

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE

## Pastoral Resources for Action – Philippines

### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went (*II Samuel 13:19-20*).

The horrors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) are brutal. SGBV is a demonstration of power and control that ignite deep emotional and physical wounds that scar one's life. Scripture records this in the stories of Tamar, (*II Samuel 13*), the victim of Judges 19, and Dinah (*Genesis 34*). All are grim reminders of the need to practice and affirm the sacredness of all and each person's right to safety and loving care.

The history of our faith is the history of attempts to recover the insight of Genesis 1 that all creation is sacred in God's sight, and all human beings are made in the image of God. Jesus was an advocate for the sacred worth of all. In the account of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), we see Jesus actively oppose violence against women. Jesus saw beyond the stigma and blame that her accusers imposed on her. Unlike King David, Jesus did not employ his power to conceal the injustice, but instead recognized her dignity, interrupted the proposed violence and sought to restore her to community. Jesus' response expresses his commitment to abundant life (John 10:10) and his call to create circumstances in which abundant life can thrive. Jesus' gracious response reaches for the redemption of both victim and perpetrator and stops the cycle of violence.

### WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

Violent, disrespectful, or abusive sexual expressions do not confirm sexuality as God's good gift. We reject all sexual expressions that damage the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity.

¶161.H *Social Principles of the United Methodist Church*

### WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?

There is a lack of concrete information to show the extent of violence against women because many cases go unreported due to a culture of silence.<sup>1</sup>

1 in 10 women age 15-49 have experienced sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>

1 in 25 women age 15-49 who have had sex experienced a forced first sexual intercourse<sup>3</sup>

### WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

#### Be a place of healing, grieving and hope

- The church must continue to be a place where friends and family gather as a community to share their pain, seek care, support and are accompanied on the long journey of healing.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/focus-areas/violence-against-women>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/statistics/201405/statistics-violence-against-filipino-women>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/statistics/201405/statistics-violence-against-filipino-women>

- We must continue to teach that we are all beloved children of God and need to celebrate the sacredness of women and children.
- Church leaders should be prophetic in sermons and Bible study; speaking truthfully about sexual violence in our communities and the call of scripture to live into a world free of violence and where all are protected.
- Church leaders should receive training to respond and care for those who are survivors of sexual and gender based violence.
- Be an intergenerational place of healing and safety. Caring for survivors, reaching out to those experiencing harm and perpetrators alike.
- Believe the survivor, never allow them to be blamed for their abuse and let them share their story.
- Remember that the support survivors receive can make a significant difference between beginning the healing process and continuing to feel hopeless and isolated.<sup>4</sup> We need to build a community of care to surround the person who has survived abuse.
- Build relationships with the emergency care services, social service providers, health centers and shelters in your area. By building these relationships you will know what resources are available to your community, trust that care is culturally confident and know the barriers to care.

### Teach and take steps

- Cherish and protect our bodies by encouraging discussion with youth and young adults about our bodies, sexuality, and sex.
- Children and youth should have an adult in their lives that they trust, who will believe and protect them.
- Create comprehensive, culturally based, sex education, awareness of reproductive measures, rights and violence prevention.
- Combine education and awareness events with other activities to help participants build trust and openness to ease into conversations about sexual violence.
- Generate awareness of sexual violence, dating violence, rape, stalking and their harmful effects. This will help us to destigmatize the shame that is often placed on the person who has survived abuse.
- Include men in preventing and speaking out against sexual violence. Encourage boys to develop positive identities and positive masculinity.
- Continue to be in conversation about and develop means to address gender based violence and oppression in our communities.
- Create holistic comprehensive community solutions. Build trust with service providers as the healing process involves long and short term needs.
- Health care providers play a crucial role in detecting abuse and creating a care plan.<sup>5</sup>
- Train service providers to see individual women in light of her socio-cultural, consider her vulnerabilities and possible victimization. This helps advocates see the barriers that survivors face in their own communities.

