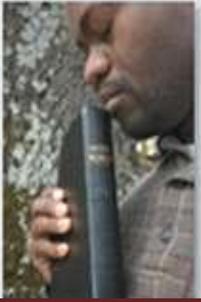


MINISTERS FORUM NEWSLETTER

INFORMATION MINISTERS CAN USE
TAKE ACTION!

BREAK THE CHAIN OF ABUSE AGAINST CHILDREN

Psalms 127:1-3; Matt 19:13-14; 2 Samuel 21: 8, 10 & 11



As a Church, we simply can't keep looking the other way because we don't know what to do with the situation of CHILD ABUSE. 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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Must Read! Prince Harry- Feeling buried alive never die.

"Where there is no VISION, the people...

Greetings Ministers, I do hope that you all have been doing well as you labour in the vineyard of souls and at the same time ministering to the common human needs of God's creation. The vineyard is multi-faceted with different issues that affect/impact lives positively and negatively and which can be attributed to our Orientation and Socialization; basically how we were trained or not trained, as well as, what and how we perceive this thing call "life". My teacher always says we are the product of our environment and how we were brought up and what we were exposed to.

As you know the month of May is designated to be CHILD'S MONTH and within this same month is also TEACHERS and MOTHERS DAY; three (3) important activities which are closely related. Over the past years much emphasis has been place on child's Month mainly due to the reports of Abuse that have been meted out to children, not just from their peers but from adults both within and outside their families. Reports and observations of violence against children have reached a point where many have classified it as "sickening" which has brought the theme for child's month to be "Breaking the chain of child abuse".

*Last Sunday I had the opportunity to bring the Child Months message at the Pentecostal Gospel Temple Church on the theme; excerpts of which will be shared in this edition of the Newsletter. Focus of the presentation was on the word **Chain**. As you know chain has links and these links represent the reasons for abuse of children such as Generational issues? Wounded parents/people? Feelings buried alive that never die? Unresolved childhood issues? These come along with emotions and feelings of anger, mistrust, bothered conscience and other life experiences/issues brought forward into new families and the struggle continues into new families and it goes on. These anxieties and pains are often taken out on children to ease the pain of parents which resulting in the different types of abuse and the chain is extended further.*

Breaking the "link" means cutting loose – stopping what is happening and start something that can sustain or keeping disconnected; that is finding out what is keeping or has been keeping the links together and devise strategies to keep the links apart and dismantled.

What is Child Abuse?

Let us explore what is child abuse? The terms child abuse and child mal-treatment are often used interchangeably. It is physical, sexual, or psychological or neglect of a child or children, especially by a parent or other caregiver. It may



include any act or failure to act by a parent or other caregiver that results in actual or potential harm to a child, and can occur in a child's home, or in the organizations, Schools or communities the child interacts with.

Child Abuse falls into different **categories Domestic Violence/ family violence such as:**

- **Physical abuse:** which is intentional injury that is inflicted on a child through methods such as beating, burning etc? Any situation in which a child is physically mistreated by an adult to the point where care or protection by a source outside of the family is needed.
- **Verbal abuse:** is often called the hidden abuse because it leaves no visible scars – is name calling, humiliating, demeaning the child and its activities or excessive yelling.
- **Sexual abuse:** indications of parents, caregiver guardian engaging in sexual molestation involving with a child due to neglect of parents – [Incest explain - happens to children, can be done by both men and women other children- and sometimes happen in church] Sexual assault can also happen with men. Other children can also abuse each other. Women can also be sexual abusers
- **Neglect** is purposeful withholding of things necessary to the well-being of the child such as adequate food, clothing, medication and health care, supervision and nurturing

The question is what/who are the factors that form the chain in child abuse? if children are born into families it means that this might be where the abuse begins and as the links get stronger the reason for the abuse of children must be tied to the family/household. The answer comes back [household sexual violence, clandestine activities, transactional sex, intergenerational sex, and trafficking in person are some of the elements that hold each other together and the link is strengthened.

