

Violence and the Family Globalisation and changes in family life

Report of the consultation
held in Seoul, South Korea
19–25 October 2007

International Anglican Family Network
in partnership with
Anglican Church of Korea and
NCKK Gender Equality Committee

Introduction

This is the second consultation organised by the International Anglican Family Network (IAFN) under the general heading 'Violence and the Family'. When the first Consultation was held in Kenya in 2003 there was only a passing reference in the report to the effects of globalisation.

By the time this consultation was held in Seoul, South Korea in October 2007 the implications of globalisation had become a major concern and provided the overarching theme for the consultation. From this stemmed detailed discussions on the effects of globalisation as seen in the growth of migrant workers, the bride trade, the pressures on family relationships and the resultant levels of family violence.

Delegates came together from nine countries and brought a wide range of experience and expertise in the themes for the consultation. Some of the recommendations are particularly relevant to the situation in Asia but most of them have implications for the whole Anglican Communion.

We are grateful to the Anglican Church of Korea for hosting the consultation and providing a stimulating programme of presentations, visits and worship to complement the deliberations of the delegates. We are also grateful to the National Council of Churches in Korea Gender Equality Committee for help in planning the programme and organising some of the visits. Our prayer is that this report will encourage all parts of the Anglican Communion to work to support families in whatever situation they find themselves and to demonstrate the love of Christ in action.

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The impact of globalisation

The theme of the consultation was the effect of globalisation on families and communities. Delegates described the impact globalisation has had on their communities and families.

Although they acknowledged some benefits from globalisation, such as the sense of being part of one world and the wider availability of goods, the overwhelming sense was of its negative impact on society, community and, particularly, the family.

The opening up of markets, especially in less developed countries, has devastated local industries as multi-national corporations have replaced indigenous businesses. For example, in the Philippines, food imports trebled between 1993 and 2003. Freedom from regulation for businesses means that jobs have become insecure, people have short-term contracts, fewer health benefits and have to work longer hours sometimes for less pay.

These changes are also affecting family and community life:

- There has been a growth in migrant workers with a profound weakening of family life as parents (often fathers) are separated from their families for months or years at a time. The effects are seen in the increase in the divorce rate, the increase in the number of single parent families and the absence of male role models in many families.
- Consumerism, rather than the quality of relationships, is dominating the lives of under-35s. The effect of advertising and the media in sexualising young children and of the Internet in drawing young people into addiction to gambling and pornography are also worrying trends.
- More women are in the workforce. This had had the benefit of increasing family incomes but has also brought pressures as women continue to hold the main domestic responsibilities, along with responsibility for the care of frail elderly parents.
- There is a widening gap between the poor and the wealthy with a corresponding breakdown in the sense of community and mutual co-operation.

There is also a deeper concern. When freedom of competition takes precedence over everything else; when people's lives become part of the market place, it has an impact on people's psyche and spirituality. The market place is no longer about buying what you need, but experiencing your own life becoming a market commodity. Thus we see the triumph of individualism over community; greed instead of sharing; materialism rather than relationships or spiritual values.

The Church should not be passive in the face of these things but should challenge them more vigorously.

Migrant workers

The countries represented at the consultation all had direct experience of migrant workers. But it also became clear that every country in the world was involved by the way in which free market economics have destroyed local industries and migrant workers have consequently been exploited in order to provide cheap products and services to consumers.

There are between 185 and 192 million migrants, representing nearly 3% of the world's population. Typically they are moving to more developed countries to improve their own circumstances and to provide cheap labour. Sadly, some of the "sending" countries have become dependent on the money they return to their home country as a major source of income. There are also similar patterns of internal migrants in countries such as China. Here, people are abandoning their land in the countryside and going to the cities in search of work.

Migrant workers have fewer rights, lower wages, lower standards of medical care and insurance, and less legal protection in the countries they move to. In the case of unregistered workers this discrimination can extend to their children who may not be entitled to attend school.

Families may be split up as men move to another country to seek work. The men face emotional stress and sexual temptation while their wives carry the burden of caring for the family and often elderly parents as well. Children suffer from being separated from their fathers during their early years. Older children may be drawn into forced labour or child prostitution because of poverty in their home country.

Half of migrant workers are women and they are typically drawn into the service sector as domestic servants, hotel workers or shop assistants. The women involved in domestic service and entertainment, including the sex industry, are vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse.

Recommendations

1. Anglican Provinces and dioceses should establish a programme or ministry for migrants if not already in existence, or strengthen those which are already established. This should include:
 - Tapping into the services and cooperation of non-government organisations working on the issues and concerns of migrants
 - Initiating exchange programmes to learn from countries and Provinces with relatively long periods of experience in dealing with the issues and concerns of migrants, such as Hong Kong, Korea, Japan and Philippines, and
 - Conducting regular training and education work among clergy and lay people on migration history, issues and other relevant information

2. The IAFN should develop a statement on how the church understands its role in the growing issues confronting migrants, as well as its responsibility to take care of its members, families and other people in distress. This should include a call for all provinces and dioceses to
 - create their own migrants' ministry or programme
 - join the International Anglican Network on Refugees and Migrants, and
 - to press for the signing and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Migrants and their Families.