### Ask for more

- Join the [#LabananAngAbuso](#) on Nov 25 for 16 days of action to end gender based violence.<sup>6</sup>
- **Get connected.** The General Board of Church and Society can support your efforts. Contact **Susan Greer Burton, Director of Women's & Children's Advocacy**, [sburton@umcjustice.org](mailto:sburton@umcjustice.org)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/poww-2015-factsheet-eastasiapacific-en.pdf?v=1&d=20151023T211444>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gabrielawomensparty.net/content/stop-violence-against-women-labananangabuso-nov25-start-16-days-activism-against-gender>  
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# HIV/AIDS

## Pastoral Resources for Action - Philippines

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### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Read Luke 17:12-19

The parallels between leprosy in scripture and HIV/AIDS are staggering. Both are dreaded, because there is stigma, shame, blame, and are seen as death sentences that cast the victims away from community and family. Hence, Christ's encounters with lepers sets standards for ministry with those infected with HIV/AIDS.



- Jesus hears and responds to the loud cry for mercy.
- Jesus immediately brings hope to what appears to be a hopeless situation.
- Jesus enables return to community.
- Jesus acknowledged the person's return.
- Jesus engenders praise, thanksgiving and glory to God.

For bible study questions see [guided questions](#) for Luke 17:12-19.

### WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

"The global AIDS pandemic provides a nearly unparalleled opportunity for witness to the gospel through service, advocacy, and other healing ministries. United Methodist public health specialists, health workers, social workers, teachers, missionaries, clergy, and laity live and work in areas where the AIDS pandemic is spreading. United Methodist congregations, schools, health facilities, women's, men's, and youth groups can play a major role by providing awareness, support, education, and care to those affected by HIV/AIDS."

*2012 Book of Resolution, #3243, "The Church and the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic"*

In response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the world, The United Methodist Church commits itself to a holistic approach of awareness, education, prevention, treatment, community organizing, public advocacy, and abstinence.

*2012 Book of Resolution, #3243, "The Church and the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic"*

### WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?

The Philippines is one of only seven countries in the world where the HIV/AIDS rate is increasing.<sup>1</sup>

The Department of Health Epidemiology Bureau warns that if the current rate of increase continues that the total number of HIV infections could increase to 133,000 by the year 2022.<sup>2</sup>

HIV infections are on the rise in the Philippines, with 21 new cases reported every day.<sup>3</sup>

The 15-34 age bracket has the largest number of HIV/AIDS cases.<sup>4</sup>



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<http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/filipino-church-leaders-call-for-end-to-hiv-stigma>

<sup>2</sup> <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/dept-health-hiv-cases-could-reach-133000-2022>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unaids.org.ph/index.php?mod=page&type=view&mid=21&rid=0&sid=0&tid=0&pid=6>

Since 2001, HIV infection rates have increased by 780 percent among those aged 15-24.<sup>5</sup>


Less than 1% of Filipinos have been tested for HIV/AIDS. Too many do not know their status.<sup>6</sup>

Sex is the main mode of transmitting the virus. In 2015, 85% of new cases reportedly were through male-to-male sex.<sup>7</sup>

A decline in new HIV infections among men who have sex with men will be achieved only by reaching a consistent condom use level of 60%, the current estimate of condom use during sex for this population is only 44%.<sup>8</sup>

New HIV cases among males and transgender women who have sex with males increased 12 times over the last five years.<sup>9</sup>

## WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

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- Host a bible study to discuss and identify the ways Luke 17:12-19 calls your community to respond.
  - Be the heart of the community by being a place that is open to supporting people living with HIV/AIDS through acceptance, prayers, presence, and assistance.
  - Develop a group of caregivers who can support the individual and families of those living with HIV.

### Prevention

- Break the stigma, discrimination and silence around HIV/AIDS by talking about the realities of the epidemic.
- Church leaders should know their status and encourage others to know theirs.
- Notify the community of [testing and counseling sites](#) that are confidential and free.<sup>10</sup>
- Create confidential spaces for people to share their status and story. This will help with prevention and normalization.
- Encourage those who are infected to seek treatment, share their status with their loved ones and work to ensure their nutritional needs are met.
- Promote safe needle exchange programs, due to the high number of new infections due to drug usage.