Links (issues) that form the chain of Child Abuse

Last month's edition (April) explored the subject of Domestic and Intimate Partner violence explained the impact on children I will therefore not spend much time on explaining what is it but will emphasize some of the elements that can cause children to be abused and prevent the chain from being broken"

- *Feelings buried alive that have not died* – I will explain this with a story- I was teaching the adult Sunday School Class a few months ago and based on the topic of the lesson I mentioned that things that happen in our lives if they are not addressed or if help is not given it can become very disturbing to the point of causing physical illness because it still bothers hence not forgotten because it was never addressed. A lady raised her hand and shared with the class that she is *now seventy-four (74) years old and she remembers clearly when she was 3 years old that she was sexually assaulted by her father* and it still bothers her. This was the first time that she was sharing it but she has never forgotten it Can you stretch your imagination on the impact of this on her [this is one link in the chain]



Can you imagine how stressful it must have been for this sister? The level of *trauma and anxiety* must have been great especially coming from someone she trusted (a father). The question might be asked where her mother was. Didn't she observe any unusual behavior in the child?

As I write this I am also reflecting on another person telling me a *similar story where she was sexually assaulted by her uncle and when she told her mother she got very angry and had a fight with her brother and threw him out of the house BUT told her not say anything to anyone* and it was never spoken again – nothing was done. They just continued their lives going to church as if nothing happen.

Nevertheless she continued her life in the church and like everyone else she looked forward to getting married and start her own family – ultimately she did BUT the memory came rushing back when the marriage was to be consummated. The memories affected the relationship with her husband through the birth of two children to the point of frustration for her husband – It was then that she sought help and was encourage to share her experience with her husband – which she timidly did. Her husband was relieved because all along he thought he was the problem. It was then and only then that she started to live freely with her husband and not being miserable with her children - because her feelings are no longer buried unresolved.

- **Wounded parents producing wounded children:** It is a known fact that if parents are emotionally disturbed it is going to be reflected in how they parent. Whenever parents are having “problems” it impacts children. Parents often take out their pain and sorrow on children because of the power and control they have over them because most times children out of respect and helplessness don't/cant retaliate.
- Children who may be “*inadvertently*” hurt through domestic violence. They may be hit by items thrown by the batterer, and older children, in particular, may be hurt trying to protect their mother/father. Studies have shown that mothers were more times likely to hurt their children when they themselves are being abused.

SOMETHINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Children in homes where domestic violence occurs are physically abused or seriously neglected at a rate higher than the national average in the general population.

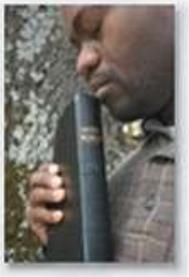
Studies conducted found that mothers were 8 times more likely to hurt their children when they were being battered than when they were safe from violence.

A major study of more than 900 children at battered women's shelters in New York found that nearly 70% of the children were themselves victims of physical abuse or neglect.

Children may be “inadvertently” hurt through domestic violence. They may be hit by items thrown by the batterer, and older children, in particular, may be hurt trying to protect their mother/father.

Children are used by batterers to manipulate their victims. A batterer may threaten to take custody of or kidnap the children if the victim reports the abuse;

Children may also be threatened with harm or death.



Broken relationships, especially when mothers are still in love; in their pain boy on many occasions are treated as ‘the man of the house’ that is, allowed to do the chores of the house that would normally have been done by the father; in the process they are often cursed about their worthlessness father to the point where they would retaliate by cursing back or get angry and retreat into anger and depression.

- *Depression is another common factor in parents who are wounded*; they have made mistakes and have not forgiven themselves and so blame themselves for things that happen to the point of introversion or become withdrawn. They are also parents who are abusive to each other and children which have also added to the chain of abuse that has to be broken.
- *Lack of stable and cordial relationships* in with both parents and family are competing with children for love from spouse, contributing to toxic relationship in the household has added to the link in the chain which must be broken if child abuse is going to end.
- **Generational Issues** where the sin of the father/mother impact the next generation (children) **2 Samuel 21: 8, 10 &11** tells the full story of Saul who broke a covenant made resulting in the death of his innocent sons because of vengeance. Also in the case of a mother who became pregnant in her teen and do not want that to happen to her daughter became over protective and obsessed with guarding her against this happening – being overly protective out of fear bringing frustration to the child and who is being accused or warned about every move because her mother does not want what happened to her to happen and continues to *parent out of Fear of not wanting what happen to her happen to her daughter.*

All these issues are links in the chain that must be broken where child abuse is concerned. The things that are taken for granted where children are concern are what keeps the chain of Child Abuse going which must be broken if we are going to save our children and ultimately generations to come.

