



STUDY NOTES: LAMBETH CALL ON SAFE CHURCH

Safe Church/Safeguarding is about working to ensure the safety of all members of the church community, with a particular emphasis on children, young people and adults made vulnerable by circumstance or relationships where there is an imbalance of power.

Safe Church/Safeguarding has two primary concerns:

- to prevent harm, abuse and exploitation of any member of a church community by any person in a position of leadership or authority within the church, be it lay person or clergy; and
- to ensure that leaders and other representatives of the church respond in an appropriate, effective, compassionate and consistent way when abuse is disclosed and/or reported.

When children, young people and vulnerable adults experience or witness incidents of abuse or exploitation they often remain silent. This may be due to many factors including fear of the perpetrator, manipulation by the perpetrator to feel that they are somehow to blame, the fear of being judged, pitied or shunned, or discomfort in speaking about topics considered taboo within their society and culture. Violence and abuse are also normalised within some societies with the result that they are accepted as inevitable.

Abuse and exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults generally occur within families and local communities. However, this also happens within organisations, institutions, and schools, including those which provide support and services to groups of people made vulnerable by their circumstances. Abuse and exploitation also happen within religious institutions, including the church and church-related organisations.

The intention for this call is therefore to promote and protect the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, within the churches of the Anglican Communion.

Reflection questions:

- When did you first become aware of abuse as an issue for the church?
- In your experience, how do churches in your province, and in your diocese usually respond when there is an allegation of abuse perpetrated by a church worker (clergy or lay leader)?
- Does your province and/or diocese currently have any measures in place to prevent abuse or exploitation by church workers?

In requesting the Lambeth Conference 2022 to prayerfully consider this call we are deeply mindful of, and guided by:

- World Health Organization estimates that:
 - up to 1 billion children aged 2–17 years experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence (abuse) or neglect in the past year. Violence and abuse against children have lifelong impacts on the health and well-being of children, families, communities, and nations;¹
 - 1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner violence in their lifetime. Violence has serious short-and long-

¹ World Health Organization, Fact sheet, Violence against children, 8 June 2020.

HOW TO USE THESE STUDY GUIDES IN PREPARING FOR THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

A 'Lambeth Call' is what the Bishops of the Anglican Communion at the Lambeth Conference 2022 will want to say about a key issue for the Church and world. It includes specific calls which others will be invited to take up and act upon.

- As you read through the calls and study notes, do you recognise what is being said, especially what is being proposed in the Affirmation section?
- Could you support it at the Lambeth Conference?
- Can you see ways in which the Specific Requests (the Calls) can be put into practice in your province or diocese and, if so, how? If not, why not?
- There will be opportunities during the conference to share your answers to these questions before the conference decides on whether to adopt or adapt the Call.

term physical, psychological, sexual and reproductive health consequences for women;²

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) targets:
 - to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (target 5.2);
 - to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against, and torture of, children (target 16.2).³

This call is proposed with full awareness of safeguarding/safe church issues in religious institutions including churches of the Anglican Communion, as highlighted by government inquiries and the media. Even in contexts where abuse has not come to light in such a public way, we know that it happens. Some religious workers have betrayed trust and abused children and adults for whom they had pastoral responsibility. Some religious leaders have denied or minimised this abuse and its consequences. Religious institutions have compounded the impact of the initial abuse by failing to effectively care for those who have been abused. The reputation of, and public trust in, many religious institutions has been damaged.

In this call, we propose that the Bishops attending the Lambeth Conference 2022 affirm:

- the witness of Scripture to God's love for all members of the human family and the priority given in Jesus' ministry to children, the vulnerable and the marginalised;
- the continuing relevance of the reflections of the Lambeth Conference 2008 on the many forms of abuse of power within society and the church from which women and children suffer disproportionately. Violence inflicted on women and children within the body of Christ is violence done to the body of Christ. Violence and abuse take many forms including physical, financial, emotional, psychological, intellectual, cultural, sexual and spiritual abuse;
- the *Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion* adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2012 (at ACC-15) with its five commitments: providing support where there is abuse; implementing effective responses to abuse; adopting and promoting standards for the practice of ministry; assessing suitability for ministry; and promoting a culture of safety;
- the *Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion* welcomed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 (at ACC-16) and the importance of having systems in place in our churches to disclose information about church workers moving between/within provinces, particularly where this relates to the safety of members of church communities;
- the *Guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – within the provinces of the Anglican Communion* adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2019 (at ACC-17). We also ask Bishops to commit to ensuring that there are systems in place in their churches to prevent abuse and provide appropriate pastoral support to those who have been abused;
- the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission whose continuation was requested by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2019 (at ACC-17). We request that Bishops will commit to working with the Commission as it provides assistance, and reports on progress, to enhance the safety of all people in the churches of the Anglican Communion.

² World Health Organization, Fact sheet, Violence against women, 9 March 2021.

³ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched by a United Nations Summit in September 2015 and is aimed at ending poverty in all its forms. It contains 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets.

Acknowledgement and declarations

The next part of the call invites Bishops to make the acknowledgement below and the declarations which follow:

We acknowledge with deep shame that some church workers have engaged in sinful, and even criminal, behaviour by abusing those in their care. We apologise unreservedly to those who have been abused and harmed. We are profoundly sorry for the failure of our churches to prevent harm, and to listen to and help those who have been abused.

We declare that:

- a key part of the mission of the Church is to create communities in which all people are safe and cared for. This conviction must be a core component of our theology and must therefore characterise our identity, thinking, words and actions in being God's Church for God's World;
- we will take action to make churches of the Anglican Communion places of enhanced safety for everyone, where church workers act with integrity; victims of abuse receive care and a just outcome; church workers who commit abuse are held accountable; and church leaders do not conceal abuse.

