

AGENDA 2.2.14

Recognising and continuing the 'Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts' campaign

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions

BE IT RESOLVED that General Synod notes the work carried out by the 'Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts' Campaign, and requests that the GCC oversees and provides adequate resources to support its continuation in the next synodical term with particular attention to the following areas:

- resource development and community engagement
- awareness training and on-going professional education, and
- research and evaluation.

REASONS FOR THE MOTION

In 2015 the Convention of General Synod resolved the following:

The Convention of Synod reaffirms its condemnation of all forms of violence in the family and authorises GCC to commit resources for a churchwide campaign to address the prevalence of Family Violence amongst us, which may include sharing of resources, education initiatives and the provision of pastoral care to the survivors of violence.

The reference to the Synod's 'reaffirmation' of its condemnation of all forms of violence was a reminder of resolutions at two previous Synods in 1993 and 2003 that expressed its collective will to condemn all forms of violence in the family.

The 2015 "Reason for Proposal" noted how the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse placed the focus on the horrific treatment of vulnerable children in institutional care. While this focus was essential and welcomed by the church, the commission was unable to listen or respond to the terrible pain caused by violence, including sexual violence, within families.

It went on to highlight that the extent of family violence in our society led the Victorian government to establish a Royal Commission. In the terms of reference it noted:

1. In 2013, 14 65,393 family violence incidents were reported to Victorian police;
2. In 2013, 44 deaths were attributed to family violence;
3. In economic terms, the cost to the Victorian government in economic terms is over \$3b terms;
4. In personal terms, the cost of economic and social dislocation is severe, and has a long term psychological, emotional and physical impact.

The situation in Victoria reflects the reality across all states and territories of Australia, and New Zealand.

In passing the resolution, General Synod was sharing the community's deep concern about the scourge of family violence and the scandal of sexual abuse against children.

The 'Hidden Hurts Healing Hearts' campaign has made a start, but needs time to fully implement training and engagement across the church. There is also a need for the development of resources for lay people and varying age groups. The training, beginning with pastors and other church leaders, has commenced in 2018. It will take much of 2019 to begin the roll out of training across the church.

In addition, the campaign has only begun to develop a research strategy that may increase the church's own understanding and knowledge of the extent of domestic and family violence in its midst. A better understanding of ourselves will help inform means of curbing its impact on partners, children and church communities.