Take action! Breaking the chain of child abuse

Parents, School and Church can break the chain of child abuse: Breaking the chain - loose it – let it go – setting children free to live a balanced life and able to maximize their full potential

Family is expected to play the lead role with parents parenting fearlessly with passion to keep family going. Mothers in particular with vigilance and intensity bring identification with the values and attitudes as seen in **Story of Rizpah –2 Samuel 21: 8, 10 &11** as it unfolds where her two sons were killed because of the sins of their father. Rizpah was a concubine of Saul who had two of his 7 sons who had to be hanged for the breaking of a covenant Saul made.



The plan was for the bodies of the men to be left in the open for the crows to eat their flesh as a sign of disgrace and dishonor to their death. Rizpah decided that she was not going to allow the flesh of her innocent son to be eaten by any “john crow”. Normally the bodies of the dead should be buried before sunset the same day but because of vengeance the bodies should not be buried until crows have eaten everything. She stood watch over the dead, rotting and stinking bodies of her sons for months to protect them from ravenous animals and birds.

We need to break the ‘cultural barrier’ where mandatory reporting is seen as “Informing” and persons being labeled as “Informers”

Just imagine Rizpah staying with the bodies, preventing crows from eating the flesh from her sons bodies. Word got to King David of what she was doing and her desire to have a decent burial for her innocent sons and he allowed her to decently bury the remains of her sons removing the shame from the family. Her perseverance made what she sets out to do happen. *In School* there is nobody like teacher to a child, sometimes more believable than their parents. ***The Church is strategically placed for the purpose of ministering to all family members. The church has the enormous opportunity to address the grievous issue in a number of ways, by:***

- Provide counseling services for victims in a way that they know their stories when told will be believed and treated
- Offer Bible studies for those who have been abuse
- Minister to the wounded and those needing healing
- Respecting and affirming children and parents
- Preaching and teaching on holistic and biblical ethics helping survivors to find true healing

Without intervention, today's abused children will grow up to be tomorrow's abusing parents and society's violent criminals. More than 98 percent of the abusing parents we work with were abused children. More than 90 percent of convicts imprisoned for violent crimes were abused children.
<http://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/29/opinion/breaking-the-chain-of-child-abuse.html>

In the same way that a mother had to stand for a cause and put back integrity to the lives of her sons who suffered for the sins of their father the church must also rise to the occasion with the state in breaking the chain of child abuse. For most of you Ministers, mothers and teachers are two very significant persons in your lives and it so happen that in the month of May the work of both professionals are recognized by the people of Jamaica because they are shapers of future and should be acknowledged accordingly.



The state has introduced laws, Legislations, Acts, Children's agencies, institutions, and making people mandated reporters of abuse - let us all play our part and break the chain. The Child care & protection Act (CCPA) states that *if it is suspected that a child is being abused it must be reported* making all Mandated Reporters (especially minister) It has been established that if it is known and not reported there is the penalty of 6 months imprisonment or a fine of \$500,000.

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. The 'cultural barrier' where mandatory reporting is seen as "Informing" and persons being labeled as "Informers" must be broken.

When the 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 judgment, but in their personal encounters they will manifest respect, trust, support, and accountability for all God's children at all ages and stages.

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 persons including church members have buried alive (which are not dead) but should be encouraged to rest their souls and be ultimately saved. We have the resources to make a positive impact.

MUST READ - See the impact of "feelings buried alive never die" in the story of Prince Harry-Princess Diana who crashed in a Paris Tunnel on August 31, 1997

"FEELING BURIED ALIVE NEVER DIE"

ALL OF THIS GRIEF': PRINCE HARRY OPENS UP ABOUT HIS MENTAL HEALTH

Prince Harry was 12 years old when the car carrying his mother, Princess Diana, crashed in a Paris tunnel on Aug. 31, 1997. He spent much of the following two decades — through the conspiracy theories, endless investigations and royal family turmoil — remaining mostly silent about her death. He went to war in Afghanistan and watched his older brother marry. Then in his late 20s, Harry crumbled, the prince told the Daily Telegraph in a recent, revealing interview that lent "unprecedented insight into his past."

