We have the resources to make a positive impact. Please encourage and empower yourselves to find out more about these issues and better minister to the wounded and struggling among us and in wider society (both Abused and Abuser). Blessings Always.