### Education

- Make the church safe and open place to talk about identity, sexuality, sex, sexual violence, reproduction, reproductive health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and drug use.
- Engage youth and young adults should in learning opportunities centered on HIV/AIDS prevention and comprehensive sex education.
- Teach equality so partners can ask to use protection as guard against HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Shape positive identities in our youth so they value one another and build relationships of equality, mutual respect and care.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/filipino-church-leaders-call-for-end-to-hiv-stigma>

<sup>5</sup> <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/dept-health-hiv-cases-could-reach-133000-2022>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/filipino-church-leaders-call-for-end-to-hiv-stigma>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.unaids.org.ph/index.php?mod=page&type=view&mid=21&rid=0&sid=0&tid=0&pid=6>

<sup>8</sup> <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/dept-health-hiv-cases-could-reach-133000-2022>

<sup>9</sup> <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/dept-health-hiv-cases-could-reach-133000-2022>

<sup>10</sup> <http://secretariat11.wix.com/socialhygieneclinic>

- Connect with the organizations working to end HIV/AIDS and the care providers in your community.
- Know what resources are available to those who are living with HIV and their families.
- Use local television, radio, social media outlets, and celebrities to spread information out about HIV prevention and the need to end discrimination against those people living with HIV.

### **Call Attention To**

- Build a relationships with health service providers in your community sharing their resources.
- Organize an action plan, gather information, and review policies that relate to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment while generating community support.
- Advocate for the removal of legal barriers on HIV testing and counseling for those below 18 years old.<sup>11</sup>
- Map out the services that are available to pregnant mothers and youth, continue to advocate for the expansion of those efforts.
- Increase funding for local AIDS councils and community social workers.<sup>12</sup>
- Create a network of communal care that supports the immediate and long term needs of those persons in your community living with HIV/AIDS.
- Increase funding for comprehensive health services in your community.
- Plan an educational event for December 1<sup>st</sup> World AIDS day.
- **Get connected.** The General Board of Church and Society can support your efforts. Contact **Susan Greer Burton** at [sburton@umcjustice.org](mailto:sburton@umcjustice.org)

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/philippines/hiv aids.html#VpQN6fkrLcs>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/philippines/hiv aids.html#VpQN6fkrLcs>

# **Pastoral Resources for Action**

## **Guided Questions for Luke 17:12-19**

In your community what gets in the way of people experiencing hope?

What does it feel like when you are shunned or excluded from your community?

How is shaming and stigma visible?

Why do we blame victims of HIV/AIDS? How do we benefit from this blame?

How do we make those who are infected and affected seem estranged?

If we were to be more like Christ we would offer healing, and care for those living with HIV/AIDS and those who are affected; how have you been a part of this healing?

In your community a place of welcome or does it hold on to the fear and stigma associated with HIV/AIDS? How could you change this culture of misinformation and fearful?

What traditions or customs do we have to welcome people back to the community?

How will you celebrate God's presence among you as you work to end HIV/AIDS in our community?



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## Pastoral Resources for Action – Philippines

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### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

The frequency and acceptance of domestic violence within our communities is sometimes overlooked. Yet it weighs down, isolates, creates pain, seems endless, and limits vision, making life unbearable for the survivor of the abuse. Luke 11:46 tells of loading people with burdens that are hard to bear, grievous and undesirable by others; yet no one is willing to lift a finger to help them. Such is domestic violence.

In Luke 13: 10-17, Jesus encounters the woman who had been bent over for eighteen years, unable to stand straight. She was so overcome with the burdens that she could only see the ground, she saw feet rather than faces, was alone, helpless and appearing to be worthless. That is what the burden of domestic abuse does, as it grips, immobilizes, and keeps victims oppressed. It is the role of the church to intervene and stop the abuse.

Jesus calls, not waiting to be asked, a gracious initiative that would change her life. He gives a kind yet powerful touch, speaks to her situation, brings freedom and courageously goes against cultural norms. God was glorified, and a woman and daughter who was bound for a long time was set free.

Everyone did not celebrate. Jesus shamed those gathered because their excuses for keeping her a victim were not acceptable. Something wonderful had happened – that which bound the woman had been broken. Christ touched one who was doubled over in pain and enabled her to walk upright again. May we go and do likewise and remove the burdens of violence, and abused suffered by so many, allowing freedom and glorifying God.

### WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

We recognize that family violence and abuse in all its forms—verbal, psychological, physical, sexual—are detrimental to the covenant of the human community. We encourage the Church to provide a safe environment, counsel and support for the victim. While we deplore the action of the abuser, we affirm that person to be in need of God’s redeeming love.”

¶ 161.G *Social Principles of the United Methodist Church*

The United Methodist Church affirms the sacredness of all persons and their right to safety, nurture and care. It names domestic violence and sexual abuse as sins and pledges to work for their eradication. The church commits itself to listen to the stories of battered spouses, rape victims, abused children, adult survivors of child sexual abuse, and all others who are violated and victimized. The church further commits itself to provide leadership in responding with justice and compassion to the presence of domestic violence and sexual abuse among its membership and within the community at large.

## WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one person to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner or family member. Abusive behavior can be physical, emotional, verbal, financial, and sexual.<sup>1</sup>

1 in 7 ever-married women report physical violence by their husbands.<sup>2</sup>

18 women and children face physical violence a daily.<sup>3</sup>

3 out of 5 women who have experienced physical/sexual violence reported experiencing psychological consequences like anger, anxiety, and depression.<sup>4</sup>



- **Silence.** There is a culture of silence around gender violence in communities keeping survivors from naming their abuse.
- **Inequality.** Domestic violence is a clear indication that there is inequality in the relationship which can result in an environment of fear and victimization. Therefore we must continue to address beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes that are deeply embedded in our social structures and that create a culture that condone gender and sexually based violence.
- **Self-blame.** Many survivors of violence blame themselves as the cause of their own misery. The wife can be seen as deserving her abuse due to not fulfilling her household tasks.<sup>5</sup>

## WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

### Be a place of healing



- The church is the center of the community. The church can use this position to be a place of safety and support as the survivor engages in the process of healing.
- Receive training on how to respond to domestic violence, provide care and be an advocate.
- Form a group of trusted caregivers who have been trained to be a circle of confidential care and support for the survivor of abuse. This care will help the healing process.
- Preach and teach biblical messages that emphasize the sacredness of women and children, health family dynamics of caring for one another with mutual respect.
- Boldly speak against violence in our communities. Silence and secrets allow for abuse to continue and allow us to accept violence as a social norm.
- Reach out confidently to those families where abuse is suspected.
- Affirm survivors for their courage and strength to seek support.<sup>6</sup>
- Never blame survivors for their abuse and believe their story.
- Encourage the family to be involved and support the survivor and perpetrator of abuse.
- Know the emergency care, social services providers and shelters in your area. Build relationships with caregivers so you trust referring community members for short-term and long-term care.

<sup>1</sup> [http://nkaceda.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Brochure\\_ENG\\_KAN-WIN.pdf](http://nkaceda.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Brochure_ENG_KAN-WIN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/statistics/201405/statistics-violence-against-filipino-women>

<sup>3</sup> *Tugon Journal Pinays Doing Theology*. R. Velunta. (National Council of Churches Philippines, Quezon City, 2015)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/statistics/201405/statistics-violence-against-filipino-women>

<sup>5</sup> <http://pcw.gov.ph/focus-areas/violence-against-women>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.api-gbv.org/organizing/prevention-organizing.php>

## Take steps

- Create space for intergenerational discussions of: gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, sexism, sex and healthy relationships.
- Emphasize the need for families to embody care, respect and be a supportive environment where disputes are resolved non-violently.
- Encourage men to see their role in ending domestic violence. Work to shape positive identities for boys and positive masculinity.
- Create holistic comprehensive community solutions. Holistic comprehensive care is important as the survivor builds trust with the care provider as the healing process involves long and short term needs.
- Train service providers to see each individual women in light of her socio-cultural and immigration history, consider her vulnerabilities and possible victimization.<sup>7</sup> This helps advocates see the barriers that survivors face in their own communities.
- Train law enforcement on domestic violence and cross cultural competence.