At royal engagements, Harry found himself overcome by a "flight or fight" sensation. The prince felt angry, he told the Telegraph, as if he were "on the verge of punching someone." But he didn't understand what was causing the eruptions. "I just couldn't put my finger on it," Harry told the Telegraph. "I just didn't know what was wrong with me." It wasn't until he began speaking with friends and family, then a therapist that Harry realized it was the unattended, unresolved grief of losing his mother so young that was possibly crippling him. "I can safely say that losing my mum at the age of 12, and therefore shutting down all of my emotions for the last 20 years," Harry said, "has had a quite serious effect on not only my personal life but my work as well."

The interview, published April 16, was with the Telegraph's Bryony Gordon, who after her own struggles with obsessive-compulsive disorder began a podcast called "Mad World: Why it's totally normal to feel weird." The purpose of the podcast is to have unvarnished conversations about depression, anxiety and mental health. Her first guest was Prince Harry. In an essay she wrote about landing the interview, Gordon said she was surprised by how candid their conversation was in Kensington Palace. "Was this really happening? I mean



really?” Gordon wrote in the essay. “Were we finally living in an era where even a representative of one of the most buttoned-up, traditional institutions on the planet might feel able to talk about the troubles in their head?”

It’s not entirely surprising that Harry was willing to come on Gordon’s show. He, alongside his brother and sister-in-law, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, founded a mental health charity called Heads Together in May 2016. The three have actively worked to alleviate mental health stigma. During a barbecue hosted by Harry, now 32, at Kensington Palace last year, he said: “I really regret not ever talking about it,” referring to his mother’s death. But Harry’s conversations about mental health at the event took on an advocate’s tone.

His interview with Gordon was more intimate.

The prince said he spent his teenage years and 20s dodging thoughts of Princess Diana, whose death came at the same time the royal family was preparing to introduce Prince Charles and his longtime love (and current wife) Camilla as a couple. “My way of dealing with it was sticking my head in the sand, refusing to ever think about my mum, because why would that help?” Harry told Gordon. “[I thought] it’s only going to make you sad, it’s not going to bring her back.”

In the mid-2000s, Harry joined the British Army around the same time his boyish and drunken antics invited ruthless media frenzy. He eventually rose to the rank of Apache helicopter commander and was praised for his skills by the British Defense Ministry. But his service opened the door for speculation that his mental health challenges were related to his time overseas.

“I can safely say it’s not Afghanistan-related,” Harry said in the Telegraph interview. “I’m not one of those guys that have had to see my best mate blown up next to me and have to apply a tourniquet to both their legs. Luckily, thank God, I wasn’t one of those people.” It was the way he had been forced to publicly grieve Princess Diana — and as a result hardly grieve at all — that did the most damage, the prince said. He didn’t let his “emotions be part of anything, he said, and tried to behave like a “typical” 20-something.

“And then started to have a few conversations and actually all of a sudden, all of this grief that I have never processed started to come to the forefront and I was like, there is actually a lot of stuff here that I need to deal with,” Harry told Gordon. His brother, Prince William, who is expected to take over the throne one day, was a “huge support,” Harry said, and encouraged him to talk with a professional.

As a way to mitigate the rage, Harry took up boxing, which he joked in the interview was better than hitting someone who didn’t deserve it. Seeking help, he said, is important for those struggling with mental health, “not just for you but everybody else around you as well because you become a problem.” “I, through a lot of my twenties, was a problem and I didn’t know how to deal with it.” Now, Harry said, he is in a “good place.”

During her own essay about the interview, Gordon reflected that the prince’s candid words were groundbreaking because “... in Britain, we don’t talk about our feelings. We have bitten our lips, slapped on rictus grins, kept bugging on.” She continued: “It has always been a sign of strength and dignity to keep it all inside, and our Royal family has always been the embodiment of that, God bless them. But Prince Harry just redefined strength and dignity for a new generation.” And Gordon, she wrote, could “think of no more fitting tribute to his mother than that.”

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Let us **BREAK THE CHAIN OF CHILD ABUSE***