The papers and materials produced by the IAFN Asian and African consultation can be used as a reference for developing the statement and the IAFN statement should then be adapted as a statement for the whole Anglican Communion

Addendum

The consultation was impressed by the work of the East Asia Refugee and Migrant Network and has made a proposal to the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion for further developing the International Anglican Refugee and Migrant Network building on the work of the East Asia Network.

Bride trade

In the light of globalisation, the bride trade issue should be seriously regarded as not only a migrant issue but also as a women's issue. In particular, many countries: Korea, Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, Hong-Kong etc. are continually affected by this issue as sending or receiving countries in Asia.

According to the Migrant Women's Hotline 1366 in Korea, 46 % of their counselling services in 2007 have been provided to Vietnamese women who are living in Korea after an international marriage which is related to bride trading.

The Philippines provide the most vivid account of this trade in human beings. Between 300,000 and 500,000 Filipino women have been married through this process in the past 10 years. The process was colloquially known as 'mail order brides', and is now operating on the internet. In the USA there are more than 200 sites offering catalogues of hundreds of Filipino women as prospective brides.

The Philippines Government has struggled to control this trade because it is mainly organised through internet sites in the USA and families are reluctant to say that their daughters are being abused.

The driving force for the bride trade is the desire of women to escape poverty and unemployment and some marriages are successful. However there are many abusive relationships and the underlying message is that women are a commodity. As a commodity, they can be treated as a sex object and domestic worker. The bride trade is also used as a 'legal' way to import women who are then forced into sweat shops or the sex industry.

Women experience significant discrimination in their new country. If they do not speak the language, they will be isolated. If they are divorced they may be deported. Their children may be bullied because they are of mixed race.

Recommendations

1. The exploitation of women, which results from a market model of intercultural marriages involving financial transactions is a major international problem. The purchasing of brides undermines fundamental human rights and dignity and the sanctity of marriage and is an issue of significant concern for the Anglican Church.
 - The Anglican Church should encourage the international community to find ways to restrict the practice of 'bride purchasing' and to ensure appropriate controls are enacted to restrict the trade of marriage brokers who seek to exploit intercultural marriages for financial gain.
2. The Anglican Church, with other communions, should advocate for all countries to abide by the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as a cornerstone of the fight against bride trading.

3. Bride trading will be a feature of international migration as long as there is a demand by men from rich nations for women from poor countries
 - The Anglican Church is well positioned to lead an education campaign in countries receiving brides from foreign nations aimed at changing community attitudes and practices which allow for the trafficking of women as brides.
4. The economic dependency on the export of human capital has trapped many poorer countries into reliance on policies which enable the movement of their citizens.
 - The Anglican Church should encourage the development of alternative, sustainable economic policies which are not based on the exploitation of citizens. The church should also emphasise the responsibility of rich nations to support the alternative economic policies.
5. The rates of economic and sex migration are not anticipated to lessen in the short to medium term.
 - The Anglican Church should actively encourage connections between Anglican bodies in host and recipient countries, to provide legal and practical support and spiritual care of migrants, especially those at risk of financial exploitation and discrimination.
6. The Anglican Church should actively extend support to brides arriving in recipient countries. This important initiative should be widely promoted as a central support program of the church, regardless of the faith and denomination of the migrant.

Family relationships

Family is the basic social unit of society which God has designed to provide love, security and care for the healthy development of individuals. The growing prevalence of marital separation and divorce in most cultural groups is of major concern, given its impact on vulnerable family members, especially children.

Therefore the Church needs to reassert the value of maintaining wholesome, healthy family relationships and keeping relationships intact while recognising that for some, particularly where abuse or violence is involved, separation may be necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of individual members.

The Church should consider how it could play a more active role in supporting family relationships as people struggle with the pressures of contemporary life in a global economy. The pressure on families results in lack of time, with less time for relationship skills and commitment in parenting.

In view of the rapid change of economic and social environment, families are now arising in many forms, such as the blended family, single parent family, families without children and other forms. To meet the many needs of these and other families, the church should study the changes of roles, values and lifestyles of contemporary families and support them to face the stress of contemporary life in a global world.

‘To love one another’ should start in the family and be in accord with the following principles:

- Families with members who have special needs should be actively supported.
- Elderly people need to be able to live in a community where they are well-respected, regardless of any deteriorating health or advancing frailty;
- Children experiencing disease/illness should be identified and receive early treatment.

Recommendations

The Anglican Church should promote and provide more programmes and services for families and specific groups within families. The church will do this in collaboration with social services and non government organisations which are already providing family relationship services.

1. Children and Youth

- The Church needs to respond to teenagers’ developmental and other needs, and to establish chaplaincies for schools starting when children are small.
- The Church needs to promote and encourage education programmes and training that promote children’s self awareness and self esteem, encourage emotional competence, social and relationship skills and help children and young people develop a positive and balanced outlook.

- The church should target a program at elementary and high school students, which helps young people to learn how to consider people from different family background, racial groups and gender perspectives.