## Ask for more

- Lobby to have the government spend more to provide resources and support survivors of domestic violence. Services should be multilingual, holistic, comprehensive, and culturally specific to navigate the barriers that prevent those who have been abused from seeking care.
- Lobby to decrease the barriers to emergency cares services.
- Join the [#LabananAngAbuso](#) on Nov 25 for 16 days of action to end gender based violence.<sup>8</sup>

## CONTACT US!

For more information, please email

**Susan Greer Burton, Director of Women's & Children's Advocacy,** [sburton@umcjustice.org](mailto:sburton@umcjustice.org)

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.api-gbv.org/files/SexualViolence.HowtoInclude-APIIDV-2009.pdf>


<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gabrielawomensparty.net/content/stop-violence-against-women-labananangabuso-nov25-start-16-days-activism-against-gender>

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## Pastoral Resources for Action - Philippines

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### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?




Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. *Hebrews 2:14-16*

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing, and does not give him his wages. *Jeremiah 22:13*

Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all who are left desolate. Open your mouth, judge righteously; maintain the rights of the poor and needy. *Proverbs 31:8-9*

### WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?




The 2008 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church ¶161 states that United Methodists “deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sex, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. To lose freedom and be sold by someone else for sexual purposes is a form of slavery, and we denounce such business and support the abused and their right to freedom. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible.

Today’s child, in too many parts of the world... is often being denied a childhood itself by being forced into labor under abusive and destructive condition. Many millions of children around the world labor in work that is coerced, forced, bonded, enslaved or otherwise unfair in wages, injurious to health and safety, and/ or obstructive of educational or moral development.

*2012 Book of Resolutions, #3083 “Eradicating Abusive Child Labor”*

### WHAT DOES TRAFFICING LOOK LIKE IN THE PHILLIPINES?

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- According to the International Labor organization 1 million Filipinos migrate to work abroad each year, currently there are 10 million Filipinos who live and work abroad. A significant number of these skilled and unskilled workers are forced laborers.<sup>1</sup>
  - Forced labor can happen in debt bondage, in factories, in the shipping industry, on fishing vessels, at construction sites, in agricultural, as domestic workers, as nurses and as engineers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/manila/areasofwork/labour-migration/lang-en/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2014/226799.htm>

- Internal trafficking is a significant problem. As people are trafficked from rural areas to urban centers which include: Manila, Cebu, the city of Angeles, and increasingly to cities in Mindanao, as well as other urban areas.<sup>3</sup>
- Hundreds of people are forced to participate in commercial sex acts daily.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.1 million children are laborers at the ages of 5-17. Of these children 95% of them are working in hazardous conditions.<sup>5</sup>
- The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the New People's Army (NPA) have been identified by the United Nations as perpetrators of violations against children in armed conflict, including forcing children into service.<sup>6</sup>
- Filipina women were subjected to sex trafficking in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, and Syria.<sup>7</sup>

## WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

### Be a gathering place that casts a vision of hope

- Nurture all people celebrating their sacred worth and restoring dignity.
- Create a place of belonging for children and youth so they know unconditional love and know they are cared for. Children deserve safe and affirming relationships and communities.
- Children's ministries should help develop a positive self-esteem for children. One resource for this is the [Teaching Sacred Worth Book Initiative](#).<sup>8</sup>
- Preach and teach of a world free of violence.
- Interrupt gender based discrimination and sexual objectification where you see it.
- Create space for intergenerational discussions of: gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, sexism, sex and healthy relationships.

### Educate

- Become informed about the many layers of injustice that create the vulnerabilities that allow the exploitation of people.
- Learn more about what trafficking looks like in your community.
- Take the [slavery footprint quiz](#) to find out how much you benefit from slave labor.<sup>9</sup> Act to decrease your footprint.
- Learn the signs of human trafficking.
- Value and encourage youth and young adults to seek healthy relationships built on equality and respect.
- Teach and model [healthy masculinity](#).<sup>10</sup> Encourage men to see their role in ending gender and sexually based violence.
- Educate clergy, lay leaders, children and families, teachers, health care providers, outreach workers about fraudulent promises of traffickers and the resulting exploitation and abuse;
- Host community events that educate about the reality of human trafficking; invite other churches, organizations that work with survivors, and law enforcement to collaborate and create awareness together.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/philippines>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/philippines>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/manila/areasofwork/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/philippines>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2013/215544.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://umc-gbcs.org/sacred-worth-books>