Calls and undertaking

We will then request that the Bishops attending Lambeth Conference 2022 endorse the following calls and undertaking:

- a call to the Instruments of Communion, to make the safety of all persons in the provinces of the Anglican Communion a priority of their focus, resource allocation and actions;
- a call to yourselves as Bishops to fulfill your responsibility to protect all people in your care by:
 - adopting the *Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion*;
 - implementing the *Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion*;
 - following the *Guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – within the provinces of the Anglican Communion*;
- a call to all clergy and lay leaders in the provinces and dioceses, to partner with their Bishops to protect everyone in their church communities by having systems in place to prevent abuse and provide appropriate pastoral support to those who have been abused;
- a call to the leaders of the world, to take whatever steps are necessary to achieve SDG targets 5.2 and 16.2.

Finally, we will ask that Bishops undertake, through their representatives to regularly report to the Instruments of Communion on progress in fulfilling their responsibility to protect all people in their care, beginning with the Anglican Consultative Council in 2023 (at ACC-18).

16 June 2022

Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission

LAMBETH CALL: SAFE CHURCH

We, the bishops of the Anglican Communion gathered at the Lambeth Conference 2022, make this call to promote the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, within the churches of the Anglican Communion.

1 Introduction

1.1 The apostle Peter wrote to the Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor reminding them of their identity in Christ as God's chosen people, sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1.1-2). Both the Old and New Testaments express the call to be holy as the appropriate response to God's grace (1 Peter 1.15-16). Christians are therefore to live as servants of God, and are to honour everyone and love the family of believers (1 Peter 2.16-17). Christian leaders are called to protect the people of God in their care (1 Peter 5.1-2).

2 Declaration

2.1 In making this call we are deeply mindful of, and guided by:

World Health Organization estimates that:

- up to 1 billion children aged 2–17 years experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past year. Violence against children has lifelong impacts on the health and well-being of children, families, communities, and nations;⁴
- 1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner violence in their lifetime. Violence has serious short- and long-term physical, psychological, sexual and reproductive health consequences for women;⁵

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) targets:

- to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (target 5.2);
- to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against, and torture of, children (target 16.2).⁶

2.2 We make this call fully aware of safeguarding/safe church issues in religious institutions including churches of the Anglican Communion, as highlighted by government inquiries and the media. Some religious workers have betrayed trust and abused children and adults for whom they had pastoral responsibility. Some religious leaders have denied or minimised this abuse and its consequences. Religious institutions have compounded the impact of the initial abuse by failing to effectively care for those who have been abused. The reputation of, and public trust in, many religious institutions has been damaged.

2.3 We declare:

- the witness of Scripture to God's love for all members of the human family and the priority given in Jesus' ministry to children, the vulnerable and the marginalised;
- the continuing relevance of the reflections of the Lambeth Conference 2008 upon the many forms of abuse of power within society and the church from which women and children suffer disproportionately. The violence meted out to women and children within the body of Christ is violence done to the body of Christ. Violence takes many forms including physical, financial, emotional, psychological, intellectual, cultural, sexual and spiritual abuse;
- the *Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion* adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2012 (at ACC-15). We will fulfil its five commitments of providing support where there is abuse; implementing effective responses to abuse; adopting and promoting standards for the practice of ministry; assessing suitability for ministry; and promoting a culture of safety;
- the *Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion* welcomed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016 (at ACC-16). We will implement its provisions by having systems in place in our churches to disclose and assess information where church workers move between/within provinces;
- the *Guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – within the provinces of the Anglican Communion* adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2019 (at ACC-17). We will follow these guidelines by having systems in place in our churches to prevent abuse and provide appropriate pastoral support to those who have been abused;
- the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission whose continuation was requested by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2019 (at ACC-17). We will work with the Commission as it provides assistance, and reports on progress, to enhance the safety of all people in the churches of the Anglican Communion.

3 Affirmation

3.1 We acknowledge with deep shame that some church workers have engaged in sinful, and even criminal, behaviour by abusing those in their care. We apologise unreservedly to those who have been abused and harmed. We are profoundly sorry for the failure of our churches to prevent harm, and to listen to and help those who have been abused.

3.2 We affirm that:

- a key part of the mission of the Church is to create communities in which all people are safe and cared for. This conviction must be a core component of our theology and must therefore characterise our identity, thinking, words and actions in being God's Church for God's World;
- we will take action to make churches of the Anglican Communion places of enhanced safety for everyone, where church workers act with integrity; victims of abuse receive care and a just outcome; church workers who commit abuse are held accountable; and church leaders do not conceal abuse.

⁴ World Health Organization, Fact sheet, Violence against children, 8 June 2020.

⁵ World Health Organization, Fact sheet, Violence against women, 9 March 2021.

⁶ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched by a United Nations Summit in September 2015 and is aimed at ending poverty in all its forms. It contains 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets.

4 Calls and specific requests

We make the following calls:

- 4.1 to the Instruments of Communion, to make the safety of all persons in the provinces of the Anglican Communion a priority of their focus, resource allocation and actions;
- 4.2 to ourselves, to fulfill our responsibility to protect all people in our care by:
 - adopting the Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion ;
 - implementing the Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion;following the Guidelines to enhance the safety of all persons – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – within the provinces of the Anglican Communion ;
- 4.3 the people of our provinces and dioceses, to partner with us to protect everyone in our church communities by having systems in place to prevent abuse and provide appropriate pastoral support to those who have been abused;
- 4.4 to the leaders of the world, to take whatever steps are necessary to achieve SDG targets 5.2 and 16.2.

We undertake through our representatives to regularly report to the Instruments of Communion on progress in fulfilling our responsibility to protect all people in our care, beginning with the Anglican Consultative Council in 2023 (at ACC-18).