2. Adults and couples

- Family-focused ministries should be encouraged to provide education and counselling for families, to take care of their needs as a unit and as they grow. In this way the family bonds are maintained and nourished over an individual's life span.
- The Church should to be more proactive in family-life education e.g. developing relationship skills between parents; and parents and children; and teaching conflict resolution skills.
- The Church should, as a priority, strengthen its commitment to providing support to the family. In particular, to strengthen this commitment to avoid the suggestion that the family is 'women's work'. Bishops, male clergy and male laity should actively contribute to this area. Pre-marriage preparation programmes and preparation for parenthood will equip families with the skills to develop healthy values, attitudes and relationships for their children.
- Continuing support should be provided to couples, eg: couples' groups and marriage enrichment programmes, for both healthy and struggling marriages.
- Practical support should also be provided to parents eg: positive parenting groups, responsible fatherhood programme, new mothers' support group, teenage parents' support group and support groups for parents with children at different stages of transition
- Children in single parent families should be provided with positive male role models, and support services should be offered to single parents.

3. Elderly

- Practical support services eg: day care service, escort for medical appointment, home care services and other activities programmes for the elderly are important and the Church should consider how to promote the availability of such services.

4. Others

The Church should examine how it could act to:

- Support caregivers, such as grandparents, relatives and neighbours who are the primary child carers when mothers or fathers are working overseas; where parents have died from AIDS etc.

- Pass resolutions to Government policy-making bodies for the protection, welfare and benefit of women, children, elderly people and people with disabilities.
- Network with concerned government agencies and NGOs on family concerns.

Addendum

The consultation has made a proposal direct to the Secretary General about the development of the International Anglican Women's Network including ways in which the two networks can work together more closely.

Family violence

The escalation of family violence, including child abuse and neglect across the world, is a cause for great alarm. It signifies a significant breakdown in family and human values and has its genesis in a range of factors, including an increasingly pressured work environment, poverty, substance abuse and addiction, changing family roles and demands and a lack of preparation for parenting, particularly among young parents.

Globalisation has added further pressure on families by bringing about greater competition for resources, changing work environments, the movement of labour and increased stresses on family life. Inequality and gender discrimination, together with power imbalances among family members, remains a major cause of violence within families.

Family violence includes the abuse of women, children and elders. Family violence has many forms including physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse. However it is also too often an unrecognised problem in society, with institutions and authorities not being prepared to take the action needed to prevent family violence, protect victims and to deal with the behaviour of perpetrators.

The Church can play an important role in helping to re-establish more supportive communities which help to nurture parents and protect children. The Anglican Church should seek to position itself as a positive defence against child and family violence by investing in the building of supportive communities, by taking a clear stance against violence in families, helping those who suffer abuse and advocating for greater investment from public and private sources in maintaining healthy and safe families.

Recommendations

1. Violence against women

The Anglican Church needs to take a strong stand against all forms of violence against women given the impact such violence has on the human rights, safety and security of victims—including children who witness violence in the home.

- The bishops and priests of the Anglican Communion should clearly communicate to their respective congregations that violence against woman within the family is unacceptable and that perpetrators are responsible for changing their behaviour
- Emergency responses including shelters should be provided or facilitated by the church for the protection of victims and their children
- Counselling, support groups and telephone support services be made available for those at risk of abuse
- Church bodies should advocate within their jurisdictions for effective laws to protect women against domestic violence and for the mandatory counselling of perpetrators
- Church communities should become involved in the healing process for victims of violence in ways that respect the trauma and harm caused

2. Violence against children

Child abuse and neglect is a rapidly growing phenomenon across the world and is resulting in an increasing number of children not only being exposed to risks and harm but also to impaired development and future life opportunities.

- Anglican Church leaders across the world should demand national action in their respective countries to combat child abuse by the provision of increased family and child support programmes and services to assist perpetrators of violence take responsibility for changing their behaviour. Anglican church communities should consider implementing support programmes for vulnerable families where there is a risk of child abuse or neglect, particularly for single parent households, young parents and those experiencing problems such as substance abuse, violence and homelessness.

3. Violence against other vulnerable family members

Families play an important role in caring for and protecting their members from harm. However in some families vulnerable family members, including those with a disability or elderly parents, are subjected to violence or neglect.

- Anglican Church communities should assist in the implementation of support groups, respite care and counselling services for caregivers to release the stress in taking care of those family members who are elderly or have a disability.
- Anglican Church leaders should advocate for the enforcement of laws to protect the property and assets of the elderly and those with disabilities from exploitation by other family members.
- Anglican communities should provide mutual support groups for vulnerable family members who are at risk of abuse so that they can receive appropriate support from others
- Anglican communities should examine how they can best offer spiritual support for vulnerable family members experiencing abuse within the family.

4. Education

Community values about the role of women, children, elderly people and those with a disability play an important role in influencing societal attitudes to violence within the family. These values can be influenced by positive education campaigns and messages which promote respect, equality and peace and which denounce violence in all forms.

Anglican Church communities and leaders should take an active role

- in communication strategies to help change attitudes to violence in the family.
- Anglican Church communities should provide education for all clergy in identifying signs of violence in families and in how to support victims and counsel perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions and change their behaviour to enhance their provision of pastoral care.