<sup>9</sup> [http://slaveryfootprint.org/#where\\_do\\_you\\_live](http://slaveryfootprint.org/#where_do_you_live)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.mencanstoprape.org/Healthy-Masculinity-Action-Project/>

- Connect with community organizations and government agencies that are a part of anti-trafficking task force initiatives. See the work of the [Nation Council of Churches in the Philippines](#) and the [KKFL and IJM partnership](#).<sup>11</sup>
- Be aware of the organizations in your area that work to gain freedom for those who are trafficked, and the organizations that work with survivors. Encourage your community to support their efforts.
- Build relationships with emergency care, social services providers and shelters.
- Host community events to educate about the reality of human trafficking. Events could include a walk for freedom, hosting a screening of a film on trafficking, or be around a big sporting event.

### **Work to end trafficking**

- Address vulnerabilities that exasperate and allow for trafficking to continue such as poverty, displacement due to natural disasters, sexual and gender based violence, and media images, attitudes and beliefs that cause internalized oppression.
- Lobby the government to continue funding for the prevention of human trafficking and the conviction of traffickers.
- Push for the government to continue research centered on human trafficking and to expand protection, shelter and resources available to meet the immediate and long term needs of those persons seeking freedom.
- Continue to expand resources and services to male survivors of trafficking.
- Choose to [buy products that are fair trade and ethically sourced](#).<sup>12</sup>
- Join with others [to petition your favorite companies](#) to demand slave free products.<sup>13</sup>

### **CONTACT US!**

For more information, please email **Susan Greer Burton, Director of Women's & Children's Advocacy**, [sburton@umc-gbcs.org](mailto:sburton@umc-gbcs.org)

Connect with other United Methodist in the Philippines who are doing amazing work to end human trafficking and sexual and gender based violence.

<sup>11</sup> <http://kapatiran-kaunlaran.org/programs/view/anti-human-trafficking-project> and <http://nccphilippines.org/blog/2015/12/churches-stand-against-human-trafficking/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://madeinafreeworld.com/members>

<sup>13</sup> <http://chainstorereaction.com>

# Reproductive Health

## Pastoral Resources for Action - Philippines

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### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly. *John 10:10*

#### Motherhood

Scripture reiterates the sacredness and significance of motherhood. God honors Eve, Hannah, and Elizabeth, whose roles as mothers are essential to our faith. Similarly, we also have stories of the sorrow and grief of maternal mortality, as seen in the lives of Rachel (*Genesis 35:16-20*) and Eli's daughter-in-law (*1Samuel 4:19-20*).



Sadly, maternal and infant mortality are common tragedies for many women and families in developing countries. As frequently as once every 2 minutes, a woman dies while giving birth or in the days right after birth. Such tragedies can be prevented through interventions such as family planning, good prenatal and post-natal care, and skilled birth attendants.

Jesus' call to abundant life demands that his example, hearing the cries of those who bear great sorrow, cannot be ignored. Despite social isolation and rejection, the woman who is bleeding placed her faith in Jesus and reached out to touch his garments in order to be healed. Jesus' acceptance of her (*Matthew 9:20-22*) revealed his compassion, his acknowledgment of her suffering, and his boldness to challenge the status quo and intervene for her to have life in all its abundance.

The church is called to do the same.

### WHAT IS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH?

Reproductive health matters, despite barriers of culture, misinformation, and gender inequalities. Since the formation of the Millennium Development Goals in 1990, the global community, through the United Nations, has proven that the decrease in maternal mortality is attributed to effective reproductive health made accessible in spite of economics or other hindrances.

#### Reproductive Health:

- Enables spacing and timing of children so that a woman's body recovers, enhancing a healthier pregnancy
- Is a key factor for reducing infant and maternal mortality
- Promotes a clear understanding of sexual and reproductive health
- Prevents sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Gives tools to make the decisions that prevent unplanned pregnancies and the spread of HIV/AIDS, and reduces abortions
- Contributes to the wellbeing of women and girls increasing their opportunities for education, economic growth and contributions to the church and the nation.

## WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

Women, who are crying out for not only their own survival but also the survival of their families and communities, deserve access to services and care that empower their personal decision-making. As a global church, we are called to eradicate systems of oppression and marginalization that inhibit women's health and well-being.

*2012 Book of Resolution, #3203, "Maternal Health: The Church's Role"*

We affirm the right of men and women to have access to comprehensive reproductive health/family planning information and services which will serve as a means to prevent unplanned pregnancies, reduce abortions and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

¶ 162.G Social Principles of the United Methodist Church

## WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?

- High out of pocket payments for health care keep women from getting the health care they need.<sup>1</sup>
- Up to 69% of sexually active young men between the ages of 15–24 have reported never using a condom.<sup>2</sup>
- The Philippines' condom use is one of the lowest in Asia.<sup>3</sup>
- Sexually transmitted infections are the main preventable cause of infertility, particularly in women.
- Studies have found that in pregnant women with untreated early syphilis 25% of pregnancies result in stillbirth and 14% in neonatal death.<sup>4</sup>
- According to National Demographic and Health Survey in 2013, one in ten young Filipino women age 15-19 have begun childbearing: 8 percent are already mothers and another 2 percent are pregnant with their first child.<sup>5</sup>
- Social and economic conditions such as poverty and low education can make it difficult for individuals to protect their sexual health.<sup>6</sup>
- People living in poverty in the Philippines have families of six or more members, with greater numbers of younger and older dependents. In the majority of families living in poverty, the head of household has only an elementary education or below.<sup>7</sup>

## WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

### **Be a space that cultivates community**

- Teach women and girls that they are beautifully and wonderfully made.
- Ensure that life is lived to fullest as each person is able to secure all that is needed to live an abundant life.
- The church is a space for intergenerational discussions of: gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, sexism, sex and healthy relationships what it means to be a family.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/poww-2015-factsheet-eastasiapacific-en.pdf?v=1&d=20151023T211444>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3578603/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://mic.com/articles/40809/4-countries-where-condoms-are-still-considered-immoral#.vwsJOMHel>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-manila/documents/publication/wcms\\_184607.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-manila/documents/publication/wcms_184607.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://psa.gov.ph/content/one-ten-young-filipino-women-age-15-19-already-mother-or-pregnant-first-child-final-results>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats12/minorities.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/frontiers/2014/publication/section-1-extreme-poverty-philippines>

## Teach and take steps

- Know what resources are available by meeting with healthcare providers and social services agencies that focus on women's health, hygiene, and reproductive rights.
- Work with healthcare providers and social service agencies to understand the needs and barriers to care that affect Filipinas.
- Ensure that there is comprehensive, culturally based sexuality education that covers sexual orientation, how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and awareness of reproductive rights.<sup>8</sup> This could be used to educate youth and young adults.
- Women should be informed about emergency contraceptives and care that is available and continue to increase access.
- Advocate for the use of, access to and affordability of condoms and birth control to prevent unplanned pregnancy, to reduce sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.
- Create opportunities for people to be informed on how to use condoms and how their usage can cut down on the transmission of HIV and sexually transmitted infections.
- Encourage equality so that people feeling like they can ask their partner to use protection to guard against HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Encourage youth and young adults to seek relationships to be built on mutual respect and equality.

## Ask for more

- Push for civil action in the Philippines in order to increase access to social services and public health.<sup>9</sup>
- Continue to keep the government of the Philippines accountable to the targets and quotas in the public sector as jobs are given to women and break down occupational segregation and help to eliminate stereotypes.<sup>10</sup>
- Continue expand human rights as they relate to sexual and gender based violence.
- **Get Connected.** Contact **Susan Greer Burton, Director of Women's & Children's Advocacy**, [sburton@umcjustice.org](mailto:sburton@umcjustice.org)

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<sup>8</sup> Yee, J. (2012, Spring). Voice from the Field. Connections A Biannual Publication of Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Vol XV,

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.wcsap.org/sites/wcsap.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/uploads/resources\\_and\\_pubs/SPRING%202012%20CONNECTIONS.pdf](http://www.wcsap.org/sites/wcsap.huang.radicaldesigns.org/files/uploads/resources_and_pubs/SPRING%202012%20CONNECTIONS.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/poww-2015-factsheet-eastasiapacific-en.pdf?v=1&d=20151023T211444>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/poww-2015-factsheet-eastasiapacific-en.pdf?v=1&d=20151023T211